

PLANET TALENT

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GLOBAL RECRUITMENT

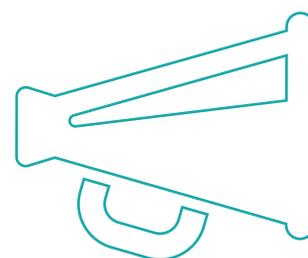


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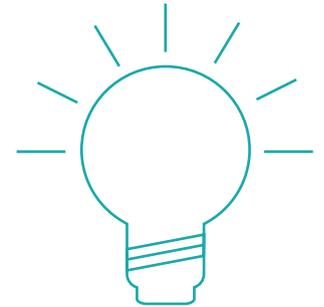
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Executive summary

Talent has gone global. It can be found in every corner of the planet. Employers everywhere are competing for it. They realise that finding the right people is critical to their competitive advantage. Intellectual capital now determines commercial success. An expansion strategy is intimately related to a people strategy. In the vanguard of the race for talent is the recruitment professional – sourcing the best the world can offer to give ambitious companies the sharpest edge. Resourcing experts like BPS World are pushing into new frontiers in trusted partnership with their clients. They are conquering Planet Talent.



Labour markets are being transformed. Developed economies are struggling with a declining workforce as the baby-boomers near retirement. At the same time, the global labour supply has exploded as emerging economies take off. Individuals everywhere have ever greater choice about where to work. More people than ever before are working outside their own countries.

The implications of these global changes for talent acquisition are enormous. Migration will only increase. The talent market is being transformed as professionals take advantage of globalisation to pursue international careers. Highly educated millennials are flooding every market.

The most visible aspect of changes in labour markets and talent dynamics are skills shortages in countries like the UK. Employers seeking engineers, IT professionals and technicians face stiff competition for the best people. Shortages mean international talent has become crucial to the UK's economic wellbeing.

But luring top talent across borders is a daunting task that confronts the recruitment professional with huge challenges. Immigration rules have become a hot political potato. HR teams may be geared up solely for local recruitment. Thinking “globally” does not always come naturally to companies. They must comply with a dizzying variety of local regulations when they cross borders. They must master the growing complexity of online and mobile landscapes. They must see off intensifying competition for the same talent in overseas markets. They must screen candidates not just for their technical skills, but for the soft skills they need to relocate internationally. They must overcome thorny issues of branding across cultures. To make things worse, many simply lack a strategic vision of global recruitment.

To dominate Planet Talent and win the global recruitment race, it is essential to employ the right technology, tools and approaches. BPS World has compiled 10 top tips to help those venturing forth to develop the best planetary practice:

Executive summary

To dominate Planet Talent and win the global recruitment race, it is essential to employ the right technology, tools and approaches. BPS World has compiled 10 top tips to help those venturing forth to develop the best planetary practice:

1. **Strategy matters** – global recruitment excellence requires a long-term strategy.
2. **Do your homework** – understand your market inside out.
3. **Know the competition** – develop a clear picture of your rivals.
4. **Tool up** – employ the latest tools in online and mobile recruitment.
5. **Boost your cultural intelligence** – equip your people with a global mind-set.
6. **Think partnership** – work with experts who understand markets and compliance.
7. **Prioritise the brand** – brand is everything, so invest in building and measuring it.
8. **Screen smartly** – pre-employment screening is crucial for talent acquisition success.
9. **Comply or die** – make compliance a priority when choosing a recruitment partner.
10. **Mind your conduct** – champion best practice to make the world a better place.

Planet Talent

Globalisation, social change and the digital revolution mean labour markets are being transformed everywhere:

- **Demographics:** as the developed world grows old and baby-boomers near retirement, economies struggle with a declining workforce.¹ Many tech workers, for example, plan to retire early.² This phenomenon is global, and the indigenous labour force is declining even in Asia's strongest economies such as Japan and Korea.
- **Emerging markets:** the entry of China and India into the global market may have doubled the supply of labour.³ The effective global labour supply quadrupled between 1980 and 2005.⁴ Growth in the developing world could more than double the effective labour supply in 2050.⁵ Until recently, the pioneers exploring overseas labour markets have been large companies.⁶ But now others are treading the same route.
- **Mobility:** individuals have ever more choice about where to work. The number of people working outside their country of birth ranges between 50 and 230 million, and international migration is only set to grow.⁷ The UK has taken advantage of this mobile labour force. In recent years there has been a sharp increase in the number of EU migrants in employment and intentions to recruit migrants.⁸



While it may be too early to talk of a fully global labour market, something akin to that is emerging in certain economies and sectors. There has, for example, been a proliferation of “talent hubs” – skills clusters in cities in the developing world.⁹ Some countries in Eastern Europe, such as the Czech Republic, have become magnets for technology professionals. BPS World's marketing director Natalie Spearing says:

“Labour globalisation is still sector and market driven but in certain industries the pace has increased dramatically and we face a shortage in skills. A good example is the Czech Republic, which has become a major tech hub luring global talent. That's why we have just opened an office there.”

TALENT TECTONICS ARE SHIFTING

The implications of global change for talent acquisition are enormous. On the one hand, migration will only increase; on the other, the talent market is being transformed. By 2020 India and China, for example, are predicted to produce 41% of the world's graduates.¹⁰ Many will take advantage of globalisation to pursue international careers; large corporations will increasingly move their people around the planet. The proportion of millennials is rising rapidly, flooding the global market with young talent without ties and transforming business outlooks.¹¹

The CIPD, the professional body for human resources and people development, says HR leaders now place a strong focus on reaching out to young people.¹² BPS founder and managing director Simon Conington says: “Talent is now truly global and this is accelerating for a number of reasons: communication, transport, the fact that the youth of today do not respect boundaries and are very questioning. This means we have had to go global: every single day we have to reach beyond the traditional talent pools.”

Planet Talent

SKILLS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY

The most visible aspect of changes in labour markets and talent dynamics are skills shortages – an issue widely acknowledged by employers trying to recruit engineers, IT professionals and technicians.¹³

Manpower Group says the number of global employers reporting talent shortages in 2015 peaked at a seven-year high of 38%, and engineers are the third most sought-after global category.¹⁴

The UK is particularly short of workers proficient in STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and maths. EngineeringUK has suggested that engineering companies will need to recruit 2.56 million people before 2022.¹⁵ Leading professional bodies voiced serious concerns about STEM skills shortages to the Commons Home Affairs Committee.¹⁶ Of the UK's National Shortage Occupation List, of 35 positions registered 15 are in engineering and technology-related professions.¹⁷

A flurry of surveys have added weight to this issue.¹⁸ Skills shortages are having a knock on effect in the wider economy – they are hampering productivity, exacerbating Britain's housing crisis, and may be costing the UK £10bn in lost GDP a year.¹⁹ Shortages have various causes, from shortcomings in how we teach STEM subjects at school to a failure by companies and government to invest in people.

Skills gaps may not be filled by indigenous workers in countries with strong external labour markets (e.g. the UK) because of “poaching” of expensively trained staff to non-training firms that save on costs and so offer higher salaries.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR RECRUITMENT?

Demographic change and skills shortages have made international talent crucial to the UK and many businesses already successfully recruit globally.

Britain's recruitment industry is the most globalised in the world: of the 3,500 members of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), the industry's professional body, 40% trade internationally.

Expert agencies like BPS have developed a global footprint (see box). Foreign talent is already plugging the UK skills gap. The share of foreign-born people in total employment increased from 7.2% in 1993 to 16.7% in 2014.²⁰ Europe has become a key source of labour in Britain, with the number of workers from other EU nations above 2 million.²¹ Business leaders highlight the positive impact of skilled migration, from increased innovation and trade to knowledge transfer and higher productivity.²² European talent is making Britain “the jobs factory of Europe”.²³



Planet Talent

BPS

BPS has been recruiting overseas since 2004 and today about 70% of its revenue comes from outside the UK. Since 2011 its global activity has increased dramatically and in 2015 BPS recruited from 58 countries. It now serves a global labour market.

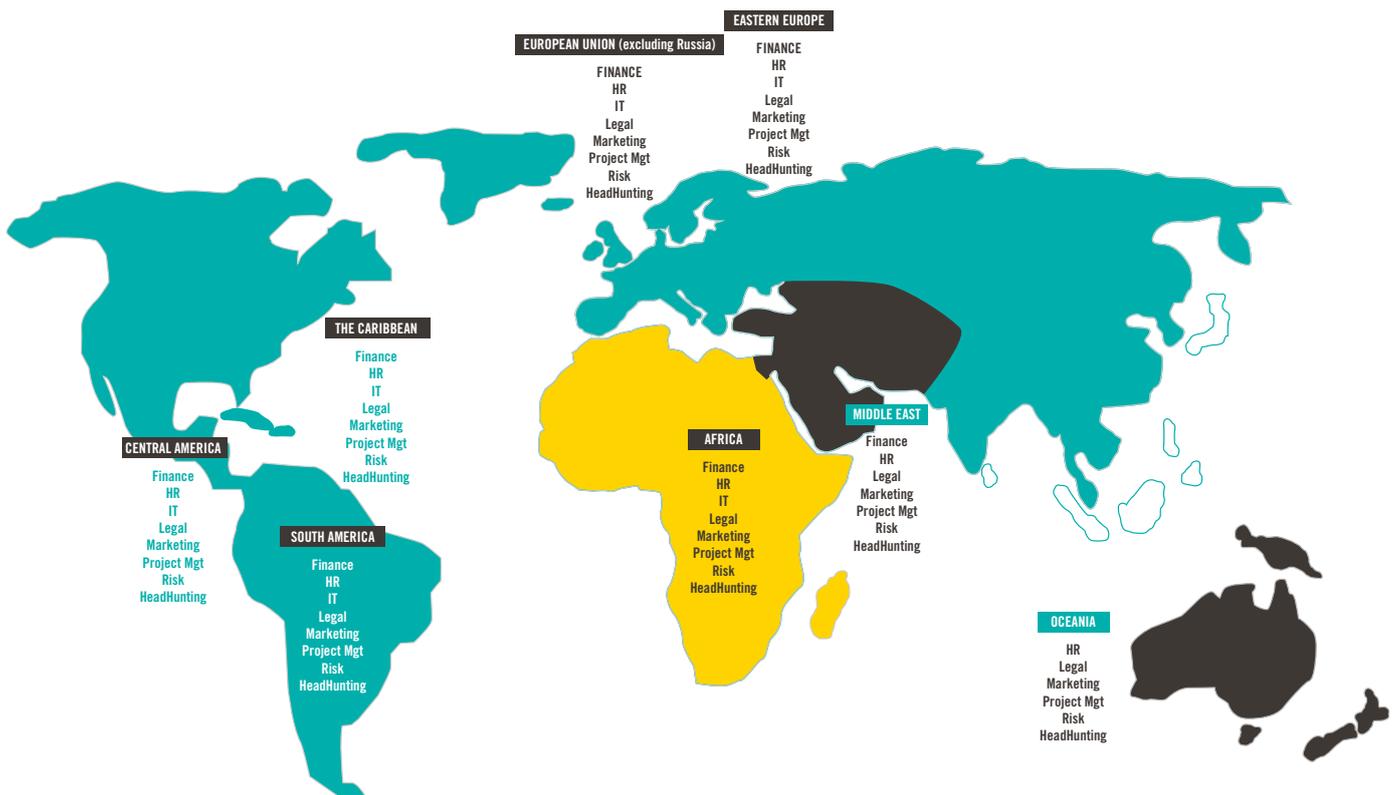
The three core areas of its business are engineering, technology and business and professional (accountancy, legal and support services). Its footprint in engineering and technology-based businesses has grown rapidly in Europe and markets such as fintech are booming. Several clients have evolved into global accounts and BPS has evolved with them into new markets.

A large amount of recruitment can be done from the company's UK base – making full use of what BPS World marketing director Natalie Spearing calls “very smart people and very smart technology”, but BPS account managers also move between the UK and clients, travelling often and spending time on site in countries such as Latvia, Poland, France and Germany. The company has just opened an office in the Czech Republic and plans another in the US. As BPS managing director Simon Conington says, there is only one underlying theme to recruitment today: “the global movement of people”.



Planet Talent

THE BPS GLOBAL FOOTPRINT



FULL CAPABILITY
DEVELOPING CAPABILITY
NO CURRENT PRESENCE

From its offices in Maidenhead, Warrington and Prague, BPS currently recruits in;
 UK, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Belarus, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, , Kazakhstan, Ukraine, India, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, US, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Costa Rica & Panama

Global challenges

Luring top talent across borders is a daunting task that confronts the recruitment professional with huge challenges:

IMMIGRATION POLICIES: The obvious short-term solution to the skills gap is immigration – but this has become the most contentious political issue of our era. Government commitments to reduce net migration by imposing a cap on sponsored skilled workers have been criticised by business leaders who say immigration is crucial to tackle the skills shortage.²⁴ Experts say government plans to train 3 million apprentices by 2020 will take too long for this to have an impact on shortages.²⁵ Uncertainty over the UK's future in the EU only complicates this picture, with British withdrawal (“Brexit”) potentially exacerbating skills shortages.

HR PROCEDURES: A tough question companies must ask when recruiting globally is whether their HR team is up to the task. Outdated processes may be designed to hire local talent, and research suggests many executives do not believe their HR teams excel at sourcing international talent or support their globalisation strategy.²⁶ Recruiting across borders poses complex challenges, beginning with the need to unify the HR team: cross-functional integration. Natalie Spearing says:

“Doing things in silos can mean you miss out on great talent in your own business. Historically this has been a massive issue for the recruitment industry. The right people may have been under their nose the whole time.”

Communication across borders can also be poor, and many HR teams may pay less heed to global branding and reputational risks. Some are not aware of new trends in recruitment: resourcing is becoming more proactive; top talent no longer expects a long-term career in one location;

workforce on demand is increasingly popular, with 51% of companies expecting an increase in contingent hiring;²⁷ and there is a growing focus on recruiting passive talent, which requires companies to build better relationships with staffing firms.²⁸

Global challenges

CULTURE: It might at first seem obvious that companies wishing to recruit globally need to be culturally adept – but thinking “globally” does not always come naturally, even at the top of organisations.²⁹ Chris Rowley, Professor of Human Resource Management at the Cass Business School, believes lack of cultural awareness can be a “critical” factor in recruitment and a shortcoming in global recruitment strategies is “too much ethnocentrism and a woeful lack of cultural awareness and sensitivities”. He says: “There can be an over-reliance on non-HR CEOs driving recruitment strategy based on biased and ethnocentric views, not research and evidence.”

Recruitment cultures themselves also differ considerably across the world, making it essential to have what Natalie Spearing calls “the right people with the right mindset” when embarking on a global strategy.³⁰ Differences in recruitment culture can be deep-rooted and historical. Prof Rowley says: “Traditionally Asian companies did not need to think about employee resourcing strategies because of a set of inter-locking cultural and organisational reasons. This started from early on with the recruitment system influenced by culture (e.g. Confucianism) and based on strong internal labour markets producing ‘salarymen’ with ‘seniority’ and ‘lifetime employment’. This led to strong teamwork and consensus, with dislike of ‘outsiders’ mixed with patriarchal hierarchies, and expectations of mutual commitment. These all increased retention.”

Such deep-rooted perspectives make it imperative when hiring to place a priority on cultural sensitivity alongside technical skills. Kevin Green, the CEO of the UK’s Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and vice-president of the Brussels-based International Confederation of Private Employment Services (CIETT), says:

“When you are recruiting across boundaries you are not just looking for technical skills, you are also looking for people who fit. Organisations must understand their own culture and test that during the recruitment process to make sure candidates don’t just have the skills but are likely to succeed in the new work environment.”

COMPLIANCE: Companies recruiting internationally must comply with a huge variety of auditing, due diligence, financial, labour and safety regulations. But there is evidence that many employers often fail even in their basic obligations.³¹ A key area of compliance that has grown in complexity is data privacy: rules often restrict how data collected from candidates for pre-employment screening is used.

In Europe, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set to come into force in 2018 will make sweeping changes to the data landscape. BPS World commercial director David Shuttleworth says it is crucial for BPS to ensure that the practices it asks its supply partners to follow are both legal at home but also underpin its clients’ value propositions. “When you buy through BPS, regardless of which country you are targeting, you buy a certain standard of operations. A key question for us as we expand overseas is how to ensure an appropriate standard that fits across all of our operations that is also acceptable to the local market and does not make it uncompetitive to deliver.”

Global challenges

TECHNOLOGY: Rapid advances in technology offer massive advantages to organisations and leveraging digital tools is at the heart of global recruitment. But the growing complexity of online and mobile landscapes make this a formidable challenge: technology is changing the dynamics of talent and make it imperative to command a highly-developed digital skillset. Recruitment professionals must be on top of three key trends in particular:

- **Social media:** use of social media and in particular social professional networks such as LinkedIn has exploded: social professional networks and internet job boards have become the main sources of quality hires.³² Moreover, countries heavily reliant on social professional networks are growing less reliant on staffing firms.³³
- **The mobile revolution:** candidates increasingly seek and apply for work in a mobile-optimised landscape.³⁴ Research suggests that up to 68% of jobseekers may be using mobile devices to search for jobs once a week or more.³⁵ Yet there is also evidence that companies are not responding to mobile trends with surveys suggesting HR professionals still do not identify mobile recruitment as a priority.³⁶
- **Talent analytics:** matching talent with opportunity is reshaping recruiting as machine-learning algorithms tie professionals to jobs based on profile demographics and behavioural feedback.³⁷ Recruitment and HR analytics are a goldmine for digitally literate organisations, informing strategic practice and boosting performance. Yet many organisations still don't take advantage of talent analytics or use data well.³⁸ The CIPD says organisations are at varied stages of development and points to a mismatch between the views of HR and non-HR leaders on the value of analytics.³⁹

COMPETITION: Competition for talent is white hot. Forecasts suggest the world supply of skilled workers is likely to grow faster than that of unskilled workers – so it is the highly skilled workers that are more likely to be in direct global competition.⁴⁰

Students are likely to constitute the most rapidly growing category of expatriates worldwide up to 2017, meaning an increasing number of people entering the workforce with international degrees.⁴¹

According to LinkedIn, competition continues to be among the top obstacles to attracting talent.⁴² CIPD research indicates that three-quarters of organisations have challenges retaining staff.⁴³ One reflection of the battle for talent is growing competition between recruitment specialists themselves.⁴⁴ Competition is clearly having an impact: research shows that there was a 39% fall in highly skilled immigrants coming to the UK from non-European Economic Area countries between 2011 and 2013.⁴⁵ Other countries have been successful at recruiting foreign labour – even those where immigration remains unpopular, like Japan – increasing even further the competition for talent facing the UK.

Global challenges

SCREENING: Failing to screen a candidate's background appropriately poses significant risks. Knowledge and work experience alone do not guarantee that a candidate will have the soft skills required to relocate internationally, meaning behavioural skills should weigh heavily in selection. But screening in a global context is complex. The first task is verifying qualifications or employment experience, and there is huge variation in vocational, educational and qualification structures.

Research by First Advantage, on screening trends in the Europe, the Middle East and Africa, for example, found that more than a quarter (26.8%) of all curriculum vitae checks uncovered inaccuracies.⁴⁶ Alongside verification, recruitment professionals must look for interpersonal skills such as cultural adaptability that can have a significant impact on success when talent crosses borders.⁴⁷

Yet research suggests only 30% of global companies have adopted pre-screening tools to determine a candidate's capacity to thrive abroad.

BRANDING: Employer brand has become a priority for businesses and its importance is growing as professional networks such as LinkedIn attract ever more users.⁴⁸

In such a competitive market it is crucial for companies to set their brand apart, and proactive employer brand strategies using digital resources have become essential. This is particularly important in a global market where some countries such as South Africa and India are ahead of the pack in understanding the role of talent brand.⁴⁹

In Asian countries such as Korea, the importance of branding is very high because the best talent wants to work for blue chip firms.

But getting a global brand to fit a local market requires deft footwork – and is greatly helped if recruitment and marketing go hand in hand. Natalie Spearing says: “How you create a global culture in an organisation feeds into the brand. Unifying a brand globally is tough because you have so many people and issues to consider. It all comes back to your company's values: the country you are operating in will always have its own identity – but the way to create a unified culture is to unify everybody behind the company's values.

STRATEGY: It may be surprising, but many organisations lack a strategic vision of global recruitment. This can skew the balance between local and global approaches and can be made more complex still by a lack of alignment among global teams. Moreover, the concept of recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) is not understood in the same way everywhere. Kevin Green of REC says: “In reality global businesses have very few hard assets. They are made up of brands, imagination, ideas: it's predominantly about people. A global organisation has a high dependence on intellectual assets. So a recruitment or HR strategy needs to be something that the board is conversant with because it is going to be one of the key factors determining whether it succeeds or fails at a global level.”

Global tips

To dominate Planet Talent, you need the right technology and tools. Here are the BPS World top tips:

1) STRATEGY MATTERS

Global recruitment excellence requires a long-term strategy. This strengthens a brand and enables it to source top talent across a broad range of markets. It also standardises and streamlines processes to achieve efficiencies and reduce risk. A strategic approach boosts a business's ability to meet revenue, growth and budget targets.⁵⁰ Claire McCartney, Research Adviser for Resourcing and Talent Planning at the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, says: "You need a watertight plan from the outset and to make sure you do your homework and people planning around that. This needs to be in place before you enter new markets – otherwise you are going to end up losing an awful lot of money and your business isn't going to succeed."

But what does a strategy look like? In practice this means coordinating recruitment resources – people, processes, structure, tools and budget – in a way that complements an organisation's business goals. The key strategic considerations for global recruiting are:

- **Make a plan:** establish a steering committee to determine the project scope and objectives. Set goals and objectives, and metrics to measure outcomes. Define what success means. Build in flexibility to account for local cultures. Set out how technology, communication parameters and training priorities will be used. A global recruitment strategy must align with revenue, growth and budgeting targets.
- **Establish accountability:** before launching a strategy, ensure that you have the full backing of executives. They should acknowledge shared responsibility for successes – and failures. Determine who "owns" core functions like screening and compliance.
- **Pace yourself:** rolling out a global recruitment plan in stages builds flexibility into structure. Meet before deployment to ensure everyone understands rules and processes then proceed in phases. Ensure company leaders sign off on each stage.
- **Communicate well:** certain terms may not mean the same thing in different parts of the world, so develop a shared glossary. Clear lines of communication are essential to make sure everyone is up-to-date on processes, changes and training. It is especially important to communicate successes, circulate feedback and encourage discussion.
- **Monitor and refine:** every global recruiting project needs to be tweaked. Constantly monitor progress against the original plan, allow for a learning curve, and make adjustments. Reporting is crucial, but base your monitoring on hard data – and share it with your peers.⁵¹ Claire McCartney says: "Global recruitment is a massive learning experience and you need to make sure you are constantly learning from what you do. But you also need to test some this out in the local market and use that knowledge when expanding into another area."

Global tips

2) DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Understand your market. Each region of the world has its own recruiting culture and your people need to understand these. Simon Conington says:

“It’s a top strategic goal for us to have physical footprints in all the regions of the world. If we want to be part of this global approach to resourcing we must have a better global understanding of cultures.”

Map out and record information in reports on local demographics, hiring quirks, talent pools, competitors and salaries. Understand the drivers of a recruitment culture: this may be determined, for example, by how talent spotters finance themselves. In poorer economies where salaries are lower more recruitment is done on a retained basis where the company is guaranteed a fee, but contingency recruitment – no win no fee – is more common in the UK.

- **Get the best advice:** a company that wants to recruit globally needs expert advice on compliance and other issues. Recruitment leaders like BPS have their own experts. Natalie Spearing says: “It is absolutely critical to get the very best advice on compliance issues and it can cost a fortune to provide that legal function in-market. At BPS we have our own in-house legal and compliance function for every market to serve clients depending on the type of recruitment they are doing.”
- **Train your people well:** language and cultural training is crucial for the global recruiter, and a range of software applications incorporate multi-language support. Qualifications differ substantially across borders in some professions, so your staff must swot up on the educational dynamics and qualification systems of markets you are recruiting in.
- **Use business intelligence:** alongside analytics, traditional business intelligence – how many calls were made, how many CVs were sent out – is also crucial when entering new markets. This should be integrated into every aspect of your approach.

3) KNOW THE COMPETITION

To understand the talent pool, a global recruiter must know the competition in target markets. They need a clear picture of rivals’ contacts, resources, schools network and advertising methods. In particular, they need to ensure the compensation packages their clients offer are competitive and hence pitch these at a level consistent with a local business culture. One way to start may be to set a benchmark for each market that factors in salaries by role, cost of living and other variables to determine whether a compensation package is competitive. Knowing the market also requires recruiters to understand specific local sector challenges – such as the market dynamics for professions such as engineers, IT technicians etc. – and to monitor trends as well as the activity of competitors over time.

Global tips

4) TOOL UP

Technology has transformed talent sourcing so your skillset needs to be as sharp as possible. Time, effort and investment are required to stay on top of developments in online and mobile recruitment. You need the latest tools – and to ensure staff can use them expertly:

Applications and interviews: candidate-facing recruitment software – from career portals to electronic forms – need to be multilingual and talent professionals should use interview technology like VOIP conferencing to extend their reach. BPS invests heavily in communication platforms to ensure location is not a barrier to that first conversation.

Social media: make full use of social media and leverage popular networks such as LinkedIn and Twitter as well as international boards like VKontakte in Russia and Weibo in China. In the UK alone, LinkedIn can boast among its members 525,500 engineering professionals and 430,000 technology professionals.⁵² But social-media is more than just a channel of communication: it is also a tool to promote employer brand.⁵³ To take full advantage of social media you must know what you're doing. The way BPS has works with LinkedIn exemplifies how recruitment leaders approach social media (see box). When it comes to using technology in recruitment, here are the key things to remember:

- **Standardise:** use technology across the organisation in the same way everywhere in terms of the information required from candidates, workflows and processes.
- **Test to death:** apply for your own job to find out whether anything needs fixing.
- **Automate:** automate applicant portals and all paper forms in order to standardise, reduce paper and harvest valuable data.
- **Follow conversations:** use social media to gain priceless insights into employer brand.
- **Measure:** use analytics and big data to see how effective your recruiting is.
- **Respect:** never downplay privacy concerns and act now to ensure GDPR compliance.

Global tips

BPS AND LINKEDIN

BPS has made significant investment in technology platforms and our close working relationship with LinkedIn is a model of how to use social media intelligently.

Marketing director Natalie Spearing sits on LinkedIn's expert adviser panel and BPS is one of the social network's 25 top inspirational brands. LinkedIn reaches 400m+ members worldwide, 19m+ in the UK and 39m+ students and recent college graduates (its fastest growing demographic).

The BPS corporate page on LinkedIn currently has over 20,000 followers – a growth rate of 83% in 2015.⁵⁴ The top five countries they come from are: UK (6,710+), India (1,000+), US (795+), Argentina (575+) and the UAE (435+). Their followers include; those in professional services 3,058, architecture and engineering 2,700, oil and energy 1,603, and technology and software 1,507. By promoting a company's recruitment needs through LinkedIn, BPS act as brand ambassadors, generating both leads and awareness that helps them grow their talent brand and engagement. In 2015, BPS generated 20,501 leads through 12,761 job applications and 7,740 InMails accepted. Their employee profile ads performed at 15 times the industry average.

Global tips

5) BOOST YOUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Entering a new market can be a culture shock. A key aspect of global recruitment is cultural intelligence:

Be flexible: accommodate cultural difference by localising aspects of the recruitment process while conforming to global standards. It can help to try out your own procedures and tools for cultural sensitivity. Know your audience: in some countries, for example, internet access is limited so recruiters need to accommodate this by using print advertisements and paper applications. The language barrier will be a major consideration in how you approach global recruitment: place a premium on foreign language abilities among your staff and candidates. The more languages and cultures that exist in your workforce, the better they will be dealing with difference. Dr Lesley Mearns, Team Leader for HRM and Leadership at Sunderland Business School, says: “Global companies say you have to treat everybody equally and employ standardised overarching policies and procedures – but they need to understand the different cultural contexts and interpret those differently. It’s all about understanding the culture, then putting the recruitment and selection in place to recognise cultural difference.”

Reconcile the global and the local: a recurrent issue in recruitment is reconciling a company’s global culture with the need to be locally specific. So how do you manage that tension? The key to solving cultural issues is compromise. Standardisation does not have to be in conflict with flexibility: it is possible to balance the local and the global. Kevin Green of REC says: “There is such a thing as having a global mindset or culture but it’s easy to say and difficult to deliver. You need to articulate your cultural values and norms, and when you are recruiting test individuals against those so you end up with people able to operate successfully within that culture.”

Treat diversity as a business tool: diversity is a secret weapon for the global company – the more diverse its workforce, the better equipped it is to deal with cultural complexity. Indeed, research suggests that diverse managers can be better managers.⁵⁵ Claire McCartney of the CIPD says: “If you have put thought into your diversity and inclusion strategy at home, then you are much more likely to be aware of cultural considerations abroad.”

Train for a global mindset: companies can take conscious steps to improve “contextual intelligence”.⁵⁶ Training can nurture a global mindset among employees and can involve immersion experiences such as assignments, global project team exercises and workshops to boost networking. Managers, in particular, need to understand the importance of diversity. Dr Mearns at Sunderland Business School says: “It is crucial for senior management to buy into the idea of diversity. As we get more international, companies have to invest in training their managers properly and getting them to engage: not just by going on courses but actively visiting places or undertaking action learning where they talk to people from different cultures and appreciate difference.”

Global tips

6) THINK PARTNERSHIP

Global recruitment cannot be done in isolation – you need expert advice to gain an in-depth understanding of markets and compliance. It is also essential to have contacts among local job agencies, universities and colleges. So it makes sense to work with experts. Recruitment process outsourcing is the standardised model for international talent acquisition, with well-connected RPO providers like BPS working closely with supply partners on the ground. Kevin Green of REC says: “The candidate is in the driving seat and can choose where to work. Recruitment businesses understand this market, where the talent is, how to access it, the right pay, and the best ways to transition a candidate to a new employer. But they can also help with the need to understand a candidate’s driver and support them to be successful in an organisation. So while companies want to work with international recruiters, it will be on a niche basis as people who understand their specific needs and markets.”

When selecting a recruitment partner, a company should choose one that understands their business and mission. Claire McCartney says:

“Choose the best agency for your needs, Make sure you put the recruitment partner through a vetting process, that they really understand your organisation, your values, your requirements – almost as if they are an extension of your organisation and its ambassador. It’s about making sure that, yes, they are experts – but that also they are going to understand exactly what you are looking for and represent your organisation in the best possible way.”

A key attribute of a good recruitment partner is its relationship with its suppliers in other countries. Getting a partnership right – such as the relationship BPS has forged with its client M+W (see box) – does not just offer both parties advantages when it comes to global expansion, it can dramatically cut their costs. At the same time, it is crucial to treat regional partners as equals to demonstrate that everyone plays for the same team, something BPS has made a virtue of and which explains why it has been so successful on the international stage.

Global tips

BPS AND M+W

M+W Group has over 7,000 technical professionals operating into 30 countries. They are a global leader in design, engineering and construction and are responsible for many of the world's most advanced technology facilities. M+W Group deliver highly complex projects in sectors which include state-of-the-art electronics, science, research and renewable energy. They have developed a strategic working relationship with BPS to meet its specialist needs.

Joanna Merry, Head of HR North-Western Europe and MEA at M+W group says: "BPS are involved in the full life-cycle of the recruitment process from gaining a clear understanding of the requirements for the role, through the interview and selection process through to supporting with negotiation and appointment. Without BPS, I would need another four people in my team!"

According to Joanna, a key advantage of working with BPS is that they are well suited to the variable business cycle: as the sector operates according to margins, M+W group can call on BPS only when and where it needs to, saving on costs, and can take advantage of its buying power with in-country recruitment partners to keep down fees.

As this partnership has evolved, BPS has nurtured considerable insights into M+W group's needs. Joanna says: "BPS really understand how we work, what we do, the types of people that we are looking for – when you are recruiting you need to look for someone who has a cultural fit as well as a skillset, particularly when it comes to the safety ethos which is of paramount importance. So when we are looking in Eastern Europe for a waste-to-energy team, for example, we have found that using BPS has really helped because they have that knowledge and understanding of what kind of people we look for."

Global tips

Global labour markets need global standards – and BPS is at the forefront of efforts to establish international partnerships on a solid ethical grounding (see box). BPS founder Simon Conington says: “Partnership is our middle name – literally. The BPS brand was born out of the desire to provide clients with a bigger approach to business – a business partnership approach. That’s where Business Partnership Services (BPS) came from. Identifying local partners is essential to everything we do – and we’ve become very good at it. Most supply chains are based on a tiered structure, but we operate a partnership approach: we put together international supply chains with in-country expertise using small, highly regarded and very effective local organisations. Clients love it.”

The BPS Partner Charter

BPS has developed “Partner Charter” to establish the basis for its relationship with clients and international suppliers and provide a kitemark against which all parties work. According to commercial director David Shuttleworth, “it’s all about behaviours rather than processes or contractual agreements – how we will work together, how we will behave, how we communicate.” The International Supply Partner Charter commits all parties to:

- 1 Focus on improving our customer service.**
- 2 Commit to finding solutions not placing blame.**
- 3 Endeavour to communicate decisively and clearly.**
- 4 Operate professionally and be respectful of all parties.**
- 5 Embrace innovation in our methods and processes.**
- 6 Uphold equal opportunities and fair treatment to all.**

7) PRIORITISE THE BRAND

When it comes to reaching out to talent, brand is everything – and those who invest in building and measuring it gain a competitive edge.⁵⁷ While a global brand conveys a company’s mission and values, how it is perceived as an employer of top talent – its “employer” or “talent” brand – is essential to the success of recruitment campaigns.

Companies get ahead of the competition by creating a proactive strategy for advancing their talent brand, and can even measure its potency.⁵⁸ LinkedIn’s Talent Brand Index, for example, provides a metric to benchmark how attractive you are to the people you want to hire.⁵⁹ Simon Conington says: “Brand is now the top priority. It’s the same everywhere in the world: if you are actually looking for true talent, true talent has choices – and the only thing that distinguishes an employer from the pack now is brand.” When it comes to branding remember to:

Choose a recruitment partner who will be a brand ambassador: agencies like BPS that combine recruitment and marketing expertise understand the importance of the talent brand – and can champion it. Natalie Spearing says: “We bring an unusual combination of skills to this market by genuinely bridging the gap between HR and marketing. We are able to advise, not just about attracting people into organisations, but also about how create a culture that retains them.”

Global tips

Make full use of your people: your employees are your brand ambassadors on social networks. They promote your talent brand constantly. The first step to enhancing employer brand is to foster buy-in among staff. Natalie Spearing says: “Buy in is absolutely critical. I start by forming ambassadors for the business from different countries and grades and work with those people to create the behaviours and values that underpin the employer brand. You can find a happy place among everybody – and it’s not hard from there to align everybody.”

8) SCREEN SMARTLY

Pre-employment screening is crucial to the success of talent acquisition but can also identify candidates with cultural sensitivity and future leadership potential. However, global recruiting requires a cautious approach to screening: laws on what is permissible vary widely and global employers must know them. Effective use of technology can greatly enhance personality and behavioural screening. Tools on the market can measure factors like an individual’s propensity to thrive abroad. When it comes to screening, remember to:

- **Be fair and consistent:** follow standard screening questions and interviewing procedures to measure all candidates fairly.
- **Respect privacy:** when collecting, storing and processing personal data always be mindful of the need to respect privacy.
- **Think local:** screening is not understood in the same way everywhere so check the local rules on processes such as ID verification and conducting criminal checks.
- **Be transparent:** communicate the existence and aims of the pre-screening programme to candidates. In some countries you may have to discuss it with a works council.

9) COMPLY OR DIE

A company that fails to comply with local rules governing recruitment risks punitive damages and a shattered reputation. But thorny issues about how compliance is handled in global recruitment scenarios – which legal jurisdiction will apply in tie-ups with a recruitment partner in another country, for example – are not easily resolved, making it advisable to make compliance a key consideration when choosing a recruitment partner. David Shuttleworth says: “We assure clients of 100% compliance. Clearly there are going to be companies that go to certain countries because they want to reduce costs and believe that as long as they comply by local laws everything is fine. But what does that mean for their international brand? Reputational issues could cause greater damage than any savings they make.” The global recruiter will need to:

- **Stay on top of marketing:** countries have their own laws governing marketing, and a global employer must ensure ad campaigns comply on issues such as disclosures, intellectual property, privacy, discrimination and quotas. They must determine the language requirements for job postings and ensure nothing is lost in translation.
- **Watch application questions:** rules governing application processes also vary – some questions may be mandatory or forbidden – and global employers need to ensure applications, whether online or on paper, fully comply.
- **Comply with privacy rules:** a key compliance consideration is data protection. Rules restrict how personal information is collected, stored and shared.
- **Stay flexible:** centralised reporting can help global recruiters to manage their obligations – but recruitment professionals will have to stay flexible as regulations constantly adapt and it is essential to stay on top of changes in compliance rules.

Global tips

10) MIND YOUR CONDUCT

Recruitment organisations are brand ambassadors making it essential for them to obey rigorous professional standards. Regulation of the recruitment industry has extended internationally and has been influenced considerably by the sector in the UK, which is recognised as the most advanced in the world (see box). Large recruitment providers such as BPS have been instrumental in extending standards of conduct and best practice globally. David Shuttleworth says:

“The UK is the world’s leading country in recruitment legislation and operating standards. So that is our benchmark when we go into new markets: we work to the rules and procedures of the UK. When we set up an entity in another country does that mean that it can work to a different set of standards? Of course not, otherwise we damage our brand. There is a standard of operation that we never go below.”

Regulation in the recruitment industry

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the only global regulatory body drafting conventions and recommendations on employment-related matters. ILO instruments, such as Convention 181 on private employment agencies, have established the framework within which national recruitment bodies have drafted guidelines on best practice. The global trade association for the recruitment and staffing industry is CIETT (International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies), which has 54 country federations including REC in the UK.

CIETT has worked closely with the ILO and in 2015 adopted a new Code of Conduct, which defines the common principles and values shared by its members.⁶⁰ At a national level, the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) is the professional body representing the interests of the UK’s £28.7 billion private recruitment industry. The Institute of Recruitment Professionals (IRP) that works in partnership with REC is a representative body for individuals employed within the sector, working to ensure they are recognised as professionals who uphold world-class recruitment standards. All IRP members abide by a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct committing themselves to upholding best practice.⁶¹ As the professional body for HR and people development, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) also operates a Code of Professional Conduct which sets out standards and behaviours that members are required to adhere to.⁶²

Conclusion

Globalisation has become a commercial imperative for many companies – but it has also turned up the heat in the competition for talent. The global labour market is now a candidate's market where top talent is highly skilled, mobile ... and in huge demand. Professionals carving out international careers can pick and choose who to work for and where. The challenges facing companies recruiting in this landscape are truly daunting: from the white hot competition for skills, to the need to understand and juggle complex issues of compliance.

Success requires expertise, cultural savvy and a “can do” attitude. Resourcing partners such as BPS World are setting the pace by pioneering the very best standards of recruitment globally on behalf of their clients.

They have drawn upon their experience to share 10 top tips with those venturing out into Planet Talent:

1. Strategy matters – [global recruitment excellence requires a long-term strategy.](#)
2. Do your homework – [understand your market inside out.](#)
3. Know the competition – [develop a clear picture of your rivals.](#)
4. Tool up – [employ the latest tools in online and mobile recruitment.](#)
5. Boost your cultural intelligence – [equip your people with a global mindset.](#)
6. Think partnership – [work with experts who understand markets and compliance.](#)
7. Prioritise the brand – [brand is everything, so invest in building and measuring it.](#)
8. Screen smartly – [pre-employment screening is crucial for talent acquisition success.](#)
9. Comply or die – [make compliance a priority when choosing a recruitment partner.](#)
10. Mind your conduct – [champion best practice to make the world a better place.](#)

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