

# The Importance of Growing Global Talent

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It is estimated that by the year 2025, the world's workforce will comprise at least 75% millennials. Linked to this, an internationally mobile workforce is becoming a reality, driven in equal parts by the globalisation of business, the need for organisations to find innovative solutions to meet growing skills gaps, and the desire of a new generation of workers for exposure to global business practices.

In this highly interconnected world, careers and career paths are no longer defined within organisational boundaries or even within national or continental boundaries. This new world of work presents opportunities for global organisations to match their unique workforce requirements while, at the same time, exposing their employees to global environments in which they can hone their skills and develop their leadership capabilities.

We believe Heineken stands as a good example of the power of this global talent development focus. Since it was formed in the Netherlands in 1864, the group has grown to employ over 80 000 people and operate breweries, malteries, cider plants and other production facilities in more than 70 countries.

The establishment of the South African business in 2016 meant that local employees immediately became part of this global talent hub. As a result, over the past two years, eight employees have either been given the opportunity to enter global careers in the group or develop their skills via long-term assignments abroad.

Equally, the skills and insights of our employees are becoming increasingly sought after by many of the group's other global operations that recognise the value that these talented and experienced individuals can deliver.

Our Global Graduate Programme also sends employees on international assignment to various countries, including South Africa. And plans are afoot to give South African graduates similar international experience. Our experience as a global talent hub has proven just how important this type of international access is for any organisation to be able to present a highly appealing employee value proposition. By affording local employees exposure to diverse international work environments, organisations effectively help them to define meaningful career paths that are highly relevant in today's global economy.

And the benefits of this global exposure accrue equally to the employees and their employers.

In addition to acquiring new business knowledge and skills that they can then apply in their local roles, recent research done by the British Council into global businesses has revealed that employees who receive international experience are more likely to demonstrate higher than average levels of innovation.

Such an effective combination of global talent culture with a strongly entrepreneurial and empowering environment is very effective in attracting and retaining the best talent. In fact, since our establishment in South Africa, Heineken South Africa has enjoyed a steady influx of exceptional team members from group operations all over the world. In return for the skills and experience they bring to our local operations, we give them the unique opportunity to gain invaluable first-hand experience of how a global brand can be successfully applied in a developing economy.

Over the years, we have also learned that a shared culture is central to the success of any organisation's efforts to deliver career opportunities and business growth through this type of local expertise with global exposure.

Employees in any part of the world need to have a good understanding of what it is like to work for their company anywhere else in the world. This requires a vision-led culture built on values that are shared across all operations, irrespective of geographical location. In this way, the integration of employees from across the globe, is typically seamless and has fewer

of the pain points that can arise when trying to combine team members from businesses or countries with differing cultures and values.

Ultimately, every one of our South African employees is also a global employee; and that translates to 80 000 highly mobile individuals who have the skills, experience and ability to grow their careers while building our brand anywhere in the world.

#### **Editorial contact**

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