



Employer Branding: The Key to Attracting Top Talent to Internationalizing Chinese Enterprises

As Chinese enterprises continue to expand globally, they are competing with overseas counterparts to not only capture new markets, but also to attract top-tier talent.

Recently, during the “Exploring Leadership Strategies for Chinese Enterprise Internationalization” seminar held by Russell Reynolds Associates in Shenzhen, panelists with extensive internationalization experience shared practical insights and experiences regarding international expansion and subsequent talent and leadership strategies.

The key to attracting top talent in new regions? A company's **employer branding**.

Why internationalizing enterprises should focus on employer branding

“Corporate branding” refers to a company's overall brand image, reputation, and identity in the market. It encompasses brand values, consumer and public perceptions, as well as the company's value proposition, marketing strategies, and competitive differentiation.

“Employer branding” refers to the company's perception as an employer among employees and potential candidates. This includes company culture, work environment, growth opportunities, compensation and benefits, and the overall reputation of the company as a workplace.

Chinese company looking to expand and grow globally must adapt to diverse environments and establish connections with local employees, rather than adopting an expat-only talent approach. This requires a strong employer brand to attract and retain high-potential leadership and local staff.

Alignment between the corporate brand and the employer brand is crucial for achieving global success. Without the right leaders in overseas markets, Chinese companies will struggle to deliver long-term international growth. One way to attract strong local leaders is to focus on employer branding. To build a leadership team that can balance local market expertise with the parent company's strategy, Chinese companies need to invest the time and effort to bring both sides together. RRA CEO, Constantine Alexandrakis, highlighted that international giants like Unilever and American Express achieve global success not only due to their excellent products, but also because they are recognized as exceptional workplaces offering long-term career development for employees.

“Employer brand is important. [The key question is,] is top talent willing to work for Chinese enterprises?”

Harold Lang

Ex-chairman at Weichai Holding Group

What kind of leaders do internationalized enterprises need?

The internationalization process is full of uncertainty. As such, leaders at its helm need to think independently and make difficult choices, displaying qualities such as courage, authenticity, empathy, purpose-driven, and agility. Leadership today isn't about mere "command and control," but is built upon sincerity, empathy, and humility.

Purpose-driven leadership creates a sense of belonging and motivation for employees. Leaders need to be capable of both offense and defense—balancing present focus with an eye on the future, ensuring alignment between current operations and long-term objectives.



Building an employer brand for internationalized enterprises

1. Professionalize talent acquisition: A professional talent acquisition process can help enterprises select and attract executive talent that best fits their needs, thereby enhancing talent retention and leadership effectiveness. Key components include defining the desired profile, partnering with professional agencies that can represent the company's strategy, maintaining transparent and regular communication with candidates, and establishing standardized interview and feedback procedures.

2. Cultivate an innovative and inclusive culture: Fostering an inclusive corporate culture is crucial for Chinese enterprises. Resolving cultural conflicts requires more than just a robust internal communication infrastructure—leaders must practice empathy and adopt a tailored perspective in each interaction, particularly when interacting with individuals from acquired organizations. Investing time and resources in promoting cross-cultural understanding and integration is essential for the successful internationalization of enterprises.

3. Coordinate synchronized talent strategies: Ultimately, employer branding is the way a company showcases itself to external talent, making it crucial to define its strategy, culture, transformations, rewards, and incentives. To

build an attractive employer brand, coordination and synchronization are necessary across various aspects, including compensation, benefits, career development, employee relations, performance management, and corporate culture. These elements work together to create an attractive employer brand that resonates with potential candidates. By aligning these factors, a company can effectively communicate its value proposition and differentiate itself in the talent market.

In today's business landscape, corporate leaders are increasingly recognizing the importance of both corporate branding and employer branding. For internationalizing Chinese enterprises, a strong employer brand is a key differentiator in their overseas expansions, significantly impacting whether internationalized enterprises can attract and retain talent in foreign markets. By professionalizing the talent acquisition process, cultivating an innovative and inclusive corporate culture, and synchronizing talent strategies, Chinese enterprises can effectively establish a robust presence overseas. These efforts will contribute to creating a favorable reputation as an employer, enabling them to attract and retain top talent in their target markets.



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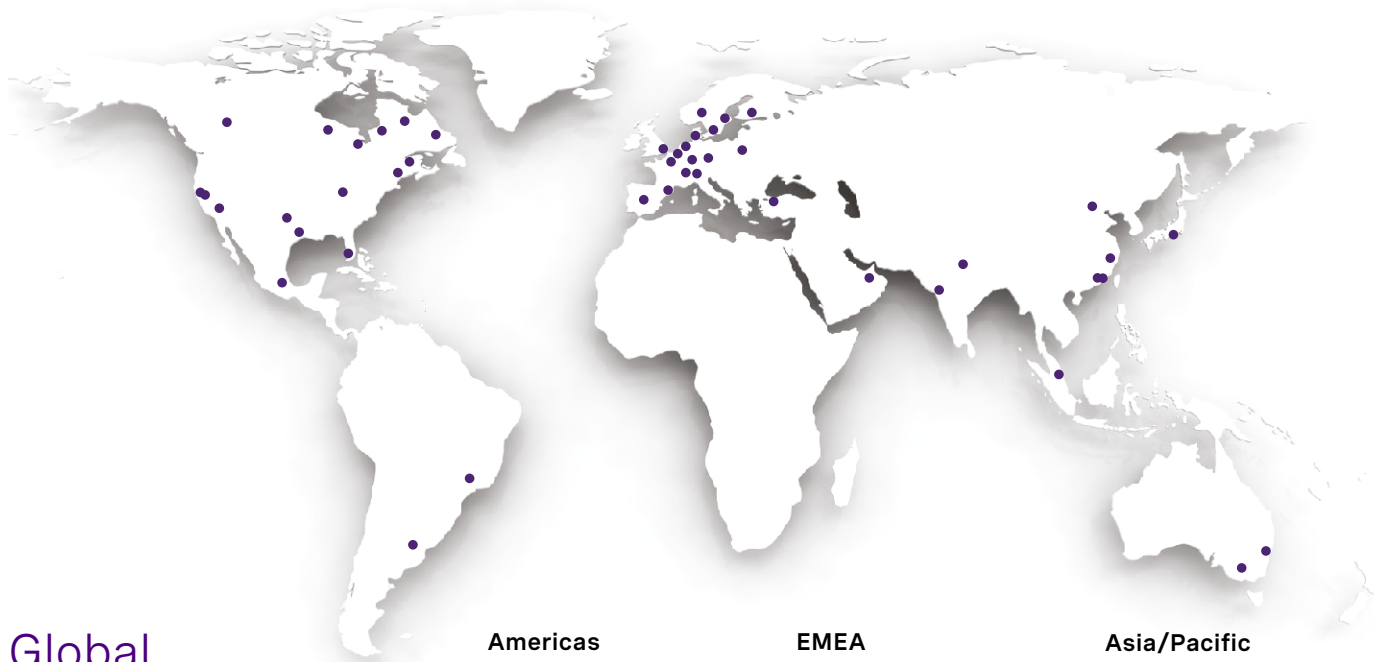
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