

Raising expectations for future leaders? “Verslo Žinios”

Vilnius, Lithuania – It is no longer sufficient for top executives to demonstrate functional knowledge or expertise in a specific area. These days, it is far more important that they can show the ability to improve continuously and to manage people in a team where everyone can take a leadership role.



Until fairly recently, top executives were expected to have deep functional knowledge of areas such as sales, finance, planning and distribution of resources. However, this is no longer enough.

“Shareholders want to hire people who can think globally and quickly learn new things, who are flexible and not afraid of emerging problems. They need people who understand global market trends, because business is very unpredictable nowadays and changes are sudden,” comments [Kristina Vaivadaite](#), Country Manager for Lithuania at international Executive Search firm Pedersen & Partners.

Top executives are expected to have boundless energy and enthusiasm and to enjoy what they do. In particular, Kristina Vaivadaite points out one popular requirement for top executives – they not only need to be able to motivate and consolidate people, but also to develop the team and to work with colleagues who are not their direct subordinates.

According to Ms. Vaivadaite, “Nowadays shareholders usually want to see a person who is able to develop others, although this skill was not that much required at all until very recently.”

For this reason, shareholders now expect to hire wise and perceptive candidates. Skills such as problem-solving, result orientation, creativity and strategic thinking are now being prioritised.

According to Kristina Vaivadaite, “Companies that do not pay attention to the development of employee skills are likely to have serious issues in the future.”

Executive search experts also stress that top executives are rarely expected to know the rarer foreign languages, and it is usually enough for them to be fluent in English. On the other hand, the knowledge of a few foreign languages is a great advantage for professionals and functional managers, especially those who work with specific export markets.

More than production

According to Ms. Vaivadaite, it was once sufficient for a General Manager at a production company to know production processes well.

“Clients now expect candidates with broader functional experience, who not only understand production processes, but also have a strong knowledge of the specific industry,” comments Kristina Vaivadaite, referring to the changes of the last 5 years.

For example, an executive who has experience in production, logistics and sales management, and also knows finance management well, will be much more attractive to employers than a colleague who has only specialised in a single function.

“Similarly, a Finance Director with strong IT knowledge is much more attractive than one who only has expertise in finance. Functional managers are expected to bring versatile experience combined with deep knowledge of one area,” notes Ms. Vaivadaite.

It is also important that top executive can make decisions in situations when multiple stakeholders are involved, and different opinions must be understood and reconciled. Excellent communication skill is needed to do this successfully.

“Shareholders also stress the skill of effectiveness. It is important that top executives are not only the leaders of their businesses, but that they do this effectively. Unfortunately, not many people have this skill,” concludes Ms. Vaivadaite.

Incidentally, the usual reason why executives who successfully reach a certain career stage are unable to move forward is a lack of self-criticism – their belief that they already know everything prevents them from going ahead. This is why shareholders demand that their top executives show continuous improvement and search for better business management methods.

Learning IT

Recruitment experts believe that digitisation will change the nature of work for both top executives and specialists.

Skills that enable employees to perform, innovate and think creatively will become even more important.

As organisations become more and more flat, projects are led not by formal managers, but by professionals who are able to manage a particular project the best. Therefore, it is crucial for top executives to be able to work in teams, to flexibly react to changing environments and to find ways to work effectively with colleagues who are spread around the world.

“In 5 years it will be hard to imagine a General Manager who has no clue about IT,” predicts Ms. Vaivadaite.



[Kristina Vaivadaite](#) is a Client Partner and the Country Manager for Lithuania at [Pedersen & Partners](#). Ms. Vaivadaite has more than 15 years of Executive Search experience, having completed over 500 senior level search assignments in Consumer Goods, Industrial, Pharmaceutical, Technology and Professional Services sectors in the Baltic countries, Scandinavia, CEE and Asia. Prior to joining Pedersen & Partners, Ms. Vaivadaite led the Lithuanian operations of a regional Executive Search company and also provided HR consulting services to local and international clients.

Pedersen & Partners is a leading international Executive Search firm. We operate 56 wholly owned offices in 52 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia & the Americas. Our values Trust, Relationship and Professionalism apply to our interaction with clients as well as executives. More information about Pedersen & Partners is available at www.pedersenandpartners.com

If you would like to conduct an interview with a representative of Pedersen & Partners, or have other media-related requests, please contact: Diana Danu, Marketing and Communications Manager at: diana.danu@pedersenandpartners.com