

# “Indian companies need to adopt healthy international habits”

And that means while companies need to continue growing, they need to also tweak and adopt global standards of management and functioning to attract top international managerial talent, Rozet tells

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## What, according to you, are the major concerns of companies while hiring employees at the top level?

Successful companies are made by the quality of their management — top management particularly — so obviously whom you hire is a major concern because that acts as a determinant of how the company will evolve over the years. The vision of the company is spearheaded by people who work in it and the C-suite leaders are a critical part of this.

Given that the complexion of the companies is undergoing a major change in that companies are becoming international, the way of functioning too is changing. This is bringing with it changes in the style of management. Bringing on the management board leaders who can identify the change in the sector, make significant alterations to the style of functioning and drive the employees to successfully undertake multinational assignments can be a challenge. Then, even after the companies identify the managers in the top position, the very nature of the job of the C-suite manager is getting complicated given that he has to be adept at dealing with international managerial challenges and situations.

As the consequence of the changing economic nature of how businesses are driven, there is a shortage in top management.

## Are there specific concerns faced by companies in emerging markets like India?

Over the last few decades, we have seen the emergence of some very big companies in emerging markets that have gone international. What is needed is a plan for companies to look at doing business the

‘truly’ international way. This simply means that while such companies need to continue growing, they need to also tweak and adapt to the global standards of management in order to attract international top management executives in their firms. Companies from emerging economies have already made their presence felt, now the major challenge is to emerge with the best practices and adapt healthy international habits and rules for top management growth.

## How is the recruitment sector adapting to the changing needs of new-age firms?

While developed markets are already used to partnering with consultants in the business, in the developing markets there’s still a lot more scope. While international search agencies have to demonstrate to such markets the effectiveness of hiring the best at the top management, it is no surprise that we are being confronted by the changing nature of industries, not just geographically but also technologically and economically.

Then, industries on their own are undergoing a change. Take media, which has changed completely in the way it functioned. We have seen a dramatic change in the last 20 years in this sector. Going digital is so critical to the media sector and now the hiring needs to happen keeping the online trends in mind. Healthcare and life sciences is another industry that has deeply changed. The key is not to teach clients to do strategy. We take the company strategies, tweak them and then we develop solutions for them.

That’s the trick for specialists like us — understand the clients, know the market but don’t decide anything for the company.

## How can companies prepare for the change at the boardroom?

I would recommend regular board assessment and audits to understand how the company is growing, where it is headed, how it is preparing to function in accordance to the changing needs. We find that very often, instead of looking ground up, it is always the top management of the company, including the board members, that need to adapt. Another important thing is once companies have the right talent, retaining them is critical too. A leadership gap can corrode the success of companies.

## Why do companies, despite having the best succession strategies, end up with a leadership gap?

What companies need to understand is that the constituting elements of leadership have to be changed. Look at this situation: you have to manage factories in the US, Europe, India, elsewhere. You have to adapt different philosophies, different cultures and ensure that workers and top management, despite coming from different cultures, contribute in just one thing: the company’s growth. Many companies hire top talent without understanding this.

## Would you advise companies to hire leaders internally or externally?

Companies need to ask hard questions: Do we have the correct management tech-

## THE HEAD HUNTER

Alexander Hughes is Europe’s oldest executive search firm, which was founded in London, UK, in 1957. Maurice Rozet, currently the chairman of the supervisory board, has helped Alexander Hughes become operational in 36 countries across four continents

▶ During his career spanning three decades, Rozet has executed assignments for many Fortune 500 companies. In 1990, Rozet acquired Alexander Hughes along with another British recruitment firm, Executive Appointments. The company, thus, became the oldest search consultant in Europe

▶ Prior to this, Rozet was managing director of the European subsidiary of Fruehauf, a US-based manufacturer of transportation and road equipment

THE LAST WORD

niques? Is the board and top management still in sync with the company vision? Are leaders interacting well with one another and the employees? Tackling the top of the pyramid and then percolating the message down is critical. So essentially you do require good leaders. The advantage of developing one’s own resources from inside is that you create a fantastic spirit and loyalty for the company but you run the risk of not challenging after a point. You can be the inside-out manager with the fresh perspective missing somewhere. It is when that challenge becomes pronounced that you can recruit external sources and generate changes and challenge. My advice: Try an in-between solution. Be open to infusing new blood for the sake of the company while continuously developing a strong leadership pipeline. 🐘