



January 2023

# Study Internationalization of Talent

An international research among employers  
and candidates in executive search

**Research among partner  
countries of the International  
Executive Search Federation  
Q4 2022**

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# Introduction

Welcome to the IESF Internationalization of Talent 2022 Study. In this global research we identify the different perceptions, of companies and professionals, about internationalization of talent in the post COVID19 period. During the pandemic, it was demonstrated that the world is ready to adapt and allows professionals to work from anywhere in the world.

This represents a new challenge and growth opportunity for organizations (especially for the Human Resources industry), because now it is necessary to internationalize workforce and identify talent in different countries.

A study on internationalization of talent allows us to highlight the added value of having experts in each country in the post COVID19 period, considering there is a greater need to exchange knowledge in the changing business environment. As IESF we have the advantage of having partners who know the culture of each country. And we also have the advantage of having access to candidates and company leaders in more than 24 countries and partners who know the culture of each country.

International Executive Search Federation (IESF.com) is one of the world's most recognized international executive search associations. Our network of partners is specialized in identifying talent and leadership. With 50 offices in 24 countries, we are globally known as "The Local Experts" because we understand regional markets and their specific needs when it comes to executive recruitment.





# About this research

In the last quarter of 2022 IESF did a comparative study of perceptions on internationalization of talent: both with companies as well as with candidates. The following study analyzes and compares the perception about the internationalization of their work and their projections in this area. Are local organizations looking for international talent? Are foreign companies looking for local executives and others?

IESF managed a quantitative study through self-applied web surveys to (A) employers (decision makers) of relevant companies in each country and (B) candidates or professionals that are available on the market or already working. We asked them similar questions in order to achieve a comparison of interests and results.

This study presents you the findings and the analysis of the results comparatively where we identified several gaps and similarities. The respondents in this research are directors, C-level, senior managers and professionals from different companies and industries, both men and women from different regions and countries. People from 17 countries divided over all 4 continents over the world cooperated in this research.

# Executive Summary

2020 will forever be known as the year that redefined where (and how) we work. Two years later, we wanted to assess the impact beyond borders by analyzing the perception of the internationalization of work from the perspective of candidates and employers.

## Candidates

Even though most of the candidates at Managing / Director level have not worked for a company in another country the last 2 years (75%), 92% of the surveyed candidates think it is possible for a company in another country to interest or hire them. The research shows that the professionals have searched positions in other countries, but did not find an attractive offer (41,6%) or never had the possibility or thought of working for a company in another country (36,7%). It seems this trend in globalization of talent is slowly but certainly increasing from a candidate perspective.

79% of the candidates expect to change jobs within the next two years. So, companies can expect a dynamic candidate marketplace the next couple of years.

Candidates seem very international oriented. They show ambition and are motivated to work internationally.

The main motivators for candidates to change positions are associated with development, culture, and personal life balance. Factors like working remotely from home or anywhere in the world, are becoming more common since COVID. It is no main motivator to change jobs, since this is taken as a post-pandemic benefit by workers. Most candidates are searching for a possible new position are in Operations, Sales & Commercial, Finances and Consultancy. Positions in HR and Marketing & Communications seem very local and culturally specific. The 25% of professionals that have worked for a company in another country the last 2 years are active in General Management, Operations or Sales.

## Employers

When we look at the same questions from a client perspective: 42% of the clients hired talent at Managing / Director level from other countries in the last 2 years. And 58% did not, and only hired locally. The job positions international candidates were hired in are: General Management, Operations, Sales & Commercial and Finance.

The research shows that the main reasons for not hiring international talent were: (1) the companies did not think of the possibility, (2) they do not seem to have the right international partner, they do not reject the idea to hire international, they tried, but failed or (3) they want to but have difficulties in the process.

Most clients do expect a growing need for talent at Managing / Director level within the next 2 years, especially in General Management, Sales and Operations.

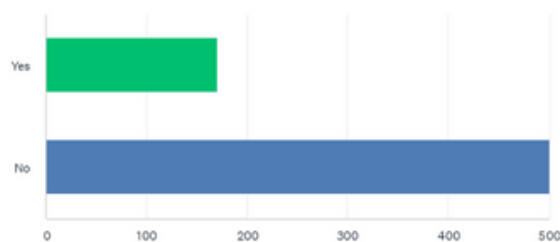
Most important trends organizations are adopting to ensure talent recruitment are: focus on Employer Branding and a perfect candidate journey. Improving the efficiency of the hiring process to make the process faster is also important.

Clients focus on offering the flexibility to work remotely, although candidates already expect that as a basic need. Main initiatives of employers have focused on process efficiency, speed and enabling remote work. However, the development of initiatives that favor work-life balance appears to be of similar importance for both groups.

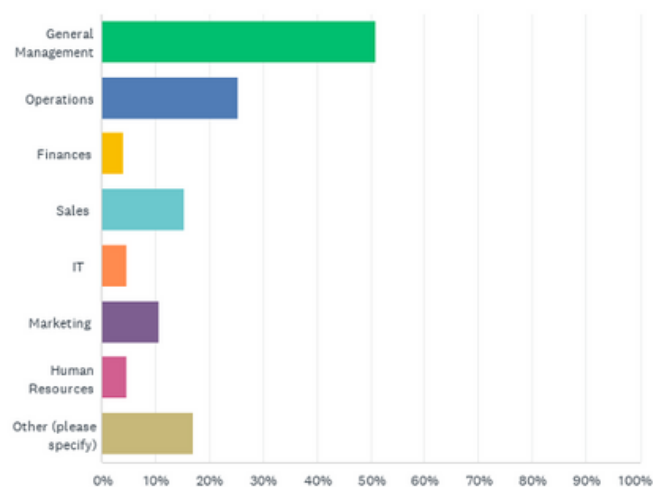
Clients that cooperated in this IESF study are of Executive Director – General Manager level (48%) or HR Director / Manager (46%). Respondents cooperated in this research are in 17 countries worldwide, divided over all 4 continents.

# Results candidate perspective

1. When we ask candidates if they have worked for an organization in another country in the last 2 year: 75% of all candidates says that they did not work for an organization in another country.

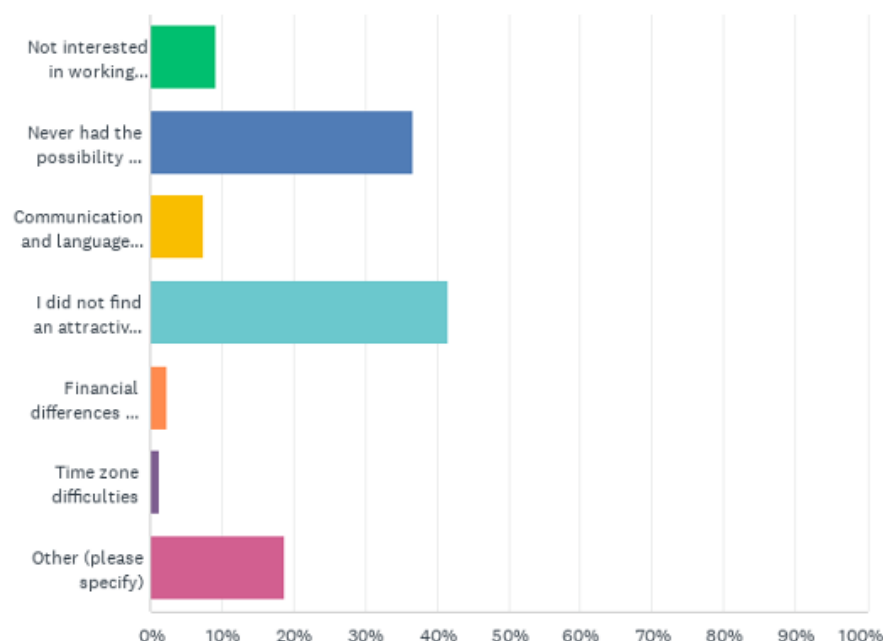


2. For the other 25% of all candidates that answered this question with a yes. They are mostly operating in General Management (51%) or Operations (25%) or Sales (15%).



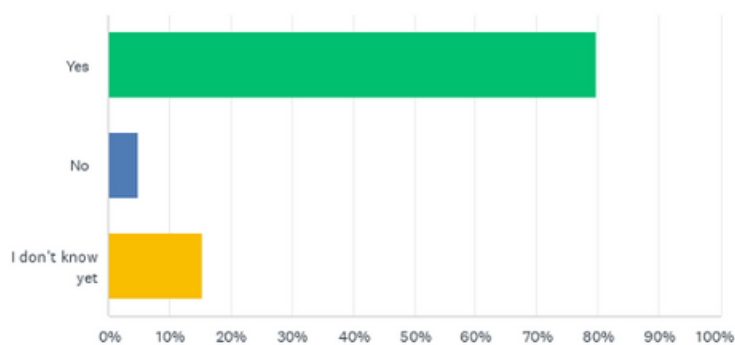
# Results candidate perspective

3. If we dive in deeper, why candidates did not work for a company in another country? What is remarkable, is that from all the candidates that have not worked in another country, most respondents (41%) answered that they have searched but did not find an attractive offer. So, there is willingness from the candidate perspective, but it did not seem to match with local employers offers. The second biggest reason is that candidates never had the possibility to consider a position in another country (37%). They are interested but did not consider it so far. It seems this trend in globalization of talent is slowly but certainly increasing from a candidate perspective. Only a small percentage of all candidates is not interested in working at a company abroad (9%).

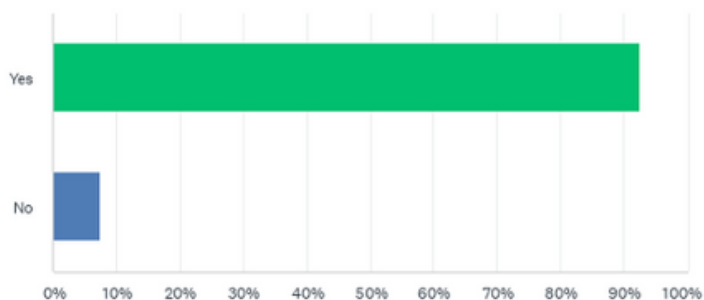


# Results candidate perspective

4. When we ask candidates if they have the ambition or expectation to change jobs within the next two years, the majority responds positively: 79%. So, companies can expect a dynamic candidate marketplace the next couple of years.



5. When we ask candidates if it is possible for an employer from another country to hire them 92% of the candidates thinks it would be possible for a company in another country to interest or hire them. This underlines the questions before and shows that according to candidates the world is becoming your global candidate market.





# Results candidate perspective

Candidates seem very internationally oriented. They show ambition and are motivated to work internationally. And they are also expected to change jobs within the next two years. The research shows a link between candidates from both English and Spanish speaking countries. Candidates from both English and Spanish speaking countries seem more positive to think that companies in other countries (with the same global language) are interested in offering them a job. English and Spanish still seem the most important international languages, which makes a transfer within neighbor countries with the same level of language very accessible.

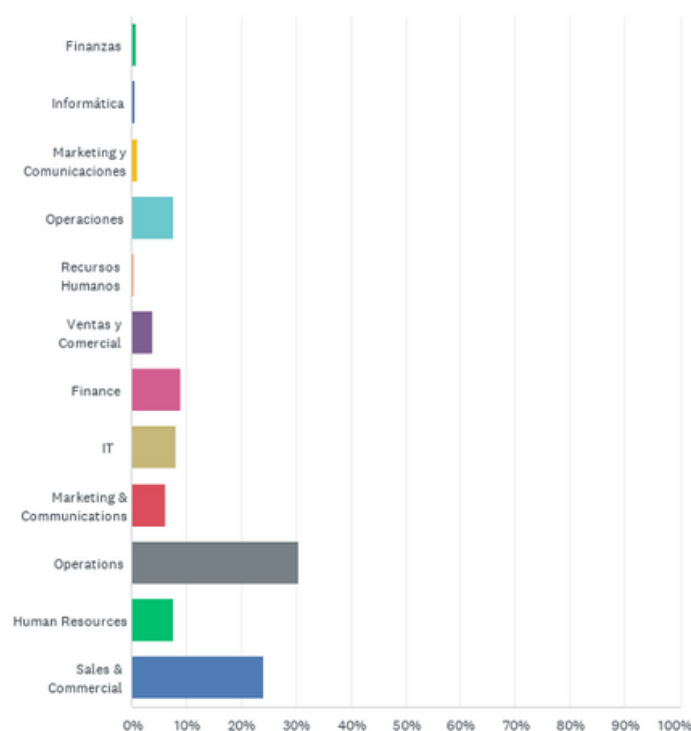
6. Compared to pre-pandemic times, what factors do you believe are important in motivating you to choose a new job? Exciting new challenges is by far the biggest motivator for choosing a new job opportunity (1), far above the salary conditions (8). The main motivators are associated with development, culture, and personal life balance. Factors like working remotely from home or anywhere in the world are becoming more common since COVID, so are no main motivators any more to change jobs.



# Results candidate perspective

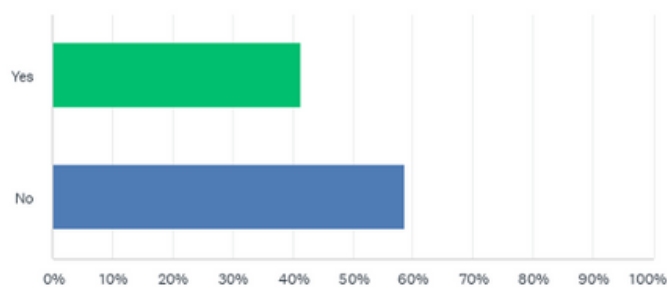
7. The area of development most candidates are searching a possible new position in, are Operations (38%), Sales & Commercial (24%), Finances (8,9%). In the other/comments section of this question another highlighted area of development seems Consultancy. And those are also the industries of which candidates think to find an international position, like mentioned earlier in this research.

Industries that according to this study are most local based, seem to be positions in HR, 24% of the respondents working in that sector mention it is not possible for a company in another country to hire them. And also Marketing & Communications seems very local and culturally specific, 20,7% of the candidates say it is not possible for a company from another country to attract them.

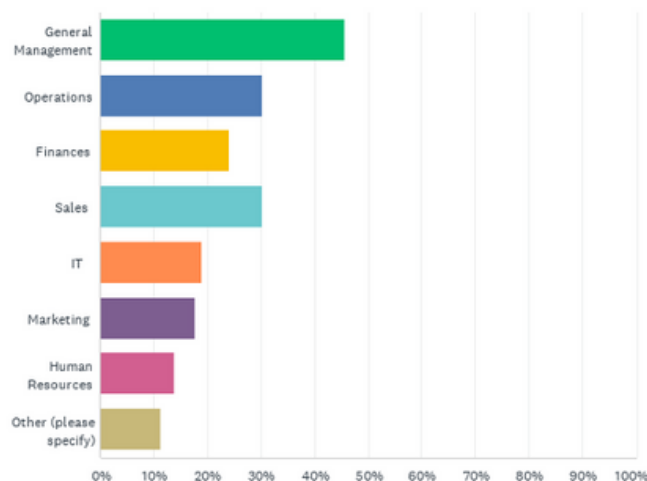


# Results employer perspective

1. In this study we also asked comparative questions to employers to combine the two perspectives into one perspective on Internationalization of Talent. We asked employers: During 2021 / 2022 did you / your company hire talent from another country, for positions at your organization at Managing / Director level? 41% of the clients hired talent from other countries. And 58% did not, only hired locally.

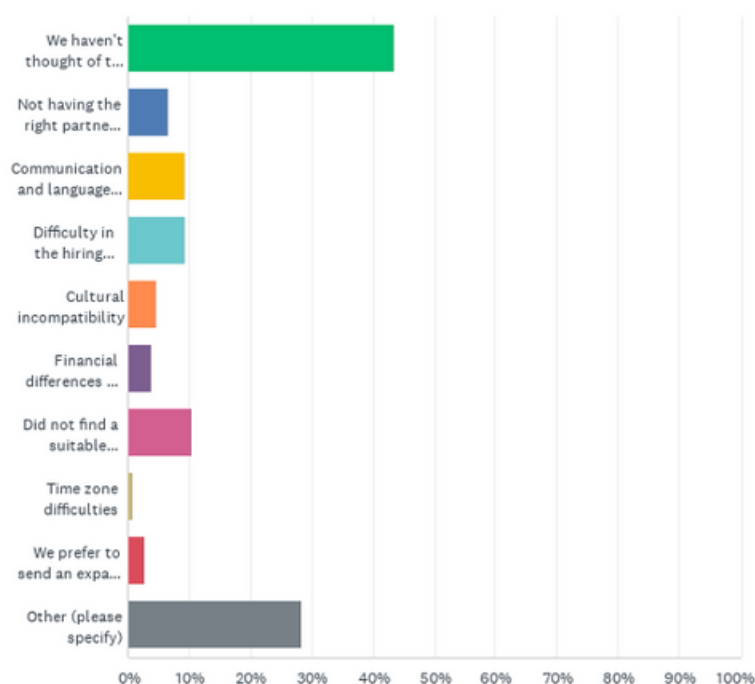


2. The job positions these employers hired international candidates for are in: General Management (45%), Operations (30%), Sales & Commercial (30%) and Finance (24%).



# Results employer perspective

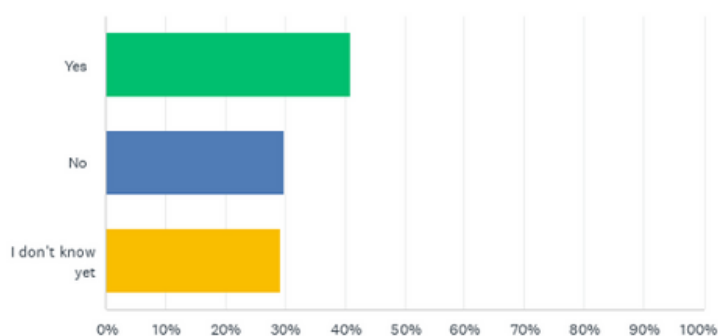
3. Of the 58% of the employers that said they did not hire international talent for a management position, the main reasons are: 43% simply did not think of the possibility to do so. 10% of the employers did try to search international but did not find the suitable candidate from another country. There are also language and communication barriers that make it difficult (9%) and other difficulties in the hiring process (9%). Employers do not seem to have the right international partner (26%). They do not reject the idea to hire international, they tried, but failed. They want to but have difficulties in the process.



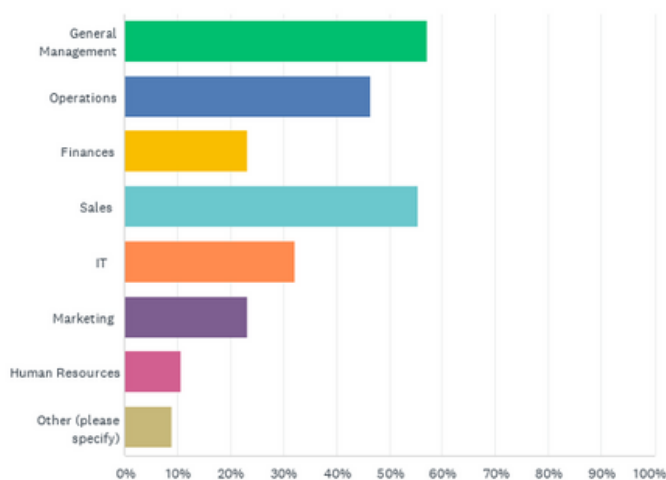


# Results employer perspective

4. When we ask employers what their hiring expectations are. 41% of the employers do expect a growing need for talent at Managing / Director level within the next 2 years. 28% do not know yet. Businesses seem more cautious. Only 29% of the employers do not expect to hire at Managing and Director level the next 2 years.



5. When we ask employers in which area international candidates could be of an added value for their organization, they answer similar as candidates, in: General Management (57%), Sales (55%) and Operations (46%).



# Results employer perspective

6. Compared to the pre-pandemic era, which of the following trends our clients' organizations are adopting to ensure talent recruitment? Most important are focus on Employer Branding and a perfect candidate journey. Also: Improving the efficiency of the hiring process to make the process faster. Employers focus on offering the flexibility to work remotely, although candidates already expect that as a basic need. A fourth important one is initiatives that improve work/life balance for candidates. The opinions are divided whether the focus should be on external Executive Search partners to enhance in-country talent attraction or international talent attraction. So far not all employers have adopted that possibility or have found a trustworthy local and global partner yet. Since the pandemic remote work is here to stay, candidates also count on that. but the flexibility to work remotely from anywhere in the world is not on the agenda for international managerial positions from an employer perspective.

The main motivators for candidates are associated with development, culture, and personal life balance. While employers are also moving in this direction, their main initiatives have focused on process efficiency, speed and enabling remote work. However, the development of initiatives that favor work-life balance appears to be of similar importance for both groups.

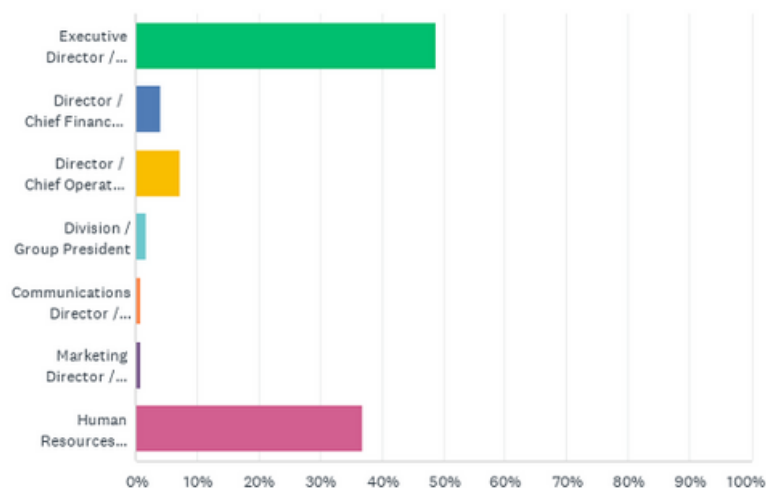
## **What factors are your organization adopting to ensure talent recruitment?**

(\*) sum of responses marked as "very relevant" and "relevant".

- 1.- Focus on Employer Branding and a perfect candidate journey (110\*)
- 2.- Improving the efficiency of the hiring process to make it faster (107\*)
- 3.- Flexibility to work remotely from the same country (98\*)
- 4.- Initiatives that Improve work-life balance (89\*)
- 5.- Modifying incentives to make offers more attractive (88\*)
- 6.- External Executive search partners to enhance in-country talent attraction (63\*)
- 7.- External Executive search partners to enhance talent attraction in other countries (49\*)
- 8.- Flexibility to work remotely from anywhere in the world (46\*)

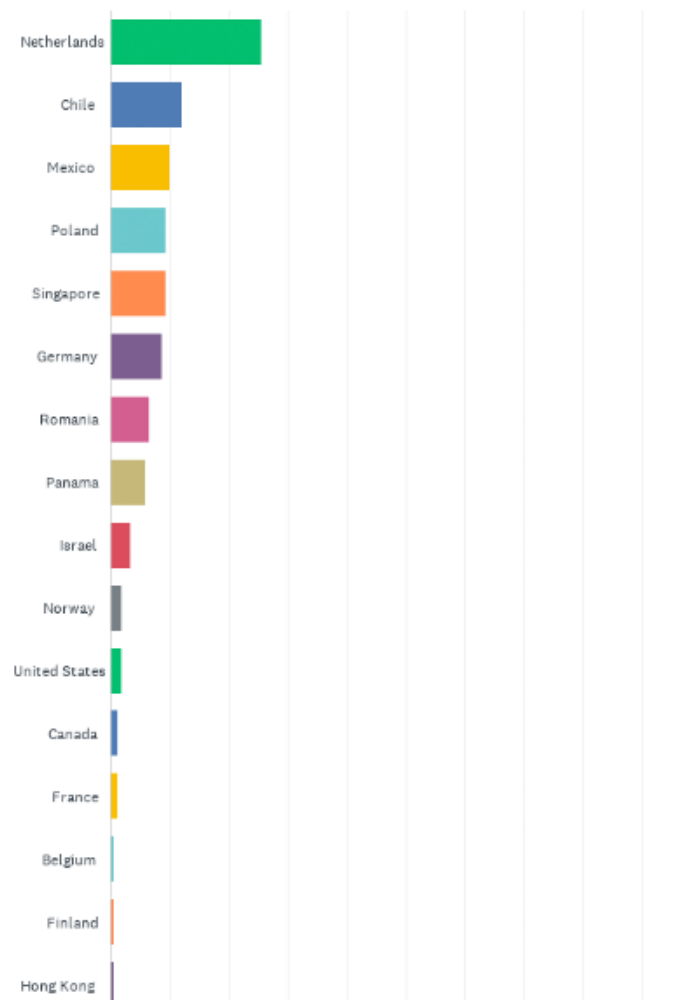
# Results employer perspective

7. Employers that cooperated in this IESF study are of Executive Director – General Manager level (48%) or HR Director / Manager (46%).



# Results employer perspective

8. Their companies are located from all over the world. But to highlight the top countries participating in this research. It shows:





# About IESF

## Expertise

International Executive Search Federation is one of the world's most recognized international executive search groups / associations. Identifying talent and leadership in 50 offices and 24 countries, we are globally known as "The Local Experts" because we understand regional markets and their specific needs when it comes to executive recruitment. We offer a fully customized, local approach to search projects, based on culture, regional economics and the local candidate marketplace.

## History

IESF was founded in 2002 by partners in Asia and Europe with a clear vision of growing a Global Group, unhindered by corporate restrictions and rigidity and clients' growing needs.

**IESF partners** are business leaders experienced in addressing the requirements of growing businesses around the world.

IESF has rapidly proliferated around the globe as clients demanded executive search and leadership in new planetary markets and industries.

IESF now consists of 24 partners and continues to grow by meeting client needs in every corner of the globe.



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