

# International Management Assessment

## What is the International Management Assessment (IMA)

The IMA is a development centre tool designed to assist organisations in the identification and preparation of candidates for international assignments. It was developed in conjunction with Théry International Management (TIM) in France. The IMA can be run in both English and French, either for native speakers of those languages or for those who operate at a high level in one of those languages.

It can be used at an early stage in a person's career to identify their potential for an international role, thus helping to create a talent pool of future international managers. Or it can be used as a diagnostic tool to assist in the preparation of people for specific assignments.

## Why use the IMA?

Figures based on research into the risks and costs of expatriation show the following:

- average expatriate failure rates of 20 – 30%
- the cost of a failed assignment can be more than €1 million
- over 60% of companies surveyed had experienced an expatriate failure

## Questions a company should ask before sending employees abroad

Many managers are selected for an international assignment based either on their success in their home country, on their personal wish to go abroad or purely on the basis of availability.

But to increase the chance of the expatriation being successful, a company should be able to answer the following questions.

- On what basis are people selected and prepared for international assignments?
- How do we identify people who are more likely to succeed in a particular foreign posting?
- How can we assess the strengths and weaknesses of different candidates for international assignments?
- Are some people more suitable for certain parts of the world than others?
- How do we decide on appropriate training and development to prepare people for future international management positions?

The answer to these questions can be supplied by putting candidates for international assignments through the IMA development centre.

## Objectives of the IMA

- to identify styles of working, approaches to team work and problem solving and general attitude in relation to different cultures around the world
- to evaluate aptitudes, strengths and weaknesses for international assignments
- to assess suitability for assignments to specific countries
- to highlight areas for future training and development

### **How does the IMA work?**

The IMA is designed to be used with four people at one time, though other numbers are possible. The participants are observed and assessed by two consultants. The IMA can be divided into a number of stages:

- There is one full day of simulations, role plays, case studies, in-basket exercises, group discussions and an in-depth structured interview with each participant. The four participants are observed by two consultants
- This is followed by a detailed analysis by the two consultants of everything the participants said during the exercises and how they behaved. This takes at least two days.
- A profile of each participant is then drawn up, detailing their aptitudes, strengths and weakness for an international assignment. A draft report with recommendations for personal and professional development is also prepared
- An individual feedback session is then held, when each participant meets one of the consultants. This takes about 3 – 4 hours, and serves both as feedback and coaching about the participant's strengths and weaknesses for an international assignment.
- Finally, there is a meeting between the participant, the consultant and the company's international mobility manager or equivalent, to discuss the results of the IMA and the action plan for the participant's professional development

### **The benefits of the IMA**

To summarise, the IMA has a number of key benefits:

- it assists in the identification of potential and future international managers
- it helps in managing the career development of those identified as future international managers
- it aids in the selection or confirmation of candidates for specific overseas assignments
- it acts as a diagnostic tool to define areas for training and development
- it helps the company protect its investment in key personnel

For further information about the IMA, please contact Adrian Pilbeam of LTS Training and Consulting through Transcultural Synergy.

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