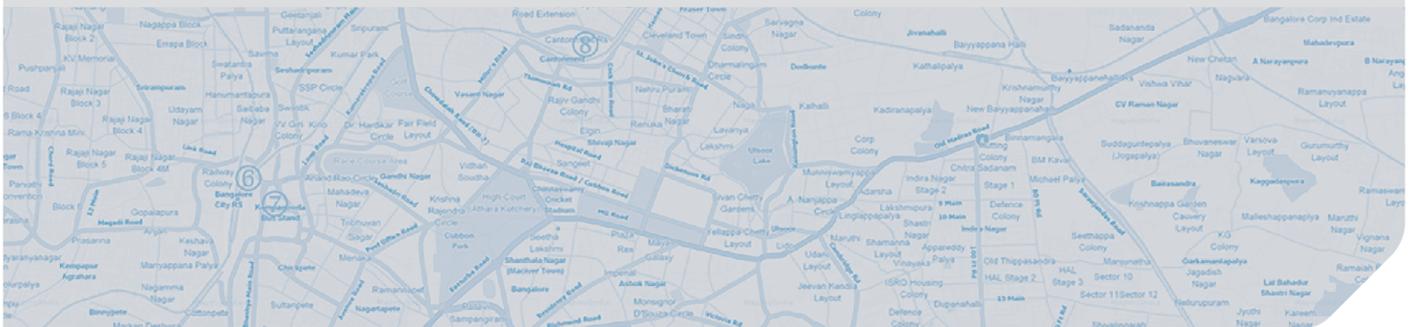


# DRIVING GLOBAL READINESS: A ROAD MAP



Making your talent global-ready is key to your organization's future. A big part of global readiness lies in language and cultural skills. Knowledge of another language and culture builds bridges to customers and colleagues, and studies show that the ability to connect delivers measurable business impact. Building effective language and cultural learning programs is not difficult, but first HR must uncover the need – which often remains hidden from plain view.

## What's Inside:

1. Things we don't know (but probably should)
2. An opportunity waiting to be seized
3. The big five business impacts of language and cultural barriers
4. Top three human capital impacts of language and cultural skills
5. Global readiness training pays off
6. Making your workforce global-ready
  - a. Global Readiness Talent Mapping
  - b. Getting Leadership Buy-In
  - c. Infusing Global Readiness into Employee Development Plans
  - d. Taking Action
7. Tools & Further Reading



## Things we don't know (but probably should)

In an episode of *Undercover Boss*, Rick Tigner, the president of Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates visits the vineyard and is shocked to discover that his workers do not fully speak English<sup>1</sup>. Tigner was no newcomer; he was a 20-year veteran of the winery who inadvertently discovered one of the main issues about language problems: they are often hidden from the senior management. One can easily imagine that if Tigner had been on an official tour to meet vineyard workers, instead of being undercover, the local management would have picked a worker fluent in English to tell him about the operations. An understandable move, but one that would have hidden the language issues that existed in the firm.

We may think that because people somehow manage to get by despite language and cultural barriers, that it is not a real problem. However, there is a cost in operational efficiency, a cost in team cohesion, and a cost in safety. If we can improve efficiency, cohesion, and safety by addressing language and cultural skills then we will improve business results.

It is natural for senior leaders to think "I haven't heard that language is a problem so it probably isn't one." As Tigner learned, you can be in the company a long time and be unaware of the issue. Indeed, language and cultural gaps abound in global corporations. In a study by IDG Research Services (see box) approximately 90% of business line leaders surveyed said their teams face language proficiency challenges, and have employees whose skills are insufficient.

HR leaders may be surprised by these numbers, because they are likely not hearing them internally. There is a good reason for that: when it comes to solving the problem and



closing the gap, most business leaders are acting on their own. In fact, more than six out of ten either address the problem themselves by seeking out a training solution for their team, or they involve a more senior level decision-maker within their functional area. They are not talking to human resources. A mere third take the issue to their HR department. In some regions, such as Asia, this number is even lower (just 12% in China).

For HR, the hunt for deficits in global readiness skills should be a natural part of training needs analysis or development planning. As with all training needs, HR needs to uncover what language and cultural skills are missing, assess the impact that has on the organization, and determine how to close the gap. See *Making your workforce global-ready* on page 9 for tools to help you.

<sup>1</sup>Fastenberg, D. (2012, January 30). Vintage 'Undercover Boss' As Winemaker Bottles Up His Impulse To Fire. Retrieved December 22, 2014, from <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2012/01/30/winemaker-struggles-boosts-english-instruction-undercover-boss/>

### IDG Research Services: Business Line Leader Language Communication Survey

**Released:** January 2015

**Fielded:** Dec. 4-17, 2014

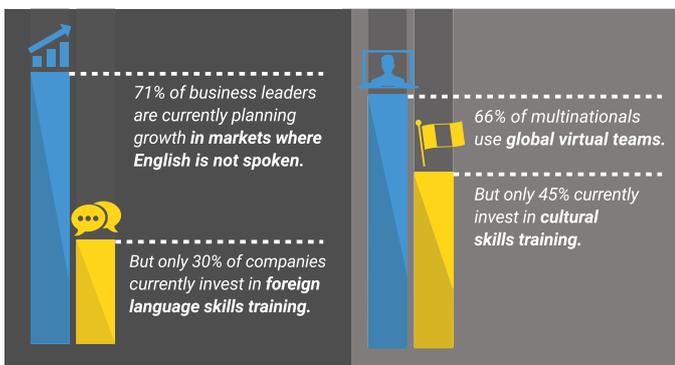
**Key findings:** 90% of respondents said their team faced language proficiency issues. Only 1/3 go to HR with these issues.

**Audience:** 300 business line leaders. C-level executives: 16%, Senior Management: 24%, Mid-level Management: 45%, Entry-level Management: 15%

**Geographic distribution:** 33% North America, 33% Europe, 17% South America, 17% Asia

## An opportunity waiting to be seized

Look up the transit information for the London underground and you find information in any one of 15 languages. Why? It's because we live in a global world. Whether you are doing business internationally or dealing with people in your own country who have a different native tongue, language is an issue. London underground's customers speak many languages, so the organization has to as well. London's situation is not unusual. Companies doing business at home and abroad are experiencing more interactions with customers, partners, and co-workers who hail from a diverse set of cultures and languages.



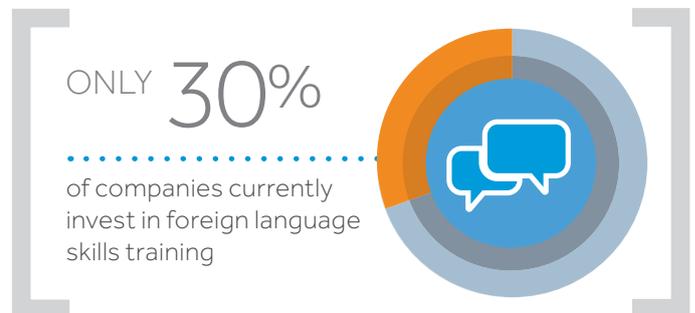
Organizations looking abroad for growth are increasingly the norm; indeed, 71% of business leaders plan growth in markets where English—the most common international business language—is not currently spoken. And they are doing so for good reason: annual consumption in emerging markets is projected to hit \$30 trillion by 2025.

Yet, despite the clear opportunities available in emerging markets, linguistic and cultural skills gaps remain wide. A crisis in Europe is evident—a McKinsey report found 27% of entry-level positions vacant as employers in 8 European economies couldn't find employees with the skills needed. The cultural chasms between traditional Western economic powers and the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russian, India and China) can be gigantic. It is in large part for those reasons that The Institute for the Future (ITF) and the University of Phoenix Research Institute's Future

Work Skills 2020 Report predicts that cross-cultural competency will be one of the top five work skills professionals need to develop to make their organizations succeed.<sup>2</sup>

Skills gaps are an HR issue and HR leaders generally are aware that building the capacity of the workforce to tackle barriers to effective communication is key to success in the global economy. So why is language often overlooked? One reason is that building language capabilities is a long-term issue and unfortunately, like other long-term issues, can get set aside as we fight short-term fires. In fact, humans generally are prone to short-termism in decision making. For example, studies show given a choice between \$10 today and \$11 tomorrow people tend to grab the cash today.<sup>3</sup>

If HR leaders can move beyond this short-termism there is an opportunity to steal a march on the competition. According to a 2014 Human Capital Media Study (HCM) of global HR leaders, only 30% of companies currently invest in foreign language skills training and only 45% currently invest in cultural training—this means there is a chance to get ahead of the vast majority who have not started yet. One tactic to get started is to fold global readiness training into the overall communication skills training program. The same HCM study showed 78% of companies already invest in communication skills training, and an additional 16% plan to invest in the next twelve months. It is often easier to build on an established training program than launch a new one.



You can find out more about the linguistic and cultural skills gaps within your own organization by completing our [Global Readiness Talent Map](#) in the section: Making Your Workforce Global-Ready.

<sup>2</sup>The Institute for the Future (ITF) and the University of Phoenix Research Institute's Future Work Skills 2020 Report (2011)

<sup>3</sup>Study: Brain battles itself over short-term rewards, long-term goals. (2004, October 14). Retrieved December 22, 2014, from <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/news/04/q4/1014-brain.htm>

# The Big Five: Business impacts of language and cultural barriers

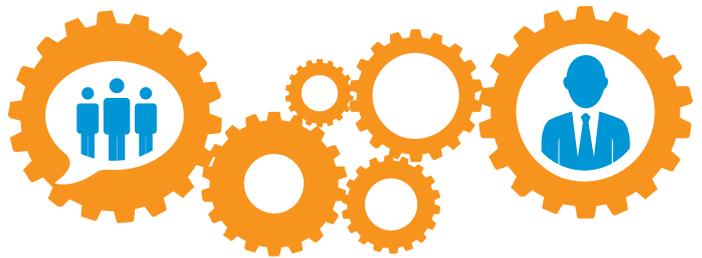
Andy Chaves, senior manager, global diversity and inclusion for Marriott International says "The staffing models of today are leaner and leaner. It's a challenging world out there. There are a lot of competitors. As we improve our efficiencies, we can do better business and faster. Improving communication among our associates is one of the key opportunities we see."

Why is there so much room for improvement? Chaves explains that employees often do not share the same first language; he says "When you have limited staff at a hotel, and you can help them develop language proficiencies to communicate with other staff in their language instead of written notes or hand signals, that's powerful."

Marriott International focuses on language first and foremost because of its business impact. In any business that operates globally, deals with a diverse customer base, or employs people of many nationalities there are five main business drivers for global readiness training.

## 1. Internal productivity

You may have had the experience of going into a store and a clerk tells you that the inventory system says they have a product, but no one can find it because it has been misplaced. This is called a phantom stock-out. It drives retailers crazy. Employees waste time looking, a product goes unsold, and a customer walks away unhappy. This is just one of the innumerable operational problems that go on daily in organizations. Even something as seemingly simple as putting a product on the right shelf can be hard to get right, and even harder to get right when language barriers or cultural nuances prevent staff members from fully comprehending what they need to do.



Business leaders are looking to drive greater organizational agility, flexibility, and productivity by improving alignment and engagement. If the organization fails to do this, the risk is loss of productivity—which translates to a host of problems: from failure of getting products to market on time to missing targets on your margins. Operational missteps can kill productivity, yet HR is often unaware of the root cause of operational problems (just as the vineyard president was unaware of the detailed operations of the vineyard). If language problems are dragging down productivity then HR needs to detect the problem and act to solve it.

### The view from employers

"Employers place a high value on intercultural skills in the workplace and associate having workers with strong intercultural skills with business benefits, such as increased productivity and sales. They also associate a lack of intercultural skills with business risks, such as miscommunication and team conflict."

**British Council, Ipsos, and Booz Allen Hamilton  
Culture at Work: The value of intercultural skills in  
the workplace (2013)**

## How global readiness training impacts PRODUCTIVITY:

Building language and cultural skills reduces operational missteps and time lost. In fact, 70% of respondents from the 2015 Rosetta Stone® Business Language Impact Study (see box) said using language training has made them more productive in their work with teams, partners, and vendors who speak the language they are learning<sup>4</sup>. More than half of employees using language training reported saving at least three hours per week on the completion of tasks involving stakeholders who speak the language they are learning. More broadly, a study by the British Council, Booz Allen Hamilton, and IPSOS reinforced the importance of cultural skills. The report said: "Employers are under strong pressure to find employees who are not only technically proficient, but also culturally astute and able to thrive in a global work environment."<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Collaboration

A case study on Ford Motor Company in the People and Strategy Journal notes that the days of doing everything out of Detroit have long since passed; the company says "...an IT project might be run largely out of Mexico with a supervisor in India."<sup>6</sup> For that kind of global team to work effectively, team members need language skills and cultural training. In fact, a survey of 600 randomly selected employees of multinational corporations found that 64% of respondents said language was a problem on virtual teams, and perhaps is one reason why so many teams (40%) were only somewhat successful or not successful.<sup>7</sup>

## How global readiness training impacts COLLABORATION:

There are multiple mechanisms by which language and cultural training aid team collaboration. The most obvious one is to improve the language skills of people who do not speak the common business language (usually English in global firms); a second mechanism is to create an opportunity to make a little small-talk with a colleague in his or her native tongue; even being able to ask about the



weather is helpful in making all team members feel included and build the trust needed to make teams collaborate successfully. Cultural training, as well as language training, enables team members to become more sensitive to the difficulties non-native speakers may face, and are thus better able to communicate

with them. If your organization has virtual teams, then HR needs to look at the impact language training would have on collaboration.

## 3. Customer Retention

Prioritizing customer retention means not just enhancing the quality of your products and services, but also sharpening your organization's global understanding of your customers' needs. If you fail to do this, you risk losing sales to competitors. No company can afford to continually replace lost customers and expect to still make a profit. One study by Bain & Company found that a 5% improvement in customer retention increased profits between 25 and 85%. Understanding your customers' needs means being able to speak to them in their language, and with the cultural nuance and sensitivity they expect. According to the 2015 IDG study, 64% of business leaders reported that employee-customer interactions are the number one language challenge their organizations face. In another recent survey, 89% of business executives felt that customer loyalty would increase if those customers were served and supported in their native language. In an increasingly global marketplace, this has implications on the skills of your workforce.

<sup>4</sup>Rosetta Stone Business, 2015 Rosetta Stone Business Language Impact Study (January, 2015)

<sup>5</sup>British Council, Culture at Work: The value of intercultural skills in the workplace (2013)

<sup>6</sup>Creelman, D. Globalization and Talent Strategies. People & Strategy. Sept. 1, 2014)

<sup>7</sup>RW3 CultureWizard, The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams: Virtual Teams Survey Report (2010)

## 2015 Rosetta Stone Business Language Impact Study

**Conducted by:** January 2015 | Rosetta Stone Business

**Released:** January 2015

**Fielded:** Nov. 7 – Dec. 5, 2014

**Audience:** 1,867 corporate language learners from 311 companies

**Geographic distribution:** 46% North America, 21% Europe, 13% Asia-Pacific, 12% Central/South America, 7% Middle East/Africa, 1% Australia/New Zealand

## How global readiness training impacts CUSTOMER RETENTION:

For many organizations, customer retention is the main business driver for global readiness training. Retailers, the hospitality industry, and health care are all places where organizations are likely to run into customers speaking a wide range of languages and representing diverse cultures. Jez Langhorn, chief people officer at McDonald's UK and Northern Europe, said "Soft skills like communication and teamwork are incredibly important to our business because of the impact they can have on our customers' experience.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, 57% of respondents to the 2015 Rosetta Stone<sup>®</sup> Business survey said that as an outcome of their language training, they are now capable of serving a larger range of customers.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, intercultural training can help avoid damaging faux pas such as calling a Japanese client by their first name or using gender-biased language in the US. Looking at the customer base is an important clue as to whether language and cultural training would help with customer retention.



## 4. Market Expansion

Growth opportunities in emerging markets far outnumber those in developed economies. Over the next few years, roughly 70 percent of world growth will come from emerging markets, with China and India accounting for 40 percent of that growth. By 2025, annual consumption in emerging markets is projected to hit \$30 trillion. Without a workforce able to speak the languages of those countries or segments, these potential new customers are effectively out of reach.

## How global readiness training impacts MARKET EXPANSION:

If you are moving into new markets, that means your teams may need to work in close collaboration with new colleagues who possess very different language skills and cultural constructs. When a large Japanese firm was searching the American market for acquisitions they had a professional interpreter to help, yet the Japanese executives would still often leap into English, finding that the direct interaction was more valuable than the more accurate words an interpreter could provide. The executives did not need to be fully fluent in a second language for their skills to be of use. Upskilling employees with enough linguistic and cultural knowledge to build trusting relationships will help you grow a sustainable business on the ground.

## 5. Safety

Effective communication plays a critical role ensuring workplace safety, especially in heavy industry. Safety is so important that companies routinely include safety data in their reporting to investors and the board. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has estimated that 25% of job-site accidents can be attributed to language barriers.

### How global readiness training impacts SAFETY:

Robert Jackson, Organizational Development Manager at DPR Construction, Inc. said: "Safety is a part of our DNA. It's incredibly important to us, and safety starts with communication. When we talk to people about language learning we often start with being able to hold each other accountable for our safety expectations." To help achieve the goal of an injury-free workplace, DPR introduced language training so that workers born in other countries could improve their English skills and operations staff could learn more Spanish. The language training contributed to a 35% decrease in their injury incidence rate. Top three human capital impacts of language and cultural skills development

Strategic HR leaders should focus on the five direct business impact issues first; however they also need to consider the impact on human capital; which in turn has an indirect, but powerful, business impact as well. We've identified three key issues:

<sup>8</sup><http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2015/01/15/reputational-problem-remains-for-soft-skills-worth-163-88bn-to-uk-employers.aspx>  
<sup>9</sup>Rosetta Stone Business (2015)

# Top three human capital impacts of language and cultural skills development

Strategic HR leaders should focus on the five direct business impact issues first; however they also need to consider the impact on human capital; which in turn has an indirect, but powerful, business impact as well. We've identified three key issues:



## 1. Development

Providing strong workforce development is critical. Such investments boost morale and loyalty among employees. One survey found that opportunities for personal growth are the top reason that people took their current job, and also the top reason they've stayed—even ahead of salary and work-life balance. For companies that think these discretionary investments are difficult to justify—even in a sluggish economy—they should consider the alternative: replacing employees who leave. Estimates put this cost at 50 percent to 150 percent of the person's annual salary (not to mention the disruption to the business caused by high turnover, or the possibility that you can't find a replacement who's as good).

Top talent is hungry for consistent development, and language and cultural knowledge are meaningful skills that employees will take with them for a lifetime. 81 percent of respondents from the 2015 Rosetta Stone® Business survey said that because they were provided access to language training, they feel their company takes an interest in their development. This is meaningful to companies like DPR Construction, which has been ranked in the top 50 general contractors in the US for the past 10 years. The firm lives by its mantra of "Who we build is as important as what we build." The company has worked hard to build a culture of learning and language training that supports that need. Employees crave development and it is a double win for DPR if they give employees something they want while fostering that spirit of continuous improvement. And language training works.

Jackson asked a manager about whether a Spanish speaker studying English had improved his skills, the manager replied: "Oh yes, it's night and day; and it makes you want to help him grow when you see his commitment to learning."

## 2. Attraction and retention

According to the IDG study of business line leaders, employee retention was reported as the number one goal of companies' long-term people strategy. The offer of global readiness training also supports attraction and retention. Chaves of Marriott reports "It's about attraction and recruitment. We heard associates telling others at bus stops or in their communities, 'Wow, Marriott is teaching English. Why don't you apply there!' We had no idea that word of mouth was going to help us with recruitment." This anecdotal information is backed up with data. Chaves reports: "We've done surveys, and associates have told us that they are proud of working for a company that invests in them by offering language development programs."

HR leaders should take note of the enthusiasm for language training that Marriott has discovered; it may be an important part of the value proposition that attracts and retains your employees.

## 3. Engaging millennials

Millennials 'get' the need to be global, a study by PwC showed that 66% feel they need to gain international experience to further their careers. They also want to get more training; the Deloitte Millennial Survey reported that 75% of millennials believe organizations could do more to develop future leaders.

Research shows that millennials are particularly impacted by language training. A study on millennials showed that only 46% felt their previous language training adequately prepared them for the workforce. This mattered because 69% found language training was relevant to their job duties, and 80% felt more positive towards the company for having provided it to them. If millennials are a big part of your workforce, then language and cultural training may be an effective engagement tool.

<sup>10</sup>PwC Millennials at work: Reshaping the workplace (2011)

<sup>11</sup>Deloitte. Big demands and high expectations: The Deloitte Millennial Survey (January, 2014)

<sup>12</sup>Farley, J. Rosetta Stone Business Language Impact Survey - Millennial Survey Results (2015)

# Global readiness training pays off

The business and human capital impacts of language training seem compelling, but what does the data show? The 2015 Rosetta Stone® Business Language Impact Study, conducted among more than 1,800 employees from over 300 companies on 6 continents, revealed some intriguing results.<sup>13</sup>

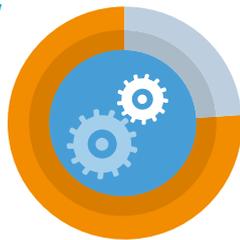


Here's a window into what your employees are thinking and saying about language training and global readiness.

## PERFORMANCE

76%  
SAID

language training helps them be more effective at their jobs.



## CONFIDENCE

75%  
SAID

learning a language has made them more confident in their work with international colleagues and partners.



## PRODUCTIVITY

MORE THAN  
1/2

of learners save at least 3 hours per week on the completion of tasks involving stakeholders who speak the language they are learning.



## CUSTOMER SERVICE

57%  
SAID

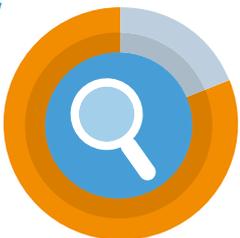
their language training has enabled them to serve a larger range of customers.



## DEVELOPMENT

81%  
OF LEARNERS

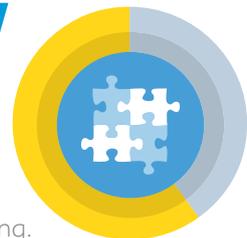
say that access to language training makes them feel that their company is taking an interest in their development.



## ENGAGEMENT

66%  
FEEL

more engaged in their work as a result of language training.



<sup>13</sup>Rosetta Stone Business (2015)

# Making your workforce global-ready

As we have discussed, studies show that in today's global world, language and cultural training can have a positive impact on business and human capital factors. However, the need for such training is often hidden. It is up to HR to first uncover where language training is needed and then rollout a program to address the skills gap. Here are three steps on the path to making your workforce global-ready:

1. Global readiness talent mapping
2. Getting leadership buy-in
3. Infusing global readiness into employee development plans



## 1. GLOBAL READINESS TALENT MAPPING

Former German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, famously stated: "If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. But if I'm buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen."

To be successful in the global marketplace, the skills of your talent have to match the needs and expectations of your customers. This is key not just for sales and customer support; when your organization supports clients abroad all facets of the organization are impacted by language and cultural barriers. Everyone from accounting to operations to legal communicates and is therefore affected by language barriers. Your organization needs to be prepared to evolve as your customer base evolves.

So what should you do first? DeShaun Wise, Director of HR and Global HR Business Partner at Rosetta Stone, recommends you begin with an internal analysis. Begin by compiling your company's short- and medium-term goals. Then look at the countries and regions to which your operations and customer base will be expanding over that same time period. Identify the linguistic and cultural competencies your current workforce possesses via a [short global readiness survey](#). Do they match your customers' cultures and languages? Next, [map out the global readiness skills](#) your workforce will need in 1, 3, and 5 years based on your goals and expected growth. Do the linguistic and cultural skills of your workforce map to the composition of your customers and operational locations for that time period? Remember that language and cultural skills are not developed overnight. Both take time.

Complete this mapping exercise, and while you're at it, get a sense for who has an appetite for this training right now.

Download your [Global Readiness Talent Survey Template](#)

Download your [Global Readiness Talent Map Template](#)



## 2. GETTING LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

Leadership buy-in is essential to any organizational initiative. To do this, you naturally need to tie the initiative to business results. Creating a Global Readiness Talent Map is the first step

in building your business case. The second is understanding the gains to be made in creating a centralized global readiness initiative. There are two main gains to this approach:

**Benefit from economies of scale:** As we've seen, a mere third of business leaders take their language and cultural training needs to their HR department. That means two-thirds seek out a training solution on their own. This one-off approach to training purchases is detrimental to cost effectiveness, as it incurs significant waste by individuals paying top dollar for their training program. Combining demand not only yields hard cost savings, it also yields soft ones, too, such as time required for contracting, procurement, etc. A large European-based telecom company recently conducted an internal audit and realized they were spending a whopping \$5.3M annually on language training worldwide. By streamlining their approach and taking advantage of economies of scale, they slashed 66% of their spend, thus saving their organization \$3.5M per year.

**Visibility through tracking and reporting:** Peter Drucker said: "What gets measured gets done." Department heads or individual contributors seeking out their own training solutions on the company's dime can pose a major problem: a lack of visibility on results and zero accountability. Software and courses meant for consumers or single users rarely come with any kind of reporting. This reporting is critical in order to ensure the company's investment is being put to good use. Instilling enterprise-specific solutions with this reporting means you will be able to track usage, congratulate and encourage high-performers, and right-size low-performers, thus optimizing your investment.



### 3. INFUSING GLOBAL READINESS INTO EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Finally, HR should leverage the employee development process to bring global readiness into the organization from the ground up.

Central to the goal of employee growth is the development plan. In many organizations, the supervisor steers the development process, but in others it's the employee. There are good reasons for both approaches, and most organizations have aspects of both in their development plan process. Here are the reasons why both sides of the coin are crucial in a comprehensive employee development strategy, and how you can inject global readiness preparation into the development process no matter who leads.

#### Employee-driven plans

Employees are often asked about their strengths and weaknesses early in the conversation, before the supervisor weighs in with their insights. There is a reason for this: no one knows the successes and struggles of the employee better than the employee. Another reason for employee input is to give them an opportunity to voice their career aspirations. They often know how to move up in the company before HR or their supervisor knows how to move them up. They can tell you what support they need to accomplish those goals and how you can help. It's important that supervisors communicate the company's plans for growth and development with their employees so employees can, in turn, think creatively and critically about how they want to be a part of that growth. This will give them a chance to anticipate the skills they will need to bolster to give them access to global opportunities.

#### Supervisor-driven plans

The supervisor or manager often knows things that the employee doesn't, including upcoming opportunities that have not yet been publicized to the rank-and-file. The goal of the supervisor-driven development process is to make sure employees will be prepared to meet the upcoming business goals of the organization. That might mean an imminent growth spurt (requiring more supervisors and managers, and hence more leadership and cultural training), expansion into new and emerging markets (potentially requiring language learning), entering a new vertical, or helping the employee compete with those being absorbed in an upcoming merger or acquisition.

The goal is to find a balance between the employee's wants and needs and those of the organization. That balance is crucial to retaining employees with great potential. It's why constructing a working development plan requires insight from both. Don't forget that development plans are only successful when managers are coaches and can convert them into productive and forward-thinking conversations.

#### Focused Development Plan

To help guide supervisors and employees through this process, you should begin by adopting a development plan tool and discussion process that prioritizes global readiness. Several top global companies implement plan structures that feature SMART development goals (SMART = specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound). Here is a Focused Development Plan template you can use in your organization.

Download your [Focused Development Plan Template](#)



### Tips to share with employees for implementing their development plan:

- Take accountability for your development
- Integrate development and learning activities into your daily activities
- Stay focused on your development priorities
- Seek feedback and coaching from your leader and others
- Periodically reflect and adjust your plan when needed

### Tips to share with employees for creating successful development conversations:

- Prepare for the discussion—clearly define the purpose and the expected outcome of the meeting
- Share data that you've gathered
- Share your assumptions
- Be receptive and appreciate of feedback
- Gain alignment

### Tips for HR

If business leaders need to be led through the likely reasons for improving language and cultural skills, then you can include some 'primer' questions, such as "Does this employee work with customers who have a different first language?", "Does this employee work on teams with colleagues who hail from different cultural backgrounds?" and "Does the employee work in an area where safety is a priority? If so, do their co-workers speak a different first language?"

## Taking action

Once you have established there is a need for language training, you have gained leadership buy-in, and you have begun to infuse your development conversations with the theme of global readiness, then you should create the capability to address that need. The first step is getting a sense for the various language and cultural training options and the associated costs. Secondly, you need to build the business case using some of the tools above to secure the funding. Finally, you need to select a vendor and move into implementation.

It is beyond the scope of this guide to talk about vendor selection and implementation, however as with many training products, the cost and quality from different vendors varies widely and higher cost does not necessarily mean higher quality. Do your homework and choose a reputable vendor, one who not only provides an excellent suite of training solutions, but who also has the expertise to guide you on implementation and on-going administration.

Among all the types of training in the corporate learning ecosystem, there is something unusual about language and cultural training. You rarely find people taking a course in logistics or accounting for fun, but all over the world you find people pursuing various flavors of global readiness training for the sheer joy of experiencing a new language or culture. With language and cultural training we find the surprising intersection of the organization's need to be global-ready and the employee's desire to reach out and connect to people with a different background. Global readiness learning is all about building bridges between people and that benefits both business and employees. For further reading and investigation:

