

Graduate Employability in the Global Labour Market

Global Employers Speak – What Makes a Graduate Employable (Track 2.3)

INTERACTIVE PANEL SESSION FEATURING:

- Abang Azahari Abang Zen, **Shell Malaysia** Talent & Resourcing Manager
- Debbie Chan, Campus Marketing Advisor **Shell Malaysia**
- Robin Buckham, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International & Development) Deakin University, Australia (formerly senior HR roles in **BHP** and **IBM**)
- Bill Damachis, Director Transnational Education & Alliances, UOW, Australia (formerly of **Deloitte's**)

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- ‘The value of (a students) international experience goes beyond purely the acquisition of language – it lies in the ability to see business and personal issues from other than your own cultural perspective’ (Charles Macleod, Head of UK Resourcing, PricewaterhouseCoopers)
- All four focus on exposing graduates to an international experience;
- PwC Ulysses Programme (for graduate international leadership development):
 - Designed as a response to core challenges of business operating in an increasingly interconnected world;
 - Launched in 2000 and central to PwC efforts to define and develop the concept of responsible leadership, shared values, understanding and collaboration and which is focused on delivering responsible and sustainable solutions;* (*Dennis Finn – PwC Melbourne)
- D. Academy (3 year development program for Deloitte graduates)
 - Focus on communication / leadership / individual effectiveness – creating impact within an ethical framework;

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- Summer vacation / internship programs for students at all four firms (attempt to involve themselves with Universities and in the students learning at an early stage):
 - Relationship with Universities is seen more like a partnership;
- Ongoing mentoring, peer support, e-learning, online training for all four firms;
- Team focused solutions for all four firms;
- Learning from doing – constantly exposed to new clients, projects and tasks;
- Graduates come from broad discipline backgrounds.

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GLOBAL REFLECTIONS

- Key challenges for global employers: shortage of talented executives with the ability and background to run a global business;
- Global employers generally learn that international executives need to be identified early in their careers:
 - Attempt to attract internationally oriented candidates;
 - Looking for transferable skills and an adaptive workforce;
 - Focus on greater breadth and on skills that help employees deal with rapid growth and change, including:
 - Literacy & numeracy
 - Time management and organisation
 - Oral & written communication
 - Team work & reflective practice / awareness
 - Creative problem solving
 - Adaptability
 - Corporate Social Responsibility / ethics
 - Initiative and enterprise in tasks
 - Critical & analytical thinking
 - Ability to apply discipline knowledge and concepts
 - Information gathering, evaluation and synthesis
 - Emotional intelligence / interpersonal skills
 - Organisational awareness

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◆ GLOBAL REFLECTIONS

- Value of pre-existing global perspective through integrating themselves into another unfamiliar culture:
 - A majority of surveys conducted with global employers indicate that having overseas professional work experience makes graduates more employable (see Archer, W., & Davison, J., 2008)
 - Early international exposure increases cultural acceptance and awareness;

Multinational Employers Speak: What Makes a Graduate Employable

◆ GLOBAL REFLECTIONS (continued)

- Nevertheless, although new graduates may prove to be mobile and willing to work internationally in the short-term, graduate development programs require a long-term outlook in terms of career development:
 - The process of developing senior international management is slow, retention rates low;
- Global employers however generally do not only train and develop the internationally mobile, but also aim to develop local staff and to establish a learning culture throughout the organisation:
 - Many global employers advocate respect of local cultures, minimisation of expatriate numbers and the grooming of local talent, with local operations being able to fine-tune to match local skills
 - Learn that international executives need to be identified very early in their careers and in the case of the big 4 at an early stage of their education.

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◆ QUESTIONS:

- What role Universities?
 - Consensus is now moving towards Universities taking more of a leading role in identifying and recommending potential students to employers, including attempts to involve employers with students at an earlier stage of their education.
 - Does the education system need greater focus on certain aspects like: internships / work based learning / work related learning / international exchange / study abroad?
 - What about the concept of Universities acting as a filtering agents for employers?
 - The role of industry advisory boards with Universities?
- What factors do global employers take into consideration when deciding how to structure their human resource management?
 - National concerns / economic concerns / technological concerns (the availability of skilled labour and the technological state of the country)

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◆ QUESTIONS:

- How important is foreign language proficiency for multinational employers?:
 - Beyond purely the acquisition of language being to see business and personal issues from other than your own cultural perspective?
- How important are graduates with an overseas study experience?:
 - Which also then leads to the question of how important is the internationalisation of academic staff in preparing students for effective participation in the global economy?
- Core challenges in an increasingly interconnected world?
- Future growth opportunities within the Asia Pacific Region?

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◆ QUESTIONS:

- Is ‘practical’ or ‘applied’ education what global employers are looking for in their international workforce rather than vocational education or qualifications?
 - Moot point / try and seek a balance between generalisation and specialisation:
 - Education should support both the flexibility of the labour force and the capacity for innovation in the industrial and service sectors:
 - » Education institutions are adopting a model which covers both angles, requiring students to take a proportion of their content outside of there area of specialisation;
 - What about in Malaysia?