

How to Develop China's Next Generation of Strategic Regional Leaders

Many multinational companies recently have gone through talent localization at the country level in China. The fact that China and Asian countries continue to be the fastest growing markets has put increasing pressure on multinational companies to develop local talent from China to take regional leadership positions. This article examines what the current regional leadership teams look like in multinational companies, what capability gaps exist for local talent pools, and how to identify high potentials and quickly accelerate this next generation.

Observation from Russell Reynolds Associates of the candidate pools in the China market indicates that while sales, customer services and functional roles are filled more and more by Chinese locals, positions such as general management, strategic planning and marketing still are predominantly filled by Western and regional expatriates. Talent localization at the regional level is a complicated issue and cannot be resolved by a one-size-fits-all approach. In the past, the main driver behind talent localization was cost savings. Nowadays, the salary gaps between expats and locals are diminishing. Understanding the business model is the crucial first step—the variations of business models can well define the differences in talent localization strategies. For example, sales and customer services to the local market should be led by locals; however, it probably makes more sense to use expats if the business is regional or global in nature with key decision makers of customers sitting elsewhere. Therefore, localization is a pragmatic issue based on business needs.

No matter from where people come, one has to demonstrate the right competencies to qualify himself/herself for regional leadership positions. A review of the talent qualified for country-level positions vs. regional-level roles reveals large capability gaps. People who are successful at the country level usually are quite execution-and-result driven with a strong entrepreneurial mindset, whereas the regional leadership roles normally require a consensus-driven profile with more emphasis on interpersonal, influencing skills and organizational savvy. As a result, strong country-level local leaders often struggle with the change in role requirements when put in regional positions. Companies need time to develop talent to close the capability gaps, but the market does not wait. What adds more to this issue is that a lot of local talent do not want to go outside China to gain the experiences they would need to better perform at the regional level because the action is in China.

Facing this dilemma, an immediate solution for many companies is to bring expats into the region to fill the gaps. Companies continue to try to figure out how to identify their future regional strategic leaders early on and accelerate their development as quickly as possible. In terms of some early signs in targeting high potentials, some companies conduct regular talent Revaluations in which employees are reviewed on their performance, as well as learning agility, emotional intelligence, breadth and depth of experience, loyalty, etc. Russell Reynolds Associates defines “potential” as a latent and inherent ability or capacity for growth over time. Based on our analysis of more than 4,000 senior executive assessment profiles in our global database, we divide these characteristics into two categories: the Foundational Attributes that enable people to make the most of their intellectual and emotional intelligence and progress to senior executive or general management roles; and the Accelerator Attributes that enable people to accelerate their trajectory given developmental exposures/experiences.

In terms of best practices in talent development, companies now are more mindful in crafting specifically designed assignments and projects based on talent characteristics and personal situations. Short-term assignments frequently are used for this purpose. Certain companies also try to give leadership candidates international experience earlier in their career when they have less family and professional constraints. Some companies have extended the time period one has to stay in a specific role before moving to the next because they believe people do not have the opportunity to live through the consequences of their decisions and actions within a two-year time frame, and this significantly lowers the strategic learning effectiveness in a particular role. Other organizations have tried to enable a two-way exchange of talent, knowledge and skill sets; i.e., while exporting some high-potential Chinese local talent to various countries, the companies also bring in the exact number of people from outside in order to build a more global organization in the long run. For any of the above development programs to work sustainably, it is important to match the program design with business purposes, and there needs to be specific business and behavioral change goals set and measured for program participants.

| Foundational Attributes | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Decision Making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains role of independent decision maker who also involves others |
| Long-Term Orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has vision and is future oriented • Plans ahead and is prepared for the future |
| Urgency about Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates decisiveness in the face of ambiguity • Is biased toward action but not too impulsive |
| Optimism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on positive side of situations • Actively and optimistically pursues new opportunities • Is comfortable taking calculated but not careless risks |
| Active Engagement with People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows interest in people; seeks to understand how they work and grow • Enjoys the challenge of persuading and gaining others' buy-in; a natural influencer • Is comfortable with most people but not too trusting |
| Emotional Resilience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays intensity/emotion but maintains control • Demonstrates resiliency and perseverance |
| Accelerator Attributes | |
| Openness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open to novel experiences and ways of thinking • Is curious and passionate about new learning experiences |
| Drive and Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drives to excel and succeed • Displays high level of ambition and achievement orientation |
| Adaptability/Flexibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapts to different situations and acts accordingly • Has the flexibility to navigate through challenges |

Author

Adela Yang oversees the Leadership & Succession practice of Russell Reynolds Associates in Greater China. Based in Shanghai, Adela's expertise as an industrial/organizational psychologist is focused on leadership and key talent succession, management and development. She advises organizations across industries to identify and develop the next wave of top leadership talent to achieve strategic, sustainable results.

For further information on our Leadership & Succession practice in Greater China, please contact:

Adela Yang

Russell Reynolds Associates Shanghai
 Room 4504, Jin Mao Tower, 88 Century Avenue
 Pudong, Shanghai 200121 China

Main: +86-21-6163-0888
 Email: adela.yang@russellreynolds.com
www.russellreynolds.com/adela-yang

如何培养中国下一代亚洲区战略领导者？

许多跨国公司刚刚在中国实现了国家层面的人才本地化。随着跨国公司持续把中国和亚洲国家认为是发展速度最快的市场，许多企业把亚太区总部迁到这里，这给跨国公司从中国本地人才中培养可胜任亚洲区领导者增加了不少压力。本文旨在分析目前跨国公司的亚洲领导团队的构成，本地人才要想胜任亚洲区领导所存在的能力差距，以及如何较早识别高潜力人才，加快推动下一代亚洲区领导者的发展。

根据罗盛咨询公司对中国市场人才的观察，虽然跨国公司在销售、客服和支持性职能部门等方面雇佣的中国本地人才越来越多，然而在业务管理、战略规划和市场营销等职位主要还是由西方人及亚洲区外派人员担任。亚洲区层面的人才本地化是一个复杂的问题，不能采用一刀切的方法来解决。在过去，人才本地化的主要驱动力是节约成本，而现在海外雇员和本地雇员的薪资差距正在减少。理解商业模式是非常关键的第一步——商业模式的差异很大程度上决定了人才本地化战略的差异。比如说，如果公司业务以服务本地市场为导向，当地市场的销售和客服应由本地人员领导；然而，如果业务本质是区域性或是全球性的，且客户的关键决策者也不在本地，则还是由海外雇员担任这一领导角色为佳。因此，人才本地化是建立在业务需求上的一个实际问题。

无论员工来自何处，他/她必须要展现出可以担任亚洲区领导者的能力。事实上，国家层级领导职位和区域级领导职位在人才能力方面存在巨大差距。胜任国家级领导职位的人才通常执行力较强、注重结果且富有企业家精神，而担任区域级职务的领导者则需要与大家取得共识、更注重人际能力和影响力以及组织才能。许多优秀的国家级领导者在担任区域级职务时，经常会遇到角色转换的难题。公司培养人才和缩小人才能力差距需要时间，然而市场发展的速度不等人；更糟糕的情况是，许多本地人才不愿意离开中国为他们更好地担任区域职务获取经验，因为他们觉得全球的眼光都在中国。

遭遇上述难题时，大多数公司会空降海外人员来填补空缺，这是最迅速的解决方案之一，许多公司仍在思考该如何识别未来区域战略领导者，并加快培养本地人才的步伐。在识别高管潜力人才的早期迹象方面，某些公司开展定期人才评估，通过绩效、学习能力、情商、经验深度和广度、忠诚度等等进行人才盘点和细分。罗盛咨询把“高管潜力人才”定义为拥有可长期发展的天资或能力的人才。根据我们对全球数据库4000多名高管评估数据的分析，我们把高潜力特质分为两类：一是基础特质，可帮助高潜力员工“充分利用”其智商和情商，从而成长为高管或担任综合业务管理角色；二是推动特质，在有发展机会和充足经验的情况下，帮助人才加速其发展。

表格：罗盛对“高管潜力”的定义

| 基础特质 | |
|---------|--|
| 决策制定 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 独立的决策者，也允许他人参与其 |
| 长期导向 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 有远见卓识，着眼于未来 • 提前计划、未雨绸缪 |
| 对结果的紧迫感 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 情况不明朗时果断决策 • 行动导向但不冲动行事 |
| 乐观精神 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 关注事态积极的一面 • 主动乐观地寻求新机遇 • 计算风险成本，敢于冒险但不莽撞 |
| 主动赢得他人 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 对他人感兴趣，试图理解他人的工作和成长经历 • 乐于劝说他人并获得他人的认可；天生的影响者 • 信任他人，但是不过分盲从 |
| 情绪弹性 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 能表现出情感的强度，同时也能控制情绪 • 收放自如、锲而不舍 |
| 推动特质 | |
| 开放性 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 对新的经历和思考方式持开放态度 • 对获取新的经历充满好奇和热情 |
| 驱动力和动力 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 有不断超越、获得成功的动力 • 展示强大的野心和成就取向 |
| 适应力/灵活性 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 可以适应不同的环境并采取相应行动 • 面对挑战游刃有余 |

在人才培养最佳实践方面，很多公司目前更加注重根据人才的特质和个人情况量身定制发展项目，而且更多采用短期的形式。一些公司还尝试在员工职业生涯较早期提供海外工作经历。某些公司已经延长员工转岗前留任前一工作岗位的时间，他们认为，如果员工在一职位上的工作时间少于两年，便无法充分经历其决策和行动带来的后果，从而大大降低其在这个职位上的战略学习效果。有些公司尝试开展与海外人才间双向交流项目，即一家公司在向外输出中国本地高潜质人才的同时，也从海外引进相同数量的人才，创造不同知识、技能及理念上的交流学习，以从长远角度为建立全球化公司添砖加瓦。以上发展项目若要实现可持续发展，它与业务的结合是非常重要的，同样重要的是为项目参与者量身定制具体的行为改变目标和业务目标，并定期加以评估。

作者

杨玮蔚博士是工业/组织心理学家，她负责罗盛咨询大中华区的领导力咨询业务，她专注于为各行业客户提供领导力、人才管理和高管继任方面的专业咨询建议，帮助跨国公司和国内企业甄选和发展高管人才，以实现战略、可持续的业务成果。

关于罗盛咨询大中华区领导力咨询更多信息，请联系：

杨玮蔚

罗盛咨询上海

金茂大厦4504室

世纪大道88号

中国上海 200121

电话：+86-21-6163-0888

邮件：adela.yang@russellreynolds.com

www.russellreynolds.com/adela-yang

关于罗盛卓越领导力中心

在今天的全球商业环境中，成功的关键是人才、业务愿景、及高管人员的领导力。罗盛卓越领导力中心呈现罗盛咨询在领导力及高管人才梯队建设领域中最前沿的研究和观点，帮助企业发展和保留最优秀的高管团队。

RUSSELL REYNOLDS ASSOCIATES

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Americas

Atlanta

1180 Peachtree St., NE
Suite 2250
Atlanta, GA 30309-3521
United States of America
Tel: +1-404-577-3000

Boston

One Federal Street, 25th Floor
Boston, MA 02110-1007
United States of America
Tel: +1-617-523-1111

Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires Plaza
Manuela Sáenz 323
Seventh Floor, Suites 14 and 15
C1107CBP Buenos Aires
Argentina
Tel: +54-11-4118-8900

Calgary

Suite 750, Ernst & Young Tower
440-2nd Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 5E9
Canada
Tel: +1-403-776-4174

Chicago

155 North Wacker Drive
Suite 4100
Chicago, IL 60606-1732
United States of America
Tel: +1-312-993-9696

Dallas

8401 N. Central Expressway
Suite 650
Dallas, TX 75225-4404
United States of America
Tel: +1-214-220-2033

Houston

600 Travis Street, Suite 2200
Houston, TX 77002-2901
United States of America
Tel: +1-713-754-5995

Los Angeles

11100 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90025-3384
United States of America
Tel: +1-310-775-8940

Mexico City

Torre Reforma
Paseo de la Reforma
115-1502
Lomas de Chapultepec
México 11000, D.F.
México
Tel: +52-55-5249-5130

Minneapolis/St. Paul

225 South Sixth Street, Suite 2550
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3900
United States of America
Tel: +1-612-332-6966

New York

200 Park Avenue
Suite 2300
New York, NY 10166-0002
United States of America
Tel: +1-212-351-2000

Palo Alto

260 Homer Avenue, Suite 202
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2777
United States of America
Tel: +1-650-233-2400

San Francisco

101 California Street
Suite 2900
San Francisco, CA 94111-5829
United States of America
Tel: +1-415-352-3300

São Paulo

Edifício Eldorado Business Tower
Av. Nações Unidas, 8501
11º Andar
05425-070 São Paulo - SP
Brazil
Tel: +55-11-3566-2400

Stamford

301 Tresser Boulevard
Suite 1210
Stamford, CT 06901-3250
United States of America
Tel: +1-203-905-3341

Toronto

Scotia Plaza, Suite 3410
40 King Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 3Y2
Canada
Tel: +1-416-364-3355

Washington, D.C.

1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20006-5810
United States of America
Tel: +1-202-654-7800

Asia/Pacific

Beijing

Unit 3422 China World Tower 1
No. 1 Jian Guo Men Wai Avenue
Beijing 100004
China
Tel: +86-10-6535-1188

Hong Kong

Room 1801, Alexandra House
18 Chater Road Central
Hong Kong
China
Tel: +852-2523-9123

Melbourne

Level 51, Rialto Towers
525 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia
Tel: +61-3-9603-1300

Mumbai

Unit 9(A), Grand Hyatt Plaza
Santacruz (East)
Mumbai 400 055
India
Tel: +91-22-6733-2222

New Delhi

203, Eros Corporate Tower
Nehru Place
New Delhi 110 019
India
Tel: +91-11-4603-4600

Seoul

16F West Tower
Mirae Asset Centre 1 Building
26 Eulji-ro 5-gil, Jung-gu,
Seoul 100-210
Korea
Tel: +82-2-6030-3200

Shanghai

Room 4504, Jin Mao Tower
88 Century Avenue
Pudong, Shanghai 200121
China
Tel: +86-21-6163-0888

Singapore

2 Shenton Way
#08-01 SGX Centre 1
Singapore 068804
Singapore
Tel: +65-6225-1811

Sydney

Level 40, Aurora Place
88 Phillip Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
Tel: +61-2-9258-3100

Tokyo

Izumi Garden Tower 14F
1-6-1 Roppongi
Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-6014
Japan
Tel: +81-3-5114-3700

Europe

Amsterdam

World Trade Center
Tower H, 18th Floor
Zuidplein 148
1077 XV Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-20-305-7630

Barcelona

Edificio Prisma
Avda. Diagonal, 613, 2ª
08028 Barcelona
Spain
Tel: +34-93-494-9400

Brussels

Boulevard St.-Michel 27
B-1040 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32-2-743-12-20

Copenhagen

Kongens Nytorv 3
DK-1050 Copenhagen K
Denmark
Tel: +45-33-69-23-20

Frankfurt

OpfernTurm
Bockenheimer Landstr. 2-4
60306 Frankfurt
Germany
Tel: +49-69-75-60-90-0

Hamburg

Stadthausbrücke
1-3/Fleethof
20355 Hamburg
Germany
Tel: +49-40-480-661-0

London

Almack House
28 King Street
London SW1Y 6QW
United Kingdom
Tel: +44-20-7839-7788

Madrid

Calle Miguel Angel, 11
Seventh Floor
28010 Madrid
Spain
Tel: +34-91-319-7100

Milan

Via Mascheroni, 5
20123 Milan
Italy
Tel: +39-02-430-0151

Munich

Maximilianstraße 12-14
80539 München
Germany
Tel: +49-89-24-89-81-3

Paris

7, Place Vendôme
75001 Paris
France
Tel: +33-1-49-26-13-00

Stockholm

Hamngatan 27
SE-111 47 Stockholm
Sweden
Tel: +46-8-545-074-40

Warsaw

Belvedere Plaza
ul. Belwederska 23
00-761 Warsaw
Poland
Tel: +48-22-851-68-38

Zürich

Löwenstrasse 28
CH-8001 Zurich
Switzerland
Tel: +41-44-447-30-30