

## What Does It Take to be a Successful Global Business Leader?

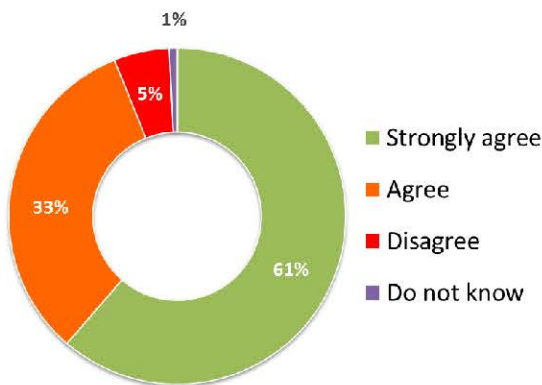
By CHRISTIAN MICHEL & JOANNA PETERS

Subject Matter Expertise Self Awareness  
 Cultural Awareness and  
 Respect  
Market Area Knowledge  
 Ability to Manage Globally Understanding  
 Constructive Interpersonal Flexibility

Most business activities today no longer adhere to the boundaries of nation states but are increasingly global in nature. In 1990, the total of the world’s exports and imports represented only about 30% of the world’s GDP and now they account for almost 60% in today’s environment. In response to this new normal, mature labor markets such as the US and Europe will need to “reskill” to meet the new demands of a highly interconnected world to remain competitive.

As international business executives, IERG’s membership experiences this change first hand and understands what it takes to be successful in this global market. As part of our second international research report, we asked our membership to identify the critical common core elements that distinguish global leaders, independent of the industry and geographic area where business is conducted. We also highlight how today’s leaders prefer to remain current and relevant in this ever changing business world.

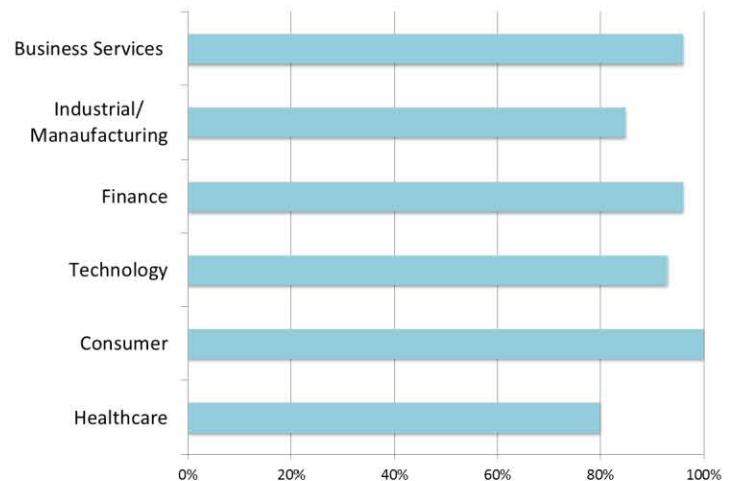
**If you think global leaders need the same skill set as national leader, think again!**



**Q: Are workplace skills of global leaders different from those of**

Skills acquired on the national stage are certainly helpful. However, over 90% of the IERG members surveyed strongly agree and agree that the skill set of a global leader is different from a national leader.

**Members in all major industry sectors recognize the need for different skill set for global leaders.**

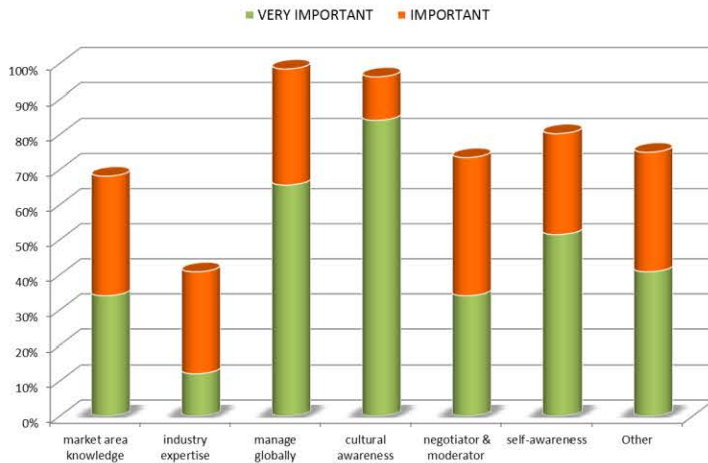


**local or national leaders?**

While some businesses sector leaders believe that differences in skills between global and national leaders are less evident (i.e., health care vs. consumer industries), the overwhelming majority in all sectors agree and strongly agree that leaders require a unique skill set when conducting business globally.

IERG Best Practices Committee: Chairs Christian Michel and Joanna Peters with Art Buckland, John Carne, Joe Mueller, Kim Ruyle, Steve Walton

## IERG Members place a greater emphasis on soft skills than on hard skills.

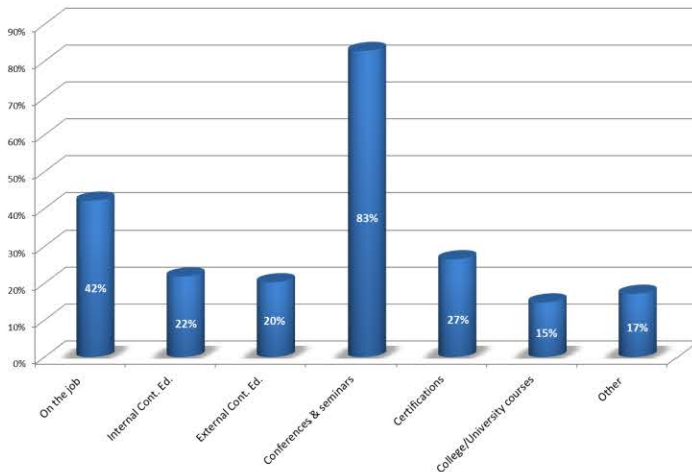


When asked to rank skills based on their importance, IERG members clearly identified cultural awareness and global management skills as THE most important skills when conducting international business.

Self-awareness was seen by over 50% as a very important and by 30% as an important trait for global leaders. In contrast, important hard skills (i.e., market knowledge (65%) and industry expertise (39%) were seen to be owned by staff or consultants, rather than being mastered by leaders.

**Q: Contrasted to a local/national business work environment, how would you rate the importance of the following for an international business work environment?**

## To keep current, IERG Members use a range of options but strongly prefer the interactive networking setting of conferences and seminars.



The vast majority of IERG members understands and appreciates quality-networking opportunities to obtain new knowledge, while creating new business opportunities.

However, over 80% of our surveyed members also recognize the value of education and certification in key skills. IERG members are willing to pay for quality educational content, presented by experienced instructors, and provided by reputable organizations.

**Q: In the next two years, which of the following development activities are you likely to pursue?**

Global business has grown exponentially over the past two decades and requires global leaders to adjust and continue to learn. Our survey of international executives, 90% of which with 10 years or more of international commercial transaction experience in a wide range of sectors, clearly shows that skills acquired on a regional or national stage are not sufficient to succeed internationally. Today's successful leaders have to be willing to continue to learn in order to be able to adapt to new norms and business settings.

*IERG is an organization of and for international executives who have the shared experience of living and doing business in unfamiliar countries. We join together around the world to enrich our talents and knowledge, build our global contacts, expand our base of referrals, and grow our professional opportunities. For more information please contact IERG Best Practices Committee Chairs [cmichel@akrf.com](mailto:cmichel@akrf.com) or [jpeters@stratconglobal.com](mailto:jpeters@stratconglobal.com) on reports or membership.*

IERG Best Practices Committee: Chairs Christian Michel and Joanna Peters with Art Buckland, John Carne, Joe Mueller, Kim Ruyle, Steve Walton