

Expatriate leaders and the nationalisation agenda

Expatriate leaders are a threat to the nationalization agendas across the GCC



For many years, nationalization has been a key ambition for governments across the Middle East. This has rightly led to a significant agenda focused on the development of nationals, however employers shouldn't underestimate the crucial role that expatriate leaders play in the success or failure of these objectives.

Put bluntly, many expatriates choose to work in the region because the financial packages achievable here are far greater than those available in their home country, and this could have a negative impact on nationalisation. Rather than being focused on the development of potential successors, many expatriates tend to try and retain their lucrative positions, which naturally means ensuring that national talent is not developed to the extent where they themselves can be replaced.

Whilst it would be naïve to think the need for expatriate talent will disappear overnight, it's clear that the remit is evolving; if the emphasis before was on raising standards by applying international best practice, expatriate leaders must now be acutely focused on developing, coaching and mentoring local talent.

From a talent recruitment and retention perspective, this creates a slightly different challenge for employers when it comes to

identifying the expatriate candidates they want within their organization. The emphasis now needs to be on finding self-assured, senior leaders who are comfortable in proactively planning for a time when a local employee can move into their role.

At Parisima, we're already working with progressive firms across the region on this challenge. We offer practical advice on how they can embed the nationalization targets within their workforce planning strategies. Some of the areas we're advising on include developing succession plans within their organization, writing job descriptions which not only attract the right expatriate candidates, but also ensure that developing a successor is an integral part of their objectives. We also help employers hire expats with both the capability to perform the role, and the self-confidence to be comfortable knowing that this includes developing successors.

For the expatriate talent already in the region, the nationalization agenda will change things. This should not be perceived as a negative but rather a reorientation of how and where they can add the most value. They can and should be inspired by the challenge of contributing to building a legacy in the countries they now call home, by actively developing the next generation of local leaders.

Dubai

Office C405, Level 4
Burj Daman,
DIFC Dubai, UAE
PO BOX 114477
t: +971 (0)4 586 7200
e: info@parisima.com

Abu Dhabi

35th Floor, Sky Tower
Reem Island, Abu Dhabi
t: +971 2 4956700

Riyadh

Office 14 & 15,
6299 Al Ihsa Street,
Az Zahraa
Riyadh 12815 3190
t: +966 11 4533949

London

City Tower
40 Basinghall Street
London EC2V 5DE
t: +44 203 770 5530

