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By Pamela Babcock

NEW YORK—Human capital concerns, building global brand recognition, anticipating and meeting diverse consumer needs, engaging audiences and advertisers, and ensuring business integrity and trust are key to capitalizing on emerging global market opportunities, business leaders said recently.

Leaders in communications, finance, media and technology shared strategies and challenges they're facing in emerging global markets at the 2013 Global Diversity Leadership Exchange, held Feb. 6, 2013, at the New York Stock Exchange [here](#).

"It's imperative as we move into a global marketplace that we're well-educated on what's going on outside of the United States," said Cristina Mancini, senior vice president of worldwide marketing at 20th Century Fox Television Distribution in Los Angeles. Mancini works with local international broadcasters from around the world to make sure purchased programming is properly marketed and publicized on their channels.

"These emerging markets, particularly the BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India and China] nations, are starting to overtake us in advertising spend," Mancini said. "When you think about where your dollars are going, you should make sure that you are well-acclimated with these territories. And the key in any negotiation is communication and awareness of cultural differences."

AT&T Enhances Global Staffing System

Global talent challenges abound for Scott Smith, senior vice president of HR for AT&T. The company fills about 70,000 positions annually (about half internally) and has about 10,000 employees working in 16 different countries, with the largest being India, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, he said. About half of the company's annual hires are external.

"Diversity is a big deal, and it's a big segment of what we do in HR. But our business leaders and our employees have to own it," said Smith, who also oversees AT&T's global learning services. "Our customer base is completely diverse whether you're talking domestic or you're talking international, so our workforce needs to be diverse."

The company will soon roll out My Career Profile, a program where international employees will be able to create an internal online skills profile that will help better identify talent.

"We need to know how we can move them around the business more," Smith admitted.

AT&T also recently moved international staffing in-house rather than using a search firm. The company has 420 staffing employees, about 25 of whom are dedicated to international hires. A few years ago, employee attrition in India was 16 percent annually; it's now 7 percent, Smith noted.

That's due in part to an employee referral program and another program where employee ambassadors go with HR on sourcing trips.

"It's not just an agency win, it's an AT&T win," Smith said. "It's a much more engaging and emotional experience."

Deloitte's Lessons from Brazil

Deepa Purushothama, a principal in Deloitte Consulting's telecommunications, media and technology practice, has spent much of her career since 2008 advising multinational wireless companies in Latin America how to grow their footprint, attract customers and interact with local markets.

She also leads Deloitte's Asian Business Resource Group and speaks often about the business case for diversity.

Purushothama noted that Brazil has a rapidly expanding middle class that's being targeted by brands worldwide. In Brazil, there's "a real desperate desire" to increase infrastructure, both with roads and other public works projects, but also to increase the information superhighway and communication capacity, particularly since the country will host the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics in 2016.

Purushothama said the key is to bring the right team to work on the problem.

When Purushothama first began consulting in Brazil, she showed up thinking she could get by knowing Spanish, instead of Portuguese.

"I thought we could figure that out, and you can't figure it out. They're not the same language," Purushothama recalled.

To be successful, she has learned, one can bring subject matter experts, "but the team you have on the ground has to be a mixed team because trust comes from that local, cultural understanding." She added that it's also critical to understand procurement and HR processes.

"To do that seamlessly is how companies really excel," she said.

A Regulator's View

Diversity of thought in today's global business environment makes life exciting and challenging for Paul P. Andrews, vice president of international affairs at the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the largest independent regulator for securities firms doing business in the United States.

Andrews, who has worked with regulators in countries that include Brazil, India, Russia, Singapore and France, said that worldwide, there are a variety of expectations about how markets should be regulated and how financial intermediaries should be overseen.

"That has a huge impact on what happens inside the U.S.," Andrews said.

In addition to exchanging information about potential suspicious trading, FINRA works to come up with global solutions to common problems. The use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and even LinkedIn "is becoming a huge issue in the securities world today," Andrews said.

On a positive note, he said, India has become "much more welcoming and open" in recent years to women working in securities regulation and finance.

International Buyers 'Incredibly Savvy'

Engaging audiences and advertisers globally has given 20th Century Fox "some really great success stories" internationally with shows like "Prison Break," "24" and "Bones," Mancini said.

She added that these international buyers are "incredibly savvy."

"They're not broadcasting out of their garage—they're multi-billion dollar organizations that are taking our content," Mancini said. "In these nations that are emerging like Brazil and India, there is great opportunity as they start expanding their digital channels for content."

Mancini said her company thinks globally but acts locally. To interest viewers in France and at M6, a popular private French television network, in "Prison Break," a show about American prisons, Fox sold the show to them and then worked with them to feature a local rap artist in the opening sequence.

It was a win for all involved.

"His single ended up going platinum and when 'Prison Break' premiered, it was the No. 1-rated show," she said.

Pamela Babcock is a freelance writer based in the New York City area.

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