

FACTSHEET ON INTERNATIONALISATION TALENT (iTALENT) SOLUTIONS MAP

To support enterprises in meeting the challenges of internationalisation, SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) commissioned the International Trading Institute at Singapore Management University (ITI@SMU) in 2018, to conduct a research study on the skills needed for internationalisation. The iTalent Solutions Map is the outcome of this research. It identifies the skills and knowledge required for internationalisation so as to empower SMEs and individuals.

Research Methodology and Design

2 The 12-month research study involved more than 100 hours of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 60 ‘internationalisers’, including industry experts, academia, SME owners and employees from more than 30 Singapore-based companies. They shared their insights on business needs, talent needs and skills needed for internationalisation.

Key Findings

3 The research study, conducted between May 2018 and April 2019, generated insights in six broad areas:

- i. Business needs which drive key talent needs for internationalisation

The following pre-market, in-market and post-market business needs were identified:

Pre-market needs: Before entering a new market, having the right mind-set and fundamental knowledge of risk management, international finance, modes of entry, and business opportunities creation and deal making are pertinent.

In-market needs: On entering a market, the focus turns to understanding the context and challenges of internationalisation. Talent needs include business languages, cultural sensitivities, ability to navigate ambiguities, and strong internal communications. These are necessary to ensure the right presentation, and the smooth running and delivery of contracts.

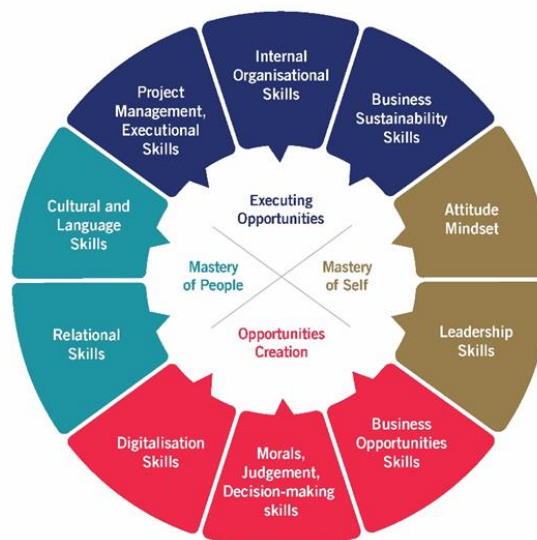
Post-market needs: After establishing a company's presence overseas, talent will be needed to build business sustainability through leadership, skills transference, organisational change and digitalisation.

ii. Mapping of the steps required to internationalise

The research mapped the internationalisation journey of a business into a seven-step process, and identified associated business needs and talent requirements at each step. With the map, companies would be able to identify which stage of the internationalisation journey they are at, and the skills they need. The map is in the attached brochure.

iii. Ten critical internationalisation skills domains

The study identified ten critical skills domains required for internationalisation. These technical and soft skills are categorised into four key areas:



iv. Roles of internationalisers

The study identified six key roles that define the work that internationalisers do.

The six key roles are:

External and Business Development-oriented roles	Internal and Operations-oriented roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master Relationship Builders <i>(Manage conflicts and build strong positive relationships with stakeholders)</i> - Entrepreneur/Opportunity Experts <i>(Identify opportunities and challenges in business development)</i> - Strategy Visionaries <i>(Possess in-depth knowledge of the industry and able to chart overall business strategy and identify key areas for business growth)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiator / Facilitator <i>(Engage in problem-solving, conflict management and negotiation with stakeholders)</i> - Gatekeepers / Project Managers <i>(Serve as the key link between headquarters and overseas offices)</i> - A Bridge <i>(Ensure smooth integration and internal communications between headquarters and local officers)</i>

 v. Characteristics of an internationaliser

The study noted the characteristics of a successful internationaliser, which includes:

- Having the right attitude and open mind towards the idea of internationalisation;
- Ability to identify, discern and navigate cultural ambiguities;
- Adopting a hands-on approach to understand work and business culture, and behaviour of locals in their countries; and
- Soft skills such as resilience, discipline, adaptability, and virtues like humility and honesty.

vi. Future career opportunities

The study identified career opportunities which individuals with internationalisation skills could explore.

Areas of work	Roles
Marketing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C-level: Chief Executive Officer / Chief Marketing Officer / Chief Operating Officer/ / Chief Technical Officer/ Country Manager/ Head-of-Department - Regional Business Development Director / Manager - Franchise Director - Internationalisation Director/Internationalisation Champion/Senior Internationaliser
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Marketing Officer - Corporate Development Manager - Integrative Marketing Team - Research and Development / Product Development Team - International Product & Strategy Team: Strategy Director, Brand Director, Brand Manager - International Retail Operations: Commercial Manager, Visual Merchandising Manager, Merchandiser Planner

Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operations Director/Manager - Finance Director/Manager - Chief Governance Officer - Procurement Director/Manager - Legal Director/Manager - Manufacturing Arm: Quality Control, Product Manufacturing Specialist - Process Engineer/ Researcher - Internal Auditor - Corporate Risk Manager
Human Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief of Staff / Regional HR Director - Regional HR Manager/Team
Technology and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Technology Officer - Chief Innovation Officer - Technology team of Digital department (Coders, Business Analyst, Technology Analyst)

Utilising the iTalent Solutions Map

4 SMEs can refer to the iTalent Solutions Map to identify their current stage of internationalisation and the skills they need to build within their workforce. The learning and development section of the report will guide HR practitioners as they develop skill development plans within their companies.

The iTalent Solutions Map report can be accessed at iti.smu.edu.sg/internationalisation and myskillsfuture.sg.