

# PULSE SURVEY HR goes global

BY SHANNON KLIIE

**T**he economy is truly global, with Canadian organizations looking abroad to recruit employees and often finding themselves in competition with international organizations for the same talent, according to the latest *Pulse Survey*.

Just more than one-half (51.1 per cent) of respondents said their organization looks outside of Canada for employees and 51.5 per cent said they often compete for the same talent as organizations from other parts of the world.

"Every country wants that qualified candidate," said Terri Oliver, an HR consultant at TheMIGroup in Mississauga, Ont. "Globally, the war for those scarce skills and that talent is going to get more competitive."

The 259 *Canadian HR Reporter* subscribers and members of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) surveyed were asked to consider three areas of globalization.

These include the migration of certain kinds of workers to other countries, the global competition for talent and the challenge of managing multinational workforces.

With that in mind, 67.6 per cent of respondents said globalization is having more than a small impact on their practice as an HR professional.

"In organizations and consulting practices, there is more and more global collaboration,"

said Caroline Yang, an HR consultant at MultiCultural Business Solutions in Markham, Ont.

When a Canadian company has operations in another coun-

try, it's important to fully understand the HR standards and norms of that country, she said.

"It's really important for HR professionals to go in and do their research and not assume something that works here will work over there. But also, don't assume that some of the best practices we have built over the years are not applicable," she said.

When she worked at Nortel in China, Yang successfully implemented Nortel's Canadian performance management and compensation structures.

"The local management was actually very keen on learning the best practices that have been built over the years by the Western business world," said Yang.

Of the 23 per cent of respondents who work at an organization that owns or operates one or more foreign companies, 81.3 per cent said that has a significant effect on the HR function.

At these organizations, issues around pensions, medical benefits and immigration are more complicated, said Oliver. Some countries have a social security agreement with Canada, whereby a Canadian working in the foreign country pays into the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and not the host country's social security scheme. Without such an agreement, the question becomes who pays for those remittances and how can the company ensure the employee will still have full access to CPP, said Oliver.

HR also needs to understand how long it will take to bring in an employee from another country or send a Canadian to work abroad and ensure it has the proper paperwork.

"For companies recruiting internationally, intra-company transfers are typically easier than external hires," she said.

Organizations should first look locally for talent but if it isn't available, they will need to turn to international sources, said Oliver.

"There's a lot more support required for the person coming in from overseas but, depending on the scarce skill that they're looking for, it may well be worth it," she said.

Of the 24.5 per cent of respondents that work at an organization that is the Canadian subsidiary of a foreign-based company, 80.9 per cent said that has a significant impact on how HR is practised in Canada.

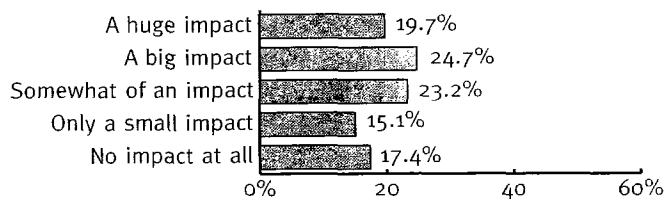
Andrea Zanetti is a compensation and benefits specialist in the Toronto area. After 15 years in the profession, she recently completed her MBA and found the corporate world had changed significantly when she started interviewing for senior compensation and benefits positions at global companies.

"There were a couple of companies that actually said to me, 'If you take this job, you will just be carrying out instructions.' As a senior HR professional, that was a bit of a shock. It almost implies this is the end of that specialization in Canada, unless it's a Canadian company," she said.

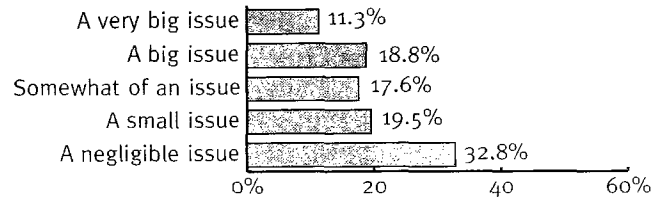




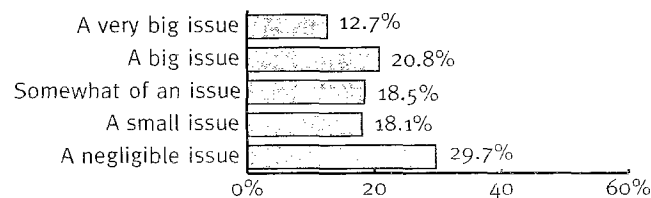
### How much of an impact is globalization having on your practice as an HR professional?



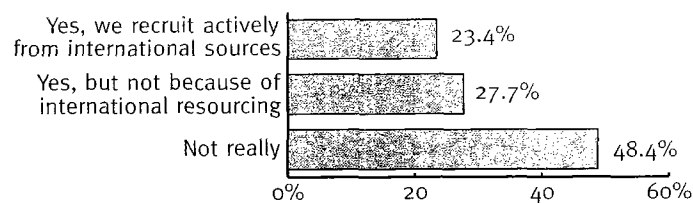
### Are global workforce shifts (such as the loss of manufacturing jobs) an issue for your organization or clients?



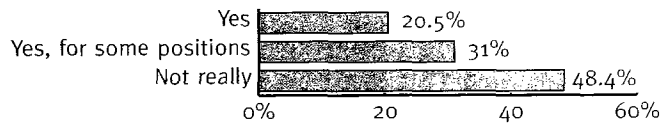
### Is foreign competition a big issue for your organization or clients?



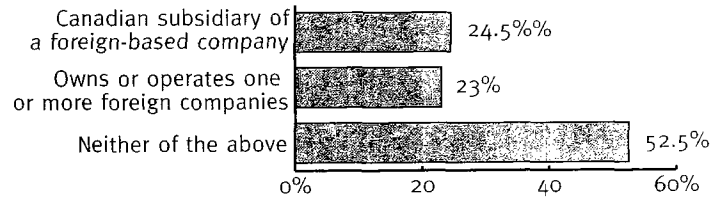
### Does your organization, or clients, actively recruit abroad for talent?



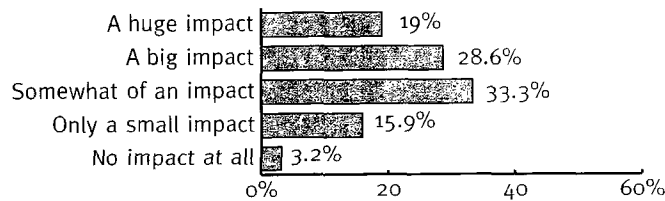
**Does your organization compete for the same talent as organizations from other parts of the globe?**



**Which of the following best describes your organization?**



**How does being a Canadian subsidiary impact how HR is practised in Canada?**



**What impact does the fact your organization owns or operates one or more foreign-based companies have on how your HR function does its work?**

