

The Michael Page HR Barometer: revealing the priorities of HR leaders in Belgium and the rest of the world

- Belgian companies' recruitment plans: 42% foresees new hires in 2016
- Recruitment and training & development: the most important priorities for Belgian HR managers
- The most important KPIs: staff performance and turnover
- Telecommuting and flexible hours: the main tools to attract more women to the company

Brussels, 24 September 2015 - Recruitment consultancy Michael Page recently published its HR Barometer. The Barometer charts trends and challenges in the field of Human Resources over a one-year timeframe. 2500 HR directors in 65 countries across the world, including 105 in Belgium, completed an online survey. The study shows that recruitment, training & development, and talent retention are the top three priorities for the next 12 months in Belgium.

HR priorities in light of a new phase of growth

According to 38% of Belgian HR leaders, attracting talent is a priority for their department. This percentage is higher than the global and European averages (around 32% and 31%, respectively), and points to substantial recruitment needs. Despite the fact that 42% of Belgian HR leaders want to effect a staff increase in their company, a large majority (57%) has not allocated extra budget for recruitment. *"We're not seeing an important strategic development in the Belgian job market.*

Certain sectors like retail or digital are doing really well and recruiting heavily, and yet retention is the key," according to Frederick D'Hauw, Manager for Michael Page Antwerp. This is reflected in HR departments' other two priorities: talent retention (38%) and training and development (34%). *"Managers are aware that their company's ability to innovate and be successful depends on the competences of their staff. That is why CEOs and HR managers shouldn't just try to retain the best talent; they should develop a sustainable retention policy and design attractive human development strategies,"* Frederick D'Hauw concludes.

KPI analysis: one of the main weaknesses for HR departments

A large majority of Belgian respondents indicate that staff performance (67%) and staff turnover (46%) are the main Human Resources performance indicators, more important than staff competencies (42%) or recruitment efficiency (35%). *"There is still a great deal to do in terms of assessing HR returns. We have concluded that HR departments struggle to make their efforts and accomplishments transparent. Regardless of the proportion of the HR budget managers spend on recruitment,*

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they must guarantee their investment by systematically monitoring the efficiency of their recruitment policy, staff competencies and their professional dedication,” Frederick D’Hauw advises.

Are HR departments equipped to deal with these challenges?

Belgian companies are not planning any substantial expansion of their HR departments. In fact, 72% of respondents do not foresee any change in business resources available to them. Only 14% expect the department to expand, and 13% actually expect their workforce to be downsized. This leads to an essential question: will HR directors be able to put management’s strategic vision into practice? *“We conclude that Belgian businesses have reorganised their HR departments in recent years, making a clear distinction between traditional HR services such as payroll on the one hand, and on the other hand the role of a business partner to whom core strategic execution is entrusted. The shift towards a strategic department capable of achieving clearly defined targets will not happen overnight.”*

Flexible hours main measure to attract more women

67% of Belgian HR leaders we surveyed are women (the global average is 58%). Since Michael Page only surveyed HR directors, HR managers, HR Vice Presidents and HR Business Partners for this study, we can say that women are well-represented in HR roles, including the more senior ones. *“Nowadays many leading organisations operate policy that strives for gender equality. At a European level this theme has been on the agenda for years, and although much still needs to be done, Human Resources have a remarkably better balance than finance, for example, as we can see from our latest CFO & Financial Leadership Barometer,”* says Ilze Lamers, director of PageGroup’s Northern European Talent & Development department. According to the Michael Page HR Barometer, flexible working conditions are some of the most important measures taken by Belgian companies to promote the integration of women in the organisation and guarantee their retention. However, just 27% of Belgian respondents confirm that they have a written policy for this theme - lagging far behind their colleagues in the United Kingdom (73%), Luxembourg (54%) or Germany (51%).

About Michael Page

Michael Page has been listed on the London stock exchange since April 2011 and is part of PageGroup, which currently has 156 offices in 36 countries, employing almost 6,000 staff. In Belgium, PageGroup’s expertise is supported by three key brands: Page Executive, a market leader in executive search; Michael Page, which finds the most experienced executives for its clients; and Page Personnel, specialised in the selection and recruitment of both junior and experienced candidates for short and long term assignments. The group has been present in Belgium since 2002.

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