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BUILDING YOUR CAREER OUT OF THE UK

À l'heure du Brexit, de nombreux dirigeants français se posent la question de la suite de leur carrière en dehors du Royaume-Uni. En réalité, le Royaume-Uni a attiré de nombreux talents étrangers (Londres est la 6^e ville française...) et a des connexions historiques très importantes au plan commercial avec de nombreuses régions dans le monde. Il offre de nombreuses opportunités pour les dirigeants qui veulent bâtir leur carrière à partir de ce pays. Nous avons choisi de laisser cet article dans sa langue d'origine, car la gestion de carrière est désormais multilingue.

LANDMARKS

There is a perception amongst many in France that the UK is all about financial services. The reality is that there is demand for executive skills in a wide range of sectors including oil and gas, telecommunications, IT services, pharmaceuticals, retail and consumer goods as well as manufacturing. Of course the position of London as a financial centre means that there are hugely attractive roles in the financial services, but this really is not the whole story.

JUNE 23rd 2016 IS A DATE people will remember on both sides of "La Manche". This was the day that the UK changed its relationship with the EU. Whilst the political impact of this decision is still unfolding, the economic impact is very surprising. The UK's GDP is actually growing. Q4 2016 has shown a 0.7% year-on-year increase. This is exactly the opposite of what was expected by experts. So what does this mean for French nationals looking to build their careers out of the UK? The most basic fact is that times of turbulence are also times of opportunity. There are uncertainties of course. The imminent Brexit negotiations will be unsettling and the status of EU nationals has yet to be finalised. However, the famous British pragmatism matters here. Highly qualified professionals will always be needed to drive economic growth and common sense suggests that the British will not erect barriers against their arrival. What really matters is that these professionals have a career plan which they can execute against.

HAVE A PLAN!

The French CEO of a UK manufacturing company who worked with AGM Transitions recently is a good example of a man with a plan. He has enthusiastic support from his Board to build a global business. Returning to France will happen at some stage although it may well be that he looks to other geographies first. His skills are a passport guaranteeing entry to any country at the most senior level.

There are two interesting things about this story. First, this CEO is not working in financial services.

Second, this CEO is not based in London. The company he works with is physically closer to France than London! The message here is not to ignore the other centres in the UK.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FRENCH EXECUTIVES HAVE CHANGED

What are the opportunities that the French executive should be aware of when building a career out of the UK? As a firm based in London which focuses on international career transitions, we have

a strong view about this. There have been a number of important changes here.

Perceptions: In the past, there was a common misconception amongst some Anglo-Saxon leaders that the French executive

brought empirical rigidity to the table. Exposure to French entrepreneurial dynamism has changed these views. The stereotypical Anglo-Saxon leader has evolved to something more diverse.

Infrastructure: There are currently more than 200,000 French people working in London alone, making it the 6th largest French city. In turn, this means that a French language infrastructure exists in London with high quality lycées and support groups.

An international hub: Another major shift which is relevant for French nationals wishing to grow their careers is the international scope of business activity conducted out of the UK in general and London in particular. Again, this outward

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A CHANGING ANGLO-SAXON LEADERSHIP

The identity of the Anglo-Saxon leader has changed: 10 of the CEOs of largest companies in the UK are European nationals and 5 of these come from France. A Dutchman runs Shell; a Portuguese runs Vodafone; a Spaniard runs Lloyds Bank; one Frenchman runs AstraZeneca, another runs Rio Tinto and a French woman runs Kingfisher.

focus – which is real – contradicts public perceptions in both France and the UK. This represents a major opportunity for executives who are mobile and flexible about where they are carrying out their

role. Historic links to Western Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America are being supplemented by newer trade with Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and other emerging markets.

Private equity: An important development over the last 20 years has been the evolution of London as a world leader in private equity. It is important to be aware that the portfolios of companies owned by private equity houses represent a substantial part of the opportunities available in the UK's unlisted markets, spanning all sectors and geographies. Of course it matters

that you speak English, but speaking the language of business and financial rigour matters even more.

There are many opportunities for French nationals wishing to grow their careers internationally out of the UK. It is smart to think broadly about sectors, about

different company structures and about the use of the UK as a hub for broader geographic activities. ■

« The UK is a hub for broader geographic activities »

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