

The role of the Regional Head in global corporations



“Some of our clients perform this function for global corporations. It demands a very special range of leadership skills, local contacts and territory knowledge.

Supporting them is one reason why we maintain three locally-based coaching teams in Europe, Asia and USA.”

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Unsung heroes or corporate policemen?

Iain Martin reviews the pivotal role played by territorial heads in large corporations.

Interesting role, isn't it - that of the regional or country head? Often these are the 'unsung heroes' of the corporation, most visible only when something goes wrong and a scapegoat is needed.

Part-diplomat and part-business leader, regional or country presidents often have wide responsibility with little power - thus calling on the highest level of influencing skills to achieve anything. The job demands careful balancing of pressures from the local communities and markets against those from the remotely-based managers of global business units.

Territory heads need to be skilled 'two-faced' operators. That is, they need to know the markets and the external influencers/decision-makers in their territory and, at the same time, understand the levers of power politics in the corporation. They have a policeman's value too - preventing bad things from happening in the territory.

Usually seen as an expensive cost centre, local heads are often under the 'cost reduction' microscope and under suspicion by business unit heads who jealously guard their own decision-making power. Done well, it is a first class training ground for business leaders with potential for the highest corporate levels. Done badly, it can cost the business dearly.