



NewsRelease

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MRI Study Uncovers Critical Six-Year Crossroad in the Career Path of U.S. Middle Managers

By Year Six, U.S. Middle Managers Are Either Identified “Senior Management Potential” or a “Career Middle Manager”

(Philadelphia, PA) September XX, 2005 – By the sixth year in the middle-management level, most companies in the United States have already decided whether a middle manager has senior-level potential or has become a “career” middle manager, according to a new study from Management Recruiters International, Inc. (MRI), the world’s largest search and recruitment organization. In the United Kingdom, however, the timeframe is even more accelerated, as the study revealed that most middle managers have only four years to advance to the senior level. The study, which interviewed 200 Human Resource directors or senior executives in the United States and 200 Human Resource directors or senior executives in the United Kingdom, also determined that “career” middle managers are seen as critical to the success of the company.

On average, a middle manager remains in the same position for 6.3 years before being promoted to senior management in the U.S. while in the U.K.; middle managers will spend an average of 4.7 years at that level before being promoted. However, in both countries, if these employees do not make the jump to senior management within that same time period, most surveyed companies said they would be considered “career” middle managers. The study also found that after six years in middle management, in both the U.S. and U.K., the opportunities for advancement to the senior level are greatly reduced. Therefore, middle managers who aspire to senior positions must carefully evaluate their career choices at this time, including the possibility of moving on to a new company, to determine how to best meet their goals.

Additionally, the accelerated timeframe for advancement in the U.K. may be attributed to the fact that middle-management candidates in the U.K. are more likely to inquire about the potential for career growth during the interview process than their counterparts in the U.S. On average, 58 percent of U.K. candidates will ask about opportunities for advancement, while only 41 percent of U.S. candidates will do the same.

“Middle managers who have aspirations to become a part of senior management within their own organization can now be cognizant of how much time they have to reach that goal,” said William Olson, President of Management Recruiters International. “Given this shorter time period, it is critical that these middle managers accelerate their career progression by investigating the available opportunities at their company and positioning themselves as potential senior managers more aggressively.”

Respondents in both the U.S. and U.K. also noted that when fulfilling senior-level positions within their company, the majority of them would prefer to promote from within. Specifically, only 23 percent of U.S. respondents and 11 percent of U.K. respondents said they consider a candidate from outside the company to be more attractive than one from within.

“According to our study, the majority of individuals in senior management are promoted from the middle-management level,” commented Olson. “Therefore, it is critical that companies focus on improving their ‘bench strength’ of middle-management employees. Hiring managers must make smarter and more strategic decisions when recruiting middle-management candidates, as these individuals represent the company’s future senior leaders.”

The study also revealed that hiring managers are more tolerant of frequent job changes at the junior level than at the middle or senior level. On average, respondents expect a junior candidate to remain with the same company for 2.4 years in the U.K. and 3.2 years in the U.S. For middle-management candidates, that figure rises to 3.5 years in the U.K. and 4.1 years in the U.S. while senior candidates should remain at their current position for years in the U.K. and 5.2 years in the U.S.

Opinion Research Corporation conducted telephone interviews with 200 Human Resource directors or senior executives in the U.S. and 200 in the U.K. The interviews took place in the U.S. between July 14 and August 5, 2005 and in the U.K. between July 14 and August 12, 2005. Margin of error for each sample of 200 is plus or minus seven percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

About Management Recruiters International, Inc. (MRI):

Management Recruiters International, Inc. (www.mrinetwork.com) is the world's largest search and recruitment organization with nearly 1,100 offices worldwide and systemwide billings of over \$425 million. MRI is a subsidiary of staffing and outsourcing leader CDI Corp. (NYSE: CDI), a global provider of engineering and information technology outsource solutions and professional staffing (www.cdicorp.com).

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