

# Fresh focus on the new generation

Younger business graduates are proving value for money, finds **Matt Symonds**

**E**xperience might not be everything after all. Ask the world's biggest companies where they would focus their efforts for recruiting business school graduates and you might be surprised by the response. Instead of the MBA, a growing number of companies are putting their money on the younger graduates of the Masters in Management (MiM).

Designed for students aspiring to leadership roles, the MiM is a postgraduate degree that attracts students from diverse academic backgrounds. They have limited professional experience, but are taught how to handle management issues in all areas of business.

Roland Siegers, executive director of the CEMS MiM, says these fresh business graduates are not only better value for money, but they're more flexible than those with an MBA.

"MiM graduates have a unique blend of skills," Siegers said. "Our students leave the programme as academic achievers who are highly skilled in communicating across cultures and working in large teams. You can send them anywhere, any time and they will perform."

Students on the Masters run by CEMS Global Alliance in Management Education study at two or three of the 29 partner schools. These institutions span continents, from Austria to Australia, and Ireland to India.

"Considering the international networks that they create, our students make valuable graduate employees. They're also distinct as they must fluently master two languages and have a working proficiency in a third," says Siegers.

The network of business schools that train these students is backed by a huge network of 73 global corporations, including consulting firm Deloitte, social media giant Facebook and the world's largest cosmetics company, L'Oréal.

An increasing number of major companies like these are seeing the appeal of hiring graduates fresh from their MiM programmes. From the 2013 CEMS graduating class, almost three-quarters now work for multinational companies. The areas of consulting, finance and consumer goods have been the most enthusiastic recruiters, with half of all CEMS graduates working for a corporate partner.

Bogdan Pralea, who studied on the programme at Vienna University of Economics and Business and Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University, graduated in 2012. He is now a Financial Analysis Manager at Procter & Gamble (P&G), the multinational consumer goods company and a CEMS corporate partner. He says through teamwork and projects across various industries, the course taught the mindset needed for him to settle into his role at P&G.

"What might have been a daunting environment felt so familiar



MiM graduates from Vienna University of Economics and Business are being hired by major companies straight from finishing their studies REX FEATURES

that I jumped in straight away to meet my team-mates and learn as much as I could about the business and my role in it. I wouldn't have had this confidence if it hadn't been for my Masters experience," he said. "To be comfortable in a multicultural environment and also feel relatively at ease with a continuously changing business is extremely empowering."

Pralea believes that many companies prefer hiring graduates directly from Masters programmes and then shape them into future leaders. He has seen this first-hand as Head of CEMS Global Partnership at P&G.

Henkel AG, the manufactur-

ing powerhouse behind the likes of laundry detergent Persil and Pritt glue sticks, is one of CEMS' longest-standing corporate partners, having joined the alliance in 1994.

The company has supported MiM students by giving them hands-on experience and recruiting for internships, as well as permanent positions.

Sarah Unkelbach, corporate manager of recruitment at Henkel AG, says: "Qualities like initiative, curiosity, openness, persuasiveness and teamwork that we look for perfectly match MiM students' abilities. More than 80 per cent of our employees work outside of

Henkel's home country of Germany, meaning we need graduates with high potential across the world."

The MiM qualification tends to produce graduates with a willingness to take on responsibility quickly, an enthusiasm for travelling across countries, and a passionate spirit, Unkelbach argues.

"Two qualities make MiM students especially valuable; teamwork combined with ambition," she says. "We want to be the best in everything we do, but in a collaborative way, which is why we look for colleagues who share this motivation and readily take on new challenges." As MiM stu-

dents fulfil the requirements of the world's major corporations, they are fast becoming the most desirable business graduate hires on the market.

While the highly ranked MBA programme at HEC Paris is well-known for producing a long list of CEOs of global corporations, almost three-quarters of graduates from the school's MiM programme now find work outside of France. In fact, over a third of the 2013 graduates are now employed outside of their home countries.

"MiM graduates are being increasingly recognised as low-risk for high investment," Siegers adds, "and they're fun."

## Education voices

### Skilled young professionals are in big demand

**Guillermo Baquero, faculty lead for the MiM programme at ESMT European School of Management and Technology in Berlin**

"In designing a degree programme, you have to consider what will make your graduates appealing. How can you do the best by students as well as recruiters?"

With this in mind at ESMT European School of Management and Technology in Berlin, we created a Masters in Management that is specifically designed for students with undergraduate



degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. The foundation

of this course came from talking to major graduate recruiters to find out where their needs were. We learnt what profiles multinationals wanted to recruit and built a programme that would produce them. Consulting firms, for instance, look for excellent quantitative abilities coupled with a background in management science, finance and economics.

Likewise, in companies where the supply chain is a major factor, they look for very analytical skills complemented with management capabilities and soft skills like

public speaking and team working. In knowing what the world's major corporations want, it's much easier to provide, and we're currently seeing our graduates interning at the likes of energy supplier E.ON, Boston Consulting Group, Deutsche Bank and multinationals General Electric, Daimler and Nokia.

These young professionals carry little baggage from their career paths, and have the combination of technical and management skills that are in such demand in today's job market."