

## Poland needs specialists for its special situation

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Almost three years after Poland joined the European Union, the dust is still settling on the country's labour market, where radical change has created special challenges for the foreign investors who are looking to benefit from the booming economy, as well as for the companies that have already set up shop in the former communist land.

One clear trend to emerge in the aftermath of EU accession, which prompted a flight of Poles to search for work in other member countries, is the increasing need for specialists to help firms compete in the union's biggest new market. Now foreign investors need to adjust to a new reality in which the best candidates may no longer be found by traditional means.

According to Andrzej Pieniasek, Head of Operations at Purcon, Poland, a new approach to recruitment is needed. 'Poland still offers outstanding opportunities for business investment,' he says, 'but the search for the right candidates has become more complex.'

Purcon, the leader in permanent recruitment and interim management in Procurement and Supply Chain for more than 30 years, opened its Warsaw office in May, 2006 to extend its reach into Europe. With its nationwide network of capable consultants, it is uniquely placed to help international companies target the highly-skilled Polish workforce.

Andrzej Pieniasek says the situation has changed since foreign businesses first flocked to the country to tap into the exciting new market at the heart of continental Europe. Then, its workforce was young, high skilled and low-cost. Since EU accession, however, wages have risen as Poles have realized that their market value may be higher than their salaries. There has also been a mass exodus of its workers in lower paid professions to other EU labour markets.

Nevertheless, Poland still offers outstanding opportunities for business and investment: 38 million consumers are driving an annual 10% rise in its GDP and the country is ranked fifth in the top 10 global investment destinations. With 52% of the population under 35 and two million of those in higher education, its future prospects are excellent.

To benefit from these opportunities, says Andrzej Pieniasek, new investors and those that already have a manufacturing or distributing base in the country need to adjust their recruitment strategy. Purcon advises on how to avoid the pitfalls of hiring in a market where demand for specialists now exceeds supply. This includes planning recruitment drives well in advance, and remaining aware of rising wages and limited availability.

Andrzej Pieniasek says it's crucial that companies seeking specialists in Supply Chain, Logistics, Procurement and Manufacturing seek expert rather than generalist advice. In addition to traditional recruitment, Purcon now offers interim management services in Supply Chain at very competitive rates.

But the biggest challenge for foreign investors lies in looking beyond the low-cost labour factor to appreciate the other attractions of doing business in Poland.

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Purcon is an international provider of tailored recruitment solutions across all Supply Chain, Procurement and Logistics disciplines. Purcon Poland is a branch of Purcon responsible for the Polish and CEE market.

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