

## India's Leaders



INDIA

As the global business environment continues to 'flatten' (Thomas Friedman's term), and as "execution" becomes the secret to making ordinary companies extraordinary, more and more organizations will find that their competitive advantage increasingly relies on having true leadership capital – perhaps even more than tangible assets such as real estate. For India as a nation, the ability to achieve global leadership standards in relatively short order will likewise determine its long-term success.

Seventy-three percent of the more than 300 global CEOs that Korn/Ferry and the Economist Intelligence Unit polled in late 2006 ranked India as the sub-region in Asia having the greatest impact on the development of international business practices. In addition, the study showed that CEOs worldwide are more confident in India's ability to achieve global leadership standards within the next three to five years than they are in China's. Perhaps now more than ever, Indian firms are pressed to quickly determine which leadership competencies they will need to drive their globalization, analyze what leadership talent they currently have, and figure out how to close the gap.

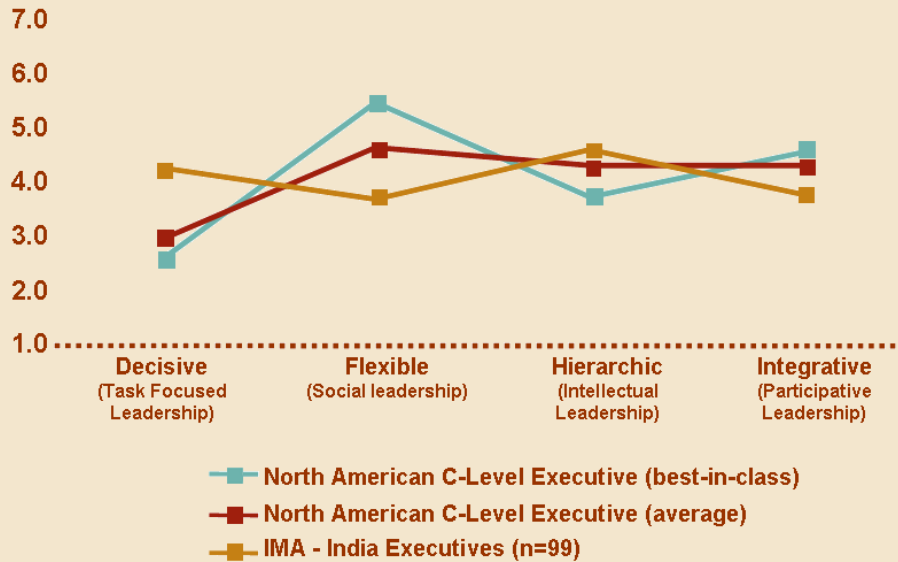
In recognition of this, in 2007 Korn/Ferry International partnered with International Management Assessment (IMA) India to conduct assessments of 100 C-level Indian executives. The following is an analysis of the group's leadership profiles.

### Leadership

**Indian leaders are more directive and hierarchical than their Western counterparts, and less concerned about appearing open to the input of others and building consensus. While this may be effective in an Indian business context, such a leadership style could backfire with international management teams who may need to feel a stronger sense of empowerment to stay motivated and productive.**

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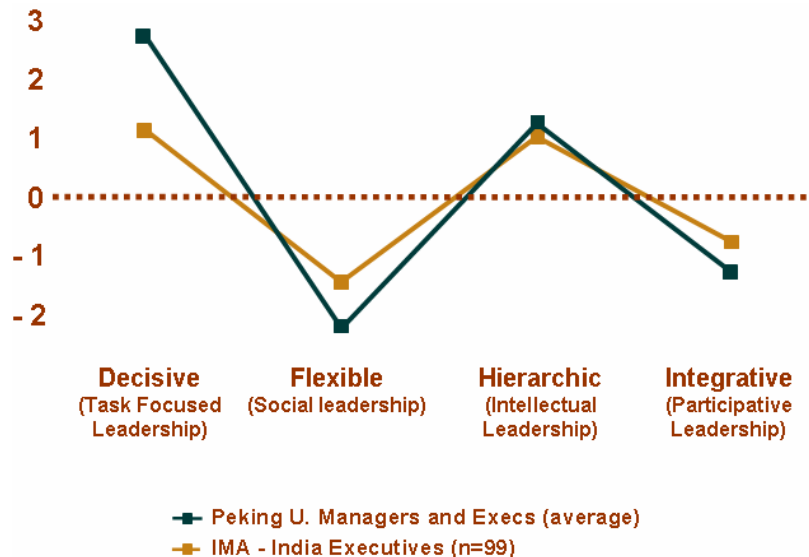
### Leadership Styles of IMA Executives vs. North American Executives



### Strategic Thinking

Indian leaders are on par with “Best-in-Class” leaders from the West when it comes to strategic thinking. What’s more, when the Indian assessments were compared against Korn/Ferry’s data on Chinese executive leadership styles, the Indian leaders ranked as far more strategic, demonstrating a tendency to take a longer-term, holistic, and analytical view of their businesses.

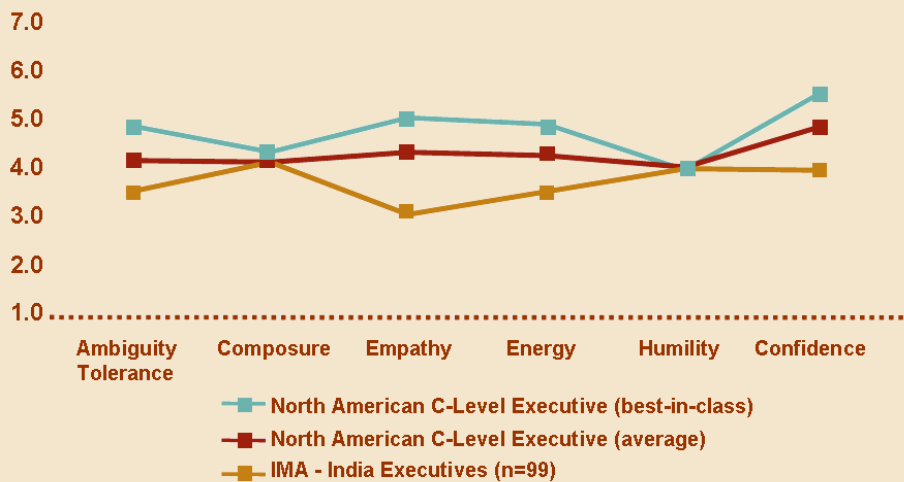
### IMA Executives vs. Chinese Executives



## Emotional Competencies

Indian executives showed significantly lower levels of ambiguity tolerance, empathy, energy and confidence compared to Western “Best-in-Class” leaders. This indicates that they may be less comfortable with uncertainty, perhaps less sensitive to the feelings of others, and that they might even be less willing to take risks and to “stand alone” than their Western counterparts.

Indian Emotional Competencies



So, while India is well-known for its entrepreneurial and highly-educated talent base, the country will need to continuously focus on developing leaders capable of managing and inspiring highly complex and multicultural organizations. In the evolving global management culture, strategic decisions are made, or at least approved, on the highest rungs of the corporate ladder. Those decisions require a lot of accurate information, much of which lies deep within business units that are a long distance from Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. Over time, Indian leaders will likely need to adopt a leadership style that is more open and participative to access the information necessary for making the complex decisions required of global businesses.

Sophisticated companies everywhere now differentiate between high *performing* managers and those that are truly high *potential*, i.e., what Korn/Ferry calls “learning agile” executives. By properly assessing who the high potential managers are, firms can make rational decisions about who they invest in. Based on the assessments done in India to-date, for Indian companies this investment will likely be in the development of social and participative leadership styles, as well as stronger international communication skills. In some cases, the gap between what firms have and what they need will be too large; at this point recruitment from the outside will be the optimal way to ensure that an effective global management team is in place.

## About the Author



**David Everhart**  
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Based in Shanghai, David Everhart heads Korn/Ferry International's Leadership Development Solutions business in Asia. In this role, he leverages his extensive experience working with both Western and Asian executives to develop and implement effective cross-cultural business strategies as well as coach them to effectively negotiate joint venture agreements, manage overseas acquisitions and lead teams in the Pacific Region.

During his career, Mr. Everhart has conducted training programs and intercultural management assessments for American, Chinese, European and Japanese leadership teams at top organizations across multiple industry sectors.

Mr. Everhart was the founder and principal of Ionis International, a boutique training firm specializing in improving the effectiveness of U.S.-China and U.S.-Japan corporate relationships. Prior to that, he served as president of PacificVision, a Japanese-owned training firm.

In addition, Mr. Everhart designs and co-teaches highly regarded executive education courses on Chinese and Japanese management at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). He is a frequent speaker at various industry conferences on Asian business topics. Mr. Everhart holds an M.A. in East Asian Studies from the University of Michigan and a B.A. in History from Cornell University.

## About Korn/Ferry International in India

Korn/Ferry International, with more than 80 offices in 39 countries, is a premier global provider of talent management solutions and is currently ranked the number one executive search firm in the world by Hunt-Scanlon. Based in Los Angeles, the Firm delivers an array of solutions that helps clients to identify, deploy, develop, retain and reward their talent.

Korn/Ferry International opened offices in India in Mumbai, Gurgaon and Bangalore in 1995, 1997 and 2007 respectively, from which it serves its extensive international client base across the country. Today, the team offers specialized consultants, personalized service, strategic guidance and world-class leadership to local companies and multi-national corporations alike, leveraging the Firm's sophisticated network of more than 490 search consultants around the globe.

## About Leadership Development Solutions

Our Leadership Development Solutions group combines validated executive behavioral assessment and developmental tools with an understanding of the skills and experiences required for success. Through a comprehensive approach, we provide a range of talent management solutions that helps clients maximize the effectiveness of their talent and align critical competencies with organizational strategy.

## How Can I Get More Information?

Please contact a Korn/Ferry consultant or visit our Web site at [www.kornferryasia.com](http://www.kornferryasia.com).

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