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Employability of MBA graduates in the Netherlands

Findings of a survey among Employers in the Netherlands
Conducted for MSM in November 2018

Working together for better global management



In total, 151 different companies responded to the survey, including large companies with more than 100,000 employees like ABN Amro, Adidas, Atos, DHL, Heineken, Hema, IBM, J&J, KPMG, PepsiCo, Philips, Stryker and Veon.

The growing skills gap

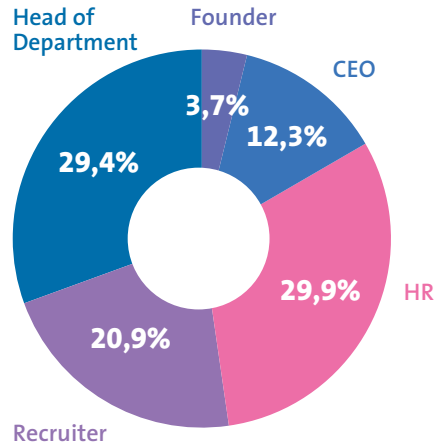
For prospective students employability is a very important criterion when choosing a business school for their MBA program. With tuition fees increasing, prospective students will look more carefully for return on investment. 90% of the students cited that 'getting a job' was a major criteria in choosing the business school for their MBA program (ICEF Monitor 2015).

From an employer perspective, various studies on the employability of MBA graduates highlight the increasingly 'wide gap' between the MBA graduate skills and the expectations of the work environment which is considered as a growing concern in the rapidly evolving and globalized work environment. Up to 67% of larger organizations struggle to find the right talent and report that this talent shortage is increasing every year (Manpower 2018).

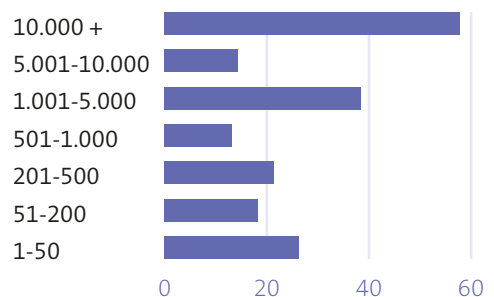
This growing skills gap is providing business schools with the important challenge of changing the increasing negative employer perception of the quality of MBA graduates.

In this light MSM conducted a survey among employers in the Netherlands in November 2018 to get insight into the value of the MBA degree, the hiring of MBA graduates, and the expected and missing skills of MBA graduates. This report provides you with the major findings of this survey conducted amongst 250 respondents in the Netherlands.

Main functions of respondents



Size of companies of respondents

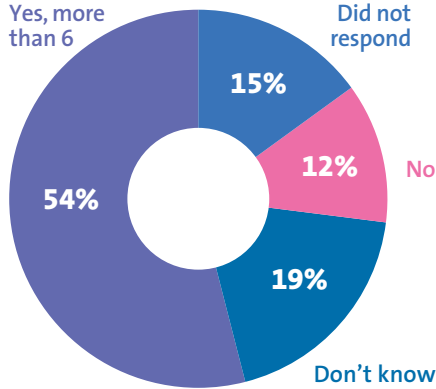


Top 5 industries of respondents

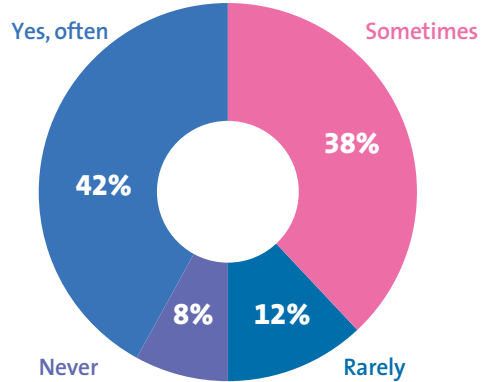


MBA hiring trends

MBA graduates in the company



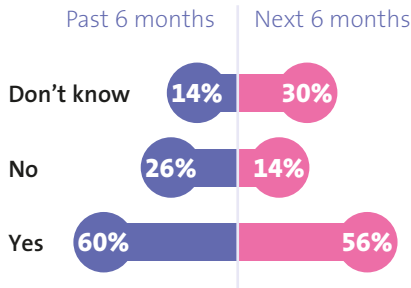
Hiring non-Dutch MBA graduates



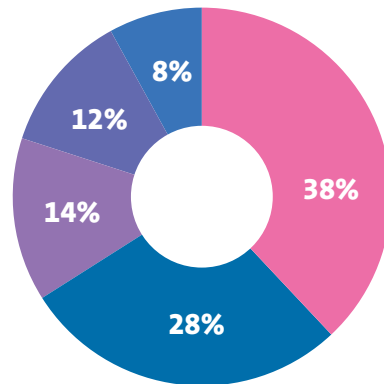
80% Companies with more than 6 MBA graduates employed more than 500 people

86% Companies with no MBA graduates employed fewer than 500 people

Hired MBA's



Necessity of speaking Dutch



38% No Dutch required

28% Notions of Dutch useful

14% Capable of conversing in basic Dutch

12% Fluency in Dutch

8% Notions of Dutch important

Top industries hiring MBA's

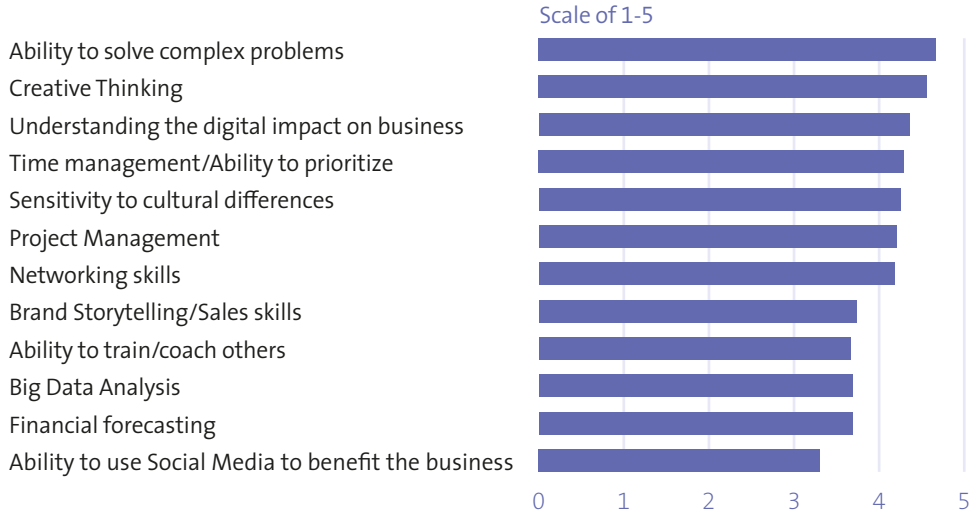
- 15%** Consumer
- 15%** Professional Services
- 14%** Information and Communication Technologies

The professional services industry is the industry with the highest rating (4%) on “never” hiring a non-Dutch MBA graduate and on the “Fluency in Dutch” requirement (4%)



MBA skills importance

Most important MBA skills needed



Complex problem solving

76% rated as very important

Most important for Department Heads, Recruiters, HR and others, and for companies > 500 people



Creative thinking

66% rated as very important

Most important for CEO's and Founders/ Owners and for companies < 500 people

Most important MBA skills in top 5 industries



Global Health & Healthcare



Information and Communication Technologies



Consumer



Automotive, Aerospace, Supply Chain & Transport



Professional Services

Important interpersonal skills mentioned:

- agile working
- independent thinking
- entrepreneurial mindset
- stress management/working under deadline

Most important skills

Survey Employers in the Netherlands	Analysis MBA Job Offers in the Netherlands	Survey MSM Alumni in the Netherlands	Financial Times Moules and Nilsson, 2017
Ability to solve complex problems	Ability to solve complex problems	Ability to solve complex problems	Ability to solve complex problems
Creative Thinking	Sensitivity to Cultural Differences	Project Management	Ability to work with a wide variety of people (Sensitivity to Cultural Differences)
Understanding the digital impact on business	Networking skills	Time Management / Ability to Prioritize	Time Management / Ability to Prioritize
Time Management / Ability to Prioritize	Creative Thinking	Sensitivity to Cultural Differences	Ability to build, sustain and expand network of people (networking skills)
Sensitivity to Cultural Differences	Brand storytelling/sales skills	Creative Thinking	Understanding the digital impact on business
Project Management	Big Data Analysis	Networking Skills	
Networking skills	Project Management	Understanding the digital impact on business	

The 'ability to solve complex problems', 'sensitivity to cultural differences' and networking skills are considered important in the Dutch job market and internationally. 'Creative thinking' and 'project management' skills seem to be more specifically required skills in the Dutch job market.

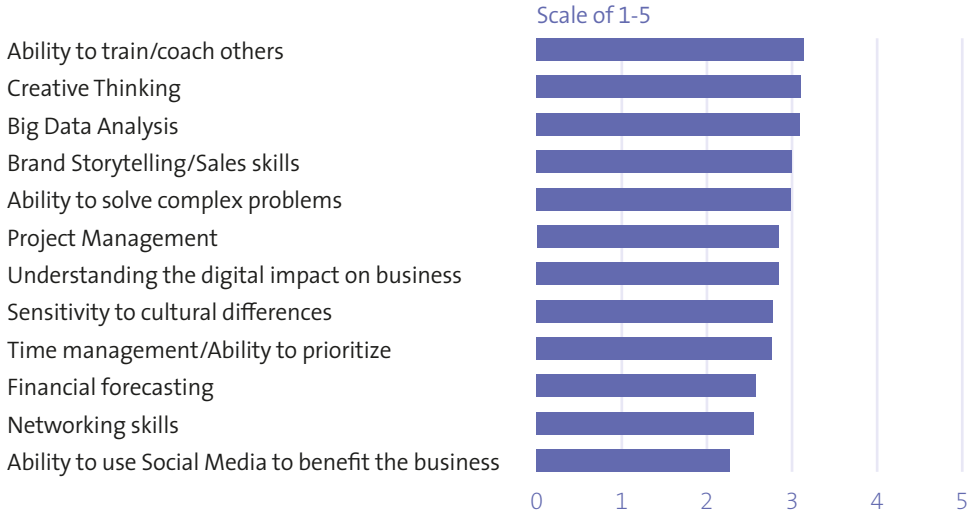
Difficult skills to find

Survey Employers in the Netherlands	Financial Times 2017 Moules and Nilsson, 2017	Financial Times 2018 Nilsson, 2018
Ability to train/coach others	Ability to train/coach others	Ability to influence others
Creative Thinking	Ability to use social media to benefit business	Strategic thinking
Big Data Analysis	Big Data Analysis	Big Data Analysis
Brand Storytelling/sales skills	Brand Storytelling/sales skills	Drive and resilience
Ability to solve complex problems	Financial forecasting	Ability to solve complex problems

Creative thinking which is considered an important skill in the Dutch job market, is also one of the hardest skills to find in MBA graduates according to employers in the Netherlands. Big Data Analysis skills are difficult to find in the Netherlands and abroad, but it is one of the most important skills required in MBA job offers in the Netherlands.

The MBA skills gap

Most difficult skills to find in MBA



Big data analysis

is most difficult to find for Recruiters and CEOs



Creative Thinking

is most difficult to find for Founders and HR



Ability to train/coach others

is most difficult to find for Department Heads and other functions

Most difficult skills to find in MBA graduates in top 5 industries



Automotive, Aerospace, Supply Chain & Transport

Financial Forecast, Big data analysis and Understanding the digital impact on business



Global Health & Healthcare

Creative thinking, Ability to solve complex problems and Brand storytelling/Sales skills



Information and Communication Technologies

Big data analysis, Creative thinking and ability to solve complex problems



Consumer

Ability to train/coach others, Creative thinking and Brand storytelling/Sales skills



Professional Services

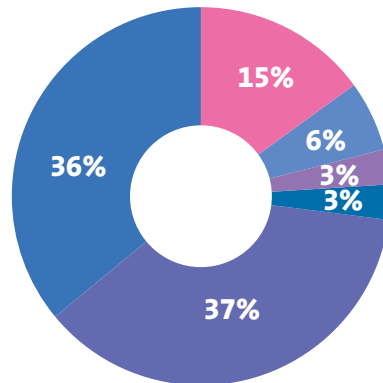
Brand storytelling/Sales skills, Creative thinking and Big data analysis

How can Business Schools better prepare MBA students for the Dutch job market?

Curriculum and skills development

Regarding the curriculum development in general, several companies indicated that they want to work together with business schools on developing curriculums that are more focused on the needs of the market. These needs include hard skills, especially IT skills, digital transformation, project management but also transferrable skills such as change management, innovative thinking, networking, communication, working with various cultures and developing an agile mindset. Also more soft skills such as leadership, taking ownership, passion and self-awareness need to be developed in the curriculum.

To better understand the needs of the market for curriculum development, MSM has installed the Business Advisory Board consisting of prominent and experienced business leaders who advise MSM on the relevance of MSM's education. In the MSM MBA curriculum developing transferrable and soft skills are an integral part of the program. During the program these skills are trained in individual and group assignments and apart from the academic courses, the MBA program offers a personal development track containing of several skills workshops and individual self-awareness and self-development coaching.



- 37%** Specific skill/curriculum development
- 36%** Increased practical experience (various forms)
- 15%** Better understanding of Dutch market/mindset
- 6%** Better expectation management
- 3%** They are well prepared
- 3%** Other observations

Increased practical experience

To make the MBA experience more practical, the internship/consulting project and interaction with companies were mentioned as possible options. Within the MSM MBA program students have the possibility to finalize the program with a business consultancy project solving a real life problem for a company. During the program, several work visits to and guest lectures from companies are organized to enhance the practical experience.



Better understanding of Dutch market/mindset

Suggestions on how to improve graduates' understanding of the Dutch market/mindset include networking, projects and internships with Dutch companies, learning Dutch, Dutch company visits, Dutch guest lectures and authentic case studies.

Apart from the above-mentioned work visits and guest lectures, MSM MBA students can enjoy the Corporate Week during which they learn more about working in the Netherlands and can network with national, regional and local companies. The MBA students also have the opportunity to participate in the mentorship program. In this program, the students are connected on an individual basis to representatives of the Dutch business community to learn more about the Dutch way of doing business.

If your company wants to get involved with MSM students through consultancy projects, internships, guest lectures or the Corporate Week, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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Summary of key findings

Perception of MBA graduates

Regarding the perception of the MBA graduate, the biggest three issues raised in the survey were:

- the high expectations of MBA graduates
- the integration problem into the team due to skills being too broad and not pragmatic enough
- MBA graduates having too much theoretical knowledge that is not applicable in real life situations.

Value of MBA degree

- 60% of the respondents of the Dutch Employer Survey, as well as 45% CEO and interview respondents do hire MBA graduates.
- In 26% of potential MBA jobs, the “MBA is required” and in 46% the “MBA is preferred”. This shows that the Dutch market still values MBA degrees, even though salary-wise this is not always reflected.
- The perception of the MBA degree is however, mostly seen as a “nice to have”.

Valuable skills

- The “ability to solve complex problems” was rated as the most important skill in the employer survey, in MBA job offers and by MSM MBA alumni in the Netherlands, while at the same time this is a in the top five of ‘hard to find’ skills in MBA graduates according the survey.

- Creative thinking is second most important skill in the survey, but is considered one of the most hard to find skills in the top 5 industries. This skill seems to be specifically required in the Dutch job market, as creative thinking is not mentioned at all in the Financial Times 2017 and 2018 surveys.
- The most difficult skill to find according the survey is the ability to train/coach others.

Business schools’ challenges

- Business schools need to deliver MBA graduates with a better fit to the market needs
- To achieve this, business schools should involve the business community more in the development of the curriculum and specific skills, and increase the interactions with companies during the MBA studies.

More information

In case you would like to have more information on the survey, on MSM or about how your company could contribute to the MBA curriculum development at MSM, please contact Hermina Kooyman at kooyman@msm.nl



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