Read This First!
Thank you for using the SHRM Foundation DVD, “From Local to Regional to Global Player: The Evolution of Aramex International.” This document outlines the suggested use and explanation of the supplemental materials created for use with the video. Please read it carefully before proceeding.

Our goal is to provide you, the facilitator, with materials that will allow you to create a customized presentation and discussion. For this reason, we have included this Discussion Guide document. In addition, discussion question slides from the PowerPoint can be deleted to customize your presentation and discussion.

Suggested Program Agenda
1. Distribute the Discussion Questions to participants, and suggest that they watch the DVD with questions in mind.
2. Play the DVD.
3. Use the PowerPoint introductory slides (Slides 2 through 5) to discuss the DVD, the history of Aramex and the five important lessons presented at the end of the DVD (Slides 25 through 30).
4. Distribute the Participant Worksheets to generate individual thought and discussion. (Alternatively, these worksheets can also be used to assign group activities and continue with Step 5 after the activity, or they can be used after Step 5 to assess participant understanding. Please see the Participant Worksheet section below for more information.)
5. Use the PowerPoint question slides (Slides 6 through 24) to discuss each individual primary discussion question. (The Question Guide provides the facilitator with all the necessary information and answers to lead a comprehensive discussion.)
6. Distribute the Participant Worksheet Answer Keys to participants.

Supplemental Materials Descriptions

Aramex Overview
The Aramex Overview can be used either as a facilitator discussion guide or as a participant handout. It includes a general outline of important facts about the company, as well as a comprehensive overview of how Aramex went from a local to a regional to a global player.

20-Minute Video Synopsis
The Video Synopsis can be used either as a facilitator discussion guide or as a participant handout. It presents a chronological summary of the important segments of the video, highlighting the speakers and critical points in each section.

SHRM Overview
The SHRM Overview should be used as a participant handout. Divided into two sections, it gives a detailed description of both SHRM and the SHRM Foundation.

HR Certification Institute (HRCI) Summary
The HR Certification Institute summary should be used as a participant handout. It discusses the levels of professional HR certification available through the Institute, with brief descriptions of each.
Please consider the following questions as you watch the SHRM Foundation DVD, “From Local to Regional to Global Player: The Evolution of Aramex International.” Your facilitator may ask you to answer these questions in discussion or activity format at the completion of the DVD.

**What are some advantages of an alliance-based business model?**

**What considerations might a global organization make for geographically separated segments of the business?**

**What types of experiences might an organization encounter when expanding from a local to a regional to a global player?**

**How can an organization encourage professional development among employees?**

**How can a company attract and retain talent in different parts of the world?**

**What can an organization do to retain talent following an acquisition?**

**How might an organization promote female involvement and engagement?**

**What is the role of HR in promoting successful growth?**

**What are some common mistakes that global players make when acquiring local companies?**
Aramex Overview

OPERATING INFORMATION
• Headquartered in Amman, Jordan.
• $845M+ in annual revenue (USD).
• 14,000 employees worldwide.
• Operates in 60 countries.
• Started in 1982 as a partner carrier for major North American carriers.
• First international company listed on the NASDAQ in 1997. Currently listed on Dubai stock market.

THE BUSINESS MODEL
• Provide local service for international shipping companies.
• Master the shipping business.
• Find partners for global expansion.
• Focus on an asset-light operational model.
• Re-evaluate business position.
• Begin competing on a global scale.

ARAMEX SERVICES
• International and domestic express delivery.
• Freight forwarding.
• Logistics and warehousing.
• Records and information management solutions.
• E-business solutions.
• Online shopping services.

GLOBAL NETWORK
• Aramex is a founding member of and chairs the Global Distribution Alliance (GDA).
• Alliance of over 40 express and logistics providers from around the world, each specializing in their own region.
• Alliance network covers the world with the same, unified quality standards and technology of Aramex.
• The network has more than 12,000 offices, 33,000 vehicles and 66,000 employees.
• Network operates in more than 240 countries.
Narrated and presented by Wayne F. Cascio, Ph.D., SHRM Foundation’s eleventh video examines how Aramex evolved from a local to a regional to a global player. Filmed on location at Aramex’s offices in Dubai, UAE, and featuring interviews with Aramex’s officers, managers and employees, this film presents several strategies for growing a local organization into a global player.

VIDEO INTRODUCTION
Wayne Cascio, Professor, University of Colorado Denver
Cascio describes how the business processes and business functions change as a company evolves from a location to regional to a global player. He explains a brief history of Aramex.

ARAMEX: THE BUSINESS MODEL
Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer; Bashar Obeid, Chief Financial Officer; Wayne Cascio, Professor, University of Colorado Denver
2:10 - The alliance model
2:56 - A light-asset model
3:24 - Today’s Aramex

Mr. Hachem explains how Aramex’s alliance and light-asset model allows the company to expand into new markets. Mr. Obeid discusses the growth of the company. Professor Cascio explains the history of Aramex’s expansion.

NEW MARKETS, NEW CULTURES
Iyad Kamal, Chief Operation Officer; Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer
4:05 - Operating with varying local cultures
5:10 - Regional management

Mr. Kamal explains the need to understand the culture of the country before setting up operations in it. Mr. Hachem described items to consider when entering new markets and the use of regional management to serve local markets.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING
Lina Shehadeh, Chief Marketing Officer; Wayne Cascio, Professor, University of Colorado Denver
5:25 - Marketing through experience

Ms. Shehadeh explains how Aramex allocates marketing budgets to enhance frontliners’ training, technologies and operations.
CORPORATE CULTURE
Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer;  Ayman Badawi, Chief Human Resources Officer;  Bashar Obeid, Chief Financial Officer;  Iyad Kamal, Chief Operation Officer;  Rula Najjar, Regional Customer Relationship Manager

6:40 - Aramex core values
7:05 - Share experiences across the company
7:30 - Involve the employees in decision-making
7:53 - Task risks and allow for mistakes
8:10 - Culture as a recruitment and retention tool
8:30 - Culture is about empowerment
8:35 - Comprehensive induction plan for new employees

Mr. Hachem describes his considerations as the company expands. Mr. Badawi explains how the company shares knowledge between the various geographical regions and how the company trains new employees. Mr. Obeid explains the need to involve employees in the decision-making process. Mr. Kamal describes the need to allow learners to make mistakes. Ms. Najjar describes the corporate culture as a recruitment tool.

CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY
Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer;  Ayman Badawi, Chief Human Resources Officer

9:05 - Corporate citizenship and social responsibility
9:23 - Community involvement

Mr. Hachem explains the considerations Aramex makes for the environment, the local community and the economy. Mr. Badawi talks about being involved in the community through corporate social responsibility programs.

FINDING AND KEEPING TALENT
Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer;  Rula Najjar, Regional Customer Relationship Manager;  Ayman Badawi, Chief Human Resources Officer;  Iyad Kamal, Chief Operation Officer;  Bashar Obeid, Chief Financial Officer

9:45 - Talent is the most important asset
10:03 - Retaining talent
10:32 - Recruit from within
10:40 - Avoid parachuting experience
11:11 - What the new generation is looking for in a job
11:46 - More ways than money to retain talent

Mr. Hachem discusses why talent is their most important asset. Ms. Najjar describes the importance of retaining talent. Mr. Badawi explains why Aramex recruits from within. Mr. Hachem explains why Aramex avoids parachuting experience and the need to understand the local talent market. Mr. Badawi explains what it takes to recruit new-generation employees. Mr. Kamal ex-
plains various methods of employee retention.

** MANAGEMENT TEAM  
*Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer;  
Iyad Kamal, Chief Operation Officer*  
12:00 - Management team statistics  
12:20 - The importance of good people

Mr. Hachem discusses the makeup of the management team. Mr. Kamal explains why Aramex focuses on empowering employees.

**ADVICE FOR WOMEN  
*Lina Shehadeh, Chief Marketing Officer*  
12:33 - Three pieces of advice for women in the workplace

Ms. Shehadeh gives three pieces of advice for women in the workplace.

**ACQUISITIONS  
*Iyad Kamal, Chief Operation Officer; Bashar Obeid, Chief Financial Officer;  
Rula Najjar, Regional Customer Relationship Manager; Ayman Badawi, Chief Human Resources Officer*  
14:41 - Buying into human capital  
15:00 - Integration Issues  
15:25 - Learning from the acquired company  
15:40 - Two-sided integration

Mr. Kamal explains that Aramex acquires companies with the intention of acquiring the human capital. Mr. Obeid discusses issues that arise in the integration process. Ms. Najjar and Mr. Badawi describe how Aramex uses a two-sided learning process to bring together the best practices from both companies.

**EVOLUTION OF THE HR FUNCTION–CHALLENGES FOR HR  
*Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer; Bashar Obeid, Chief Financial Officer;  
Ayman Badawi, Chief Human Resources Officer*  
16:20 - HR is critical for a growth strategy  
17:00 - HR becomes the conduit for the corporate culture

Mr. Obeid and Mr. Badawi explain the evolution of the role of HR at Aramex.

**FIVE LESSONS  
*Wayne Cascio, Professor, University of Colorado Denver*  
17:05 - The five lessons  
20:00 - The Aramex strategy for success

Professor Cascio explains the five key lessons covered in this case study.
The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world’s largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 individual members, the Society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available.

As an influential voice, the Society’s mission is also to advance the human resource profession by giving HR professionals tools to be business leaders, such as executive education programming, the SHRM Foundation video series, benchmarking and workplace trends reports, SPHR, PHR and GPHR certification preparation tools, and much more. The Society also works to build recognition in the business community about the role HR plays in organizational success.

SHRM serves the profession by providing HR professionals with ready access to the latest information and trends through a series of free and discounted webcasts, HR Magazine, sample forms and policies, surveys, and the SHRM Knowledge Center, which fields more than 125,000 requests annually.

Founded in 1948, SHRM currently has more than 575 affiliated chapters in the United States and members in more than 140 countries. For more information visit SHRM Online at www.shrm.org.

The SHRM Foundation is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizational affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management. Since 1966, the SHRM Foundation has focused on human resources as a strategic business leader. It advances the profession and increases the effectiveness of HR professionals through research, education, innovation and research-based knowledge.

The Foundation funds strategic research in all areas related to the management of people in organizations. Grant applications (for up to $200,000) are available on the SHRM Foundation website (www.shrm.org/foundation).

The SHRM Foundation Board of Directors reviews proposals two times each year. Authors can expect to receive detailed feedback on their proposals. More than 85 percent of Foundation research projects completed since 1998 have resulted in a published article, book or major conference presentation.

In addition, the Foundation funds the dissemination of research-based knowledge through books, videos, DVDs and innovative educational initiatives such as the SHRM Masters Series, Thought Leaders Retreat and scholarships.

The SHRM Foundation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, comprising distinguished HR academic and practice leaders. Contributions to the SHRM Foundation are tax-deductible. For more information, please visit the SHRM Foundation web site: www.shrm.org/foundation.

The HR Certification Institute, established in 1976, is an internationally recognized certifying organization for the human resource profession.

Today, more than 115,000 HR professionals worldwide proudly maintain the HR Certification Institute’s credentials as a mark of high professional distinction.

The HR Certification Institute is a global leader in developing rigorous exams to demonstrate mastery and real-world application of forward-thinking HR practices, policies and principles.
QUESTION GUIDE

*Education and health care*
A corporation can contribute to improving educational opportunities within the communities in which it operates by getting involved in education. By assisting and, in some cases, creating schools for the underserved, corporations can have a significant and lasting impact on society. Some opportunities:

*Learn as you go.*
For small or newly formed businesses, an alliance model can help a firm to break into an established market by learning the details and nuances of the industry under the supervision of an established player. Partner businesses are typically given access to a well-established set of best practices along with a set of supplemental services that they can offer to their customers. For Aramex, partnership with FedEx, a well-established American courier service, gave it insight into how to run a logistics company. The partnership also gave Aramex a means to offer its local customers access to reliable, cost-effective, international shipping services.

For FedEx, the parent company of the alliance, Aramex offered access to areas in the Middle East and other regions of the world that were previously not serviced by FedEx’s mainline service. Through its partnership with Aramex, FedEx was able to learn the nuances of the cultures and business norms in that geography and expand into similar markets with improved chances of success.

*Distributed risk*
Alliances allow organizations to provide services while mitigating certain risks. For example, the FedEx/Aramex alliance allowed FedEx to expand service rapidly into the Middle East without having to learn the sociopolitical environment. For Aramex, the alliance allowed it to provide international services to its customers without the need to purchase expensive airplanes and landing rights, or to employ people all over the world to handle packages. Ultimately, the alliance allowed Aramex to start up locally, grow into a regional company, and eventually into a global player by mitigating the capital requirements of establishing a global company from the start.

*Built-in business*
An alliance-based model brings business to the table for local or startup organizations. In the early 1980s, entering into markets in the Middle East, Africa and India was of great importance to FedEx. There was demand for service to the area, but due to the political instability of the region, FedEx chose to seek out alternative methods for expansion. Upon forming the alliance with Aramex, it was able to provide delivery service to the region. At the same time, FedEx provided Aramex with a steady stream of business (read: cash flow) that provided the foundation for Aramex’s rapid growth.

What are some advantages of an alliance-based business model?

*How can a light-asset model help a company grow?*
A light-asset business model is a method by which companies gain access to equipment, land and other large-ticket items through leasing, partnership and profit sharing rather than through traditional capital expenditures. The model is designed to allow companies to reap profits from the value they add to the process rather than from the ownership of property and capital resources. By keeping capital costs low, companies can invest more money in human resources, marketing and other soft expenses that have a greater impact on the productivity of the business. Asset-light models are particularly effective for service-based companies where equipment is a commodity rather than a differentiator.

*How can an organization prevent an alliance partner from becoming an eventual competitor?*
Keeping an alliance together requires a delicate balance of mutual benefit. Because the premise of capitalism is self-interest, the best way to maintain an alliance is by ensuring both sides receive adequate benefit. The key is to select the right business partner at the outset. Potential partnerships should be defined by honesty, integrity, financial stability, and clarity of expectations, goals and resources that will be shared. It is also wise to set a timeline to re-evaluate the agreement. A business alliance, much like a personal relationship, can last ad infinitum as long as there are open lines of communication and a desire to make it mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

*What are some reasons to acquire rather than to partner with a company?*
It all comes down to control. In some cases, partnerships adequately produce desired outcomes, yet in other cases there are issues that can only be resolved if the larger partner assumes control of the smaller business. For example, if one of Aramex’s partnerships with a smaller delivery company were to provide inadequate service (e.g., late delivery, lost packages, unfriendly service), it might be in Aramex’s best interest to purchase the smaller company to gain control of its operations and correct the issues.

Another reason to purchase a company rather than to partner with it is to prevent future competition. If, for example, one of Aramex’s alliance partners were signaling to split off with the intent to compete directly, Aramex might be served best by offering to buy out the company prior to it terminating the alliance.
**Culture sensitivity**

An organization that has operations in various parts of the world must consider the local customs, traditions and expectations of each area. Understanding and operating within local norms is critical to being a successful business and a sought-after employer. In some areas of the world, for example, working on religious holidays is considered unthinkable, whereas in other parts of the world, working more than 36 weeks in a year is unheard of and unacceptable. Being aware of a locale’s customs is key to achieving success in that region.

Aside from religious and work-related considerations, other customs include formalities, language dialects and social norms. In retail and storefront businesses in France and certain parts of Latin America, for example, afternoon siestas are part of accepted business standards. Businesses shut their doors, and both employees and customers participate in a period of early-afternoon downtime before re-opening operations for afternoon and evening business. It would be considered insensitive to fail to respect these local traditions.

**Regulatory compliance**

In every area of the world, governments have different sets of regulatory obligations and tax structures. Global organizations must become aware of and operate inline with the requirements of each government entity. In some areas of the world, governments regulate the use of natural resources more heavily than in other areas, and other areas focus on human rights and labor standards. Complying with governmental regulations requires an organization to invest in legal and business experts who are familiar with local laws.

**Standard operating procedures**

The most important tasks for a multinational, global player are to ensure that there is a global standard of operations, while allowing for flexibility to accommodate local traditions, customs and norms. As an organization expands to various parts of the world, it is important to make sure the core operations that define a company (e.g., on-time delivery of packages) remain intact. Consider, for example, if Aramex were to expand to South America where midday siestas are imperative, special consideration must be made (e.g., flexible scheduling) to ensure that employees are allowed their normal siesta while still remaining open for business and in operation throughout the entire business day.

**How can an organization maintain a global standard of operation while operating locally?**

An organization that operates locally but is managed globally must balance the needs of the local operation with the demands of the global customer base. In many cases, it is a matter of training and preparation that helps a company stay focused. It is also important to identify conflicts with core values and to devise solutions prior to entering into a market to ensure successful execution of the business.

Further, by empowering well-trained employees (both managerial and front line) at the local level to make operational decisions, organizations put many of the day-to-day decisions that directly affect employees and customers in the hands of those who best understand the operating environment. Establishing trust with local managers and employees is the key to ensuring a standard level of service.

**How does dividing up management by region address cultural considerations in each business area?**

By establishing a regional management structure, an organization can keep matters affecting the front line closer to the ground. Regional managers are better able to focus on the needs of their specific region, while being removed enough from the front line to make objective, wide-view decisions. By empowering a regional layer of management, an organization can ensure that matters that affect one locale do not affect surrounding locales or vice versa.

**How might a global organization compete more effectively by acquiring smaller organizations?**

When a global player chooses to enter into a new market, typically there is a steep learning curve associated with the nuances of that new market. One way to effectively shorten the learning curve is to acquire an existing, smaller player in the market and learn from its experience. Often smaller players have tremendous knowledge of their markets, but lack capital and other resources that a global player would typically be able to deliver. In the case of Aramex, acquiring a smaller business in a new market offers it rapid, successful entry into the market with the ability for bidirectional knowledge transfer that helps both companies improve their operations.

The most important consideration for Aramex is to conduct the acquisition in such a way that the talent at the acquired company stays with the company after the merger.
QUESTION GUIDE

Capital constraints
Typically, sourcing enough capital to fund an expansion from a local organization to a regional organization to a global player can be difficult. Many organizations turn to financial markets to receive an influx of cash in exchange for certain levels of control over the organization. Aramex, which listed on the NASDAQ in 1997, used the funds it received from the stock exchange to reach beyond its home territory to become a regional carrier. After further investment by a private fund, Aramex exited the NASDAQ and began its path to a global player by forming alliances with a network of more than 40 carriers around the globe.

Time-zone management
Doing business in different time zones can be difficult. Having operations across dozens of time zones requires that the company operate in a 24-hour, nonstop business cycle. Adequate management must be available at all times to address problems as they arise. By dividing up into regions, many of these issues can be more easily managed. There will, however, always be a need for authorized decision-makers to be available at the global headquarters.

Besides crisis management, scheduling real-time collaboration between geographically separate parts of the organization can be difficult. For Aramex, collaboration between employees in the farthest eastern areas of its territory with employees in the farthest western areas presents a 14-hour time difference. Even with advances in videoconferencing technologies, there will always be challenges associated with time zones.

Languages and cultures
Operating in multiple countries means operating in multiple languages. When a company chooses to expand into a market with a native language different from its own, issues can arise with respect to basic understanding of laws, customs, employee relations, etc. But language is not the only challenge. There are many cultural issues that a company should be aware of before entering into a market. For example, in Japan, discount pricing is considered a sign of inferior products, and white is a funeral color. Linguistic and cultural missteps can be avoided by establishing reliable partner companies and reliable advisers or investors in an organization’s target markets. Working according to local customs can allow access to lucrative untapped markets.

Legalities
Every country has its own set of laws that govern how businesses may operate within its borders. For example, many European countries have strict regulations regarding customer privacy. Other countries have varying views regarding the protection of intellectual property, the environment and labor standards. All of these variations can represent increased costs in terms of coming into compliance with legal obligations, tax assessments, and the associated costs of human and natural resources.

What is experiential marketing?
Experiential marketing is a way to engage customers with a product or service by allowing them to experience it firsthand. It is a method designed to provide a real-life experience to customers in the context of how they would use a company’s product or service in their daily lives. For business-to-business companies like Aramex, experiential marketing might include a cost-free, risk-free shipment, thereby allowing the potential new client to experience the level of service and quality that Aramex offers over the competition. Beyond new customers, experiential marketing can be used to allow existing customers to try out new product offerings or to receive discounts for loyalty. Experiential marketing is about maximizing the impact of dollars earmarked for marketing.

How does transparency help eliminate friction during expansion?
When change comes to any organization, it is typically met with distrust and skepticism. It is human nature to dislike change. However, change is how people and organizations grow. To alleviate the stress associated with growth, it is best to have a policy of transparency and openness. Particularly when acquisitions are involved, the fear of the unknown can be paralyzing to productivity. Open communication, clear messaging and decisive actions will help reassure employees of the security of their jobs, their co-workers’ jobs and that of the overall company.

How can an organization protect its culture as it expands?
Investing in a comprehensive training program to indoctrinate newly hired and newly acquired employees is critical to protecting an organization’s culture. Documenting what sets the company apart, what defines the company and what is characteristic of its “DNA” is important to protecting an established culture. Aramex has developed a two-weeklong induction process that inundates new employees with everything Aramex. For senior-to-middle managers, Aramex has developed a corporate university program designed to give a more in-depth look at what defines Aramex’s success.
QUESTION GUIDE

Provide a safety net; encourage risk taking
It is important to give employees the chance to take initiative to develop their own opportunities and ideas. Allow them to “break things,” and to learn from those mistakes. Set up redundancies to protect mission-critical processes so employees can experiment with improvement without negatively affecting productivity. Provide opportunities for learning, innovation and professional growth without the risk of punitive action. Aramex considers risks and failures to be just as important to the business as success and stability.

Assign responsibilities
Give employees responsibilities that push their boundaries and expand their horizons. Stagnation, boredom and lack of growth opportunities are often cited in exit interviews as reasons for employee turnover. By pushing an employee to excel beyond his or her previous accomplishments, he or she stays engaged in the business, continues to develop professionally and helps push the organization forward.

Share knowledge
It is important to spread good ideas through an organization as quickly as possible. Give employees opportunities to learn from each other, and allow them to provide input on the topics. Employees will appreciate the opportunity to learn new practices and diversify their skills. If an employee or group of employees develops an innovative product, process or idea, allow them to have ownership of the idea and share it throughout the organization. Employee-to-employee sharing encourages further experimentation and professional development.

Network
Allow employees to attend industry events to learn best practices that they can apply in their own jobs. Industries are constantly evolving, and business moves at a fast pace, so employees need to keep up with the latest research, knowledge, tools and ideas to stay relevant and at the top of their game. These events will boost professional growth and help them gain the necessary tools to be successful.

How can an organization encourage professional development among employees?

How can empowering employees help a company grow?
Boots-on-the-ground employees typically have a unique perspective that upper-level management is not able to witness. Involving front-line employees in planning and decision-making processes gives managers access to information that might otherwise be unavailable to them. By empowering all employees to contribute their opinions and insights to the conversation, an organization can remain cohesive from top to bottom.

This cohesion will help management more quickly identify areas of improvement and opportunities for expansion, both in terms of markets and product offerings, and it will help eliminate costly human resource issues like absenteeism, turnover and suboptimal engagement.

How can a comprehensive induction plan for new employees foster innovation, loyalty and corporate culture?
A comprehensive induction-training program for newly hired and newly acquired employees will help foster innovation and loyalty and protect a corporate culture by laying out a framework of trust, commitment, understanding, empowerment and loyalty. As part of the introduction to the company, employees should be exposed to its values, traditions and characteristics that define its “DNA.” They should also be introduced to the professional and collegial aspects that drive the company’s culture.

Also during introductory training, a company might spend time encouraging employees to innovate and take intelligent risks. Giving examples of successes and failures from the past may provide a helpful set of guidelines to the benefits and consequences associated with taking risks.

According to the Experts...

“What is important about that is that the company itself allows you to create, to innovate, to do mistakes and go through risks. I think that’s the most important learning experience itself.”

Iyad Kamal
Chief Operation Officer

ADDitional resources
Ways to Promote Professional Development in the Workplace
**How can a company attract and retain talent in different parts of the world?**

Multiple players in a single industry, CSR initiatives serve as a genuine point of differentiation. The key to long-term success with CSR programs is to find ways to integrate them with the organization’s day-to-day operations rather than simply as a peripheral activity. A well-integrated CSR program will help keep employees engaged with their jobs while fulfilling their desire to benefit society.

**Why is employee retention so important to the long-term viability of a company?**

HR costs are directly correlated with employee retention. Employee turnover, absenteeism, replacement and training costs can directly affect the profitability of an organization (and, therefore, its long-term viability). Beyond direct costs, many indirect costs are associated with a failed employee retention effort: lost productivity associated with the interim period before a replacement can fill the job; the time a co-worker spends away from his or her work to help fill the gap; the cost of formal and informal training to get the new employee up to speed; and costs for advertising and promotional materials, referral bonuses, relocation expenses, and background checks.

Customer retention, institutional knowledge, employee morale and corporate culture can also be negatively affected by high turnover rates.

**How does community involvement help retain talent?**

According to several national studies, employees of companies with corporate community initiatives are prouder of and more committed to their employers. Research shows that the higher an employee rates his or her organization’s corporate citizenship, the more committed he or she is to the organization. Corporate community initiatives (CCIs) affect team-member morale, spirit and pride. CCIs also instill trust in the employer and a willingness to recommend the organization as a good place to work.

Other studies have indicated that employees develop skills and competencies across a broad range of business-relevant areas, including communications and teamwork, as a result of involvement in CCIs. In a survey of professional women, 83 percent reported that volunteering developed leadership skills; 78 percent reported that it developed communication skills; and more than half reported development in other workplace skills. It also found that 45 percent of employees who have volunteered with their company or co-workers report that they are very satisfied with their jobs, compared to 30 percent who have not. The same survey revealed that that 65 percent of student respondents entering the job market today expect to make a social and environmental impact through their work, and 44 percent indicated they would be willing to take a pay cut to do so.
Retention agreements, early
The most typical strategy to retain employees post-merger is through formalized retention agreements. These agreements are positioned as a key element of the merger or acquisition agreement and are considered binding in most countries. The agreements that tend to have the greatest affect on employee retention are those that are signed during the due-diligence and negotiation stages. During these stages, it is important to identify which employees in the acquired company need to be retained and to make it clear to those employees that they are targeted for retention. Often as mergers and acquisitions progress, employees become skeptical of and nervous about their positions in the new company. The longer the acquiring organization waits to indicate their job stability, the more likely employees are to seek out alternative employment.

Retention bonuses
Retention agreements are often paired with employment contracts and financial bonuses. For example, many companies offer employees equity shares or cash bonuses that are set to vest after a certain time period well after the organizations have merged.

Esprit de corps
Beyond financial benefits, there are many other considerations that a company must make to keep acquired employees. Begin with keeping promises. Newly acquired employees often do not have a clear set of expectations for the new company. Whatever the acquiring organization promises must be delivered, on time and without compromise. Clear and open communication becomes imperative. Stay ahead of the gossip mill, and prevent hearsay from hijacking the narrative. Everyone in the organization needs to know how the acquisition will affect him or her. Managers should become experts in the acquired company’s culture. Look for ways to fuse together the two companies’ cultures. Do not just assume the acquired company will buy into the larger company’s way of doing things. Put resources where they are needed. Global organizations with deeper pockets can impress newly acquired employees by giving them resources that they might not have had access to previously. Encourage the acquired employees to ask for what they need to make their jobs easier, more productive and more enjoyable.

Why does Aramex advise against “parachuting experience”?
After acquiring a local business, Aramex avoids sending in experts to replace existing management. Rather, it chooses to train the existing employees to the ways of the Aramex organization. Aramex brings many of the newly acquired employees to its global headquarters in Jordan to put them through a comprehensive induction program. Parachuting managers and other employees into a newly acquired company can create needless challenges that are easily avoidable. When outside employees are sent into acquired organizations, employees and existing managers might begin to believe that their positions in the company are in jeopardy and will begin to seek alternative employment.

What types of incentives help retain talent?
There are several incentives that an organization can offer to help retain talent, including financial reward, additional resources and retention agreements. Bonuses and pay increases can be highly effective. Also, intrinsic benefits like perceived job security, long-term viability of the company, professional development and career-path opportunities have positive effects on employee retention. Ongoing communication about the merger or acquisition helps relieve anxiety and fear of the unknown, and thereby helps reduce employee turnover.

How does promoting from within help retain talent? Are there any pitfalls?
Promoting from within gives employees a clear path of advancement. Employees might become frustrated and look outside the organization if they see no clear future for themselves. A policy of promoting from within also helps stabilize the culture of the organization by minimizing external influences. It also helps prevent senior-level managers from not understanding the daily lives of the people they manage, because at one point they too were lower in the ranks.

There are potential issues with promoting from within. For example, if an organization has mediocre management-development practices, managers will, by necessity, make up their own management practices and start making mistakes. These mistakes will perpetuate and propagate throughout the company. Also, promoting from within has the potential to develop leaders who are resistant to outside opinions and to change itself. It can limit innovation in management styles to what is organic within the organization, and might inadvertently prevent the adoption of best practices identified around the globe. Lastly, these policies can prevent the company from recruiting exceptional talent that is unwilling or unable to start at the entry level.

According to the Experts...
“Our only asset is our talent. The only asset that we tend to invest [in and] operate and work on is our talent. What keeps me awake at night is to attract talent and to retain our talent.”

Hussein Hachem
Chief Executive Officer
How might an organization promote female involvement and engagement?

According to the Experts...

“Remember that companies—good companies and good leaders—hire for attitude and train for the skills. You need to have the right attitude. The attitude to know that you will be able to make it, that you have what it takes to overcome obstacles. You have to remember that there’s a hidden opportunity in every challenge. Look for it. Stay at it and go for it.”

Lina Shehadeh
Chief Marketing Officer

Work/life fit
Work/life fit is one of the leading issues women face in today’s workforce. In many areas of the world, particularly in the Middle East, where Aramex is based, women are the primary caregivers for the family unit. For organizations to successfully engage women, considerations should be made that will attract women to a business, keep them engaged in its success and also provide them with the ability to take care of their family obligations. Flexible work schedules, maternity and parental leaves, reduced-hour careers, and career sabbaticals have become commonplace in global organizations that are dedicated to workplace diversity. Further, some organizations have chosen to provide onsite child care, after-school tutoring and other services for parents.

Performance-based pay
Globally, women are paid 75 percent of what their male counterparts earn for the same work. Organizations that are seeking to engage women should strive to provide equal pay for equal work. One way to accomplish this is through performance-based pay. Rather than pay by some arbitrary salary scale, employee pay should be directly correlated to job performance. This method provides an easy-to-explain compensation model that is attractive to hardworking individuals, particularly to hardworking women.

In many globally recognized organizations, performance-based pay has proven to increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and disengagement, and eliminate pay inequity.

Provide opportunities
Global organizations should ensure their human resource practices provide equal and adequate opportunities for women to participate in the business. Traditionally, women are less likely to seek out opportunities when compared to their male counterparts. They are also less likely to participate in self-promoting activities that would garner the attention of management. Organizations need to be aware of these tendencies and make efforts to consider women for project assignments, decision-making and management opportunities. Further, a concerted effort should be made to promote women to executive roles. Universally, 53 percent of women are placed in entry-level positions fewer than 30 percent are promoted to executive management and only 13 percent are in the “C-Suite” (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, etc.).

How does “setting your own expectations” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
Women should set their own expectations for their careers. Too often women accept what is handed to them and do not push for more. Women who expect more from their careers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. Traditionally, Middle Eastern women have been marginalized by a male-dominated society. In business, Middle Eastern women need to recognize that they are blazing a new trail and will not automatically be considered for job opportunities and promotions. By setting their own expectations, women can focus on what they want their career paths to look like, where they want to end up and the best route to get there.

How does “having the right attitude” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
As employee training programs become increasingly more sophisticated, organizations have begun to seek out employees with the potential to learn and grow rather than those who already have a particular skill set. Many organizations have begun to require less practical experience from potential job candidates than was previously required. HR departments have turned to personality profiles and aptitude testing to identify applicants who have a high potential to learn, coupled with an attitude focused on success. Being able to learn from mistakes, push productivity forward and remain positive in difficult situations have become as important to a person’s job candidacy as her technical skill set.

How does “asking for opportunities” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
Statistically, women negotiate less than men. Women must assert their interests in advanced job responsibilities and promotions to be given the opportunities they desire. Globally, women are underrepresented in executive roles, with fewer than 13 percent of C-Suite positions being held by females. In the Middle East, this number is even lower, with some studies finding fewer than 5 percent of C-Suite jobs being held by women.
**Finding the right talent**
As an organization grows from a local to a regional to a global player, it becomes imperative that the right talent is identified and acquired to staff that growth. Defining each role, developing a set of selection criteria, finding appropriate candidates and working closely with executives to choose the right employee is critical to the success of any expansion. An effective human resource initiative pairs HR professionals with line executives to make strategic decisions regarding investments in human capital.

**Keeping the best**
Talent management has rapidly become as important to the long-term success of an organization as securing financial capital or inventory management. Talent management covers all aspects of an employee’s relationship with the company, from compensation plans to career development and employee morale. As the world moves more boldly into the information age, human capital and intellectual property have become mission-critical assets that require a sophisticated level of protection, investment and consideration. Human resource departments no longer serve clerical roles; instead they are tasked with finding the right people to add value to the organization.

**Protecting the culture**
When an organization expands beyond its home turf, protecting the culture of the organization becomes exponentially more complicated. HR can help an organization grow by identifying the key elements of the organization’s culture and then developing a strategy to keep those elements intact and engrained throughout the organization. The culture of an organization often has many aspects that are not immediately obvious even to those people most entrenched in the organization. HR should lead an initiative to deeply analyze the culture and put together a priority-ranked list of those elements that are critical to instill in the expanding organization.

**Understanding the local community**
As organizations expand, special consideration should be given to each local community in which expansion occurs. Human resources should address everything from social customs to work/life fit. HR should help find a balance between the culture of the parent organization and the way of life in that particular geography. Beyond employee relations, HR should lead the way in community engagement and natural resources protection. HR should work to make the organization a world-class corporate citizen regardless of the geography in which the organization operates.

**Building the bench strength**
Protecting the success of a budding expansion requires consideration for future changes in human capital. Human resources should invest in employee development, mentoring programs and succession planning at all levels of the organization. An organization’s “bench strength” represents its ability to survive unexpected changes that result from the departure of key employees or managers.

**Why is young talent attracted to Aramex?**
The Aramex cites a growing interest in global sustainability among young people as a leading reason why it is able to attract talent. It believes that young people view the group as one that cares for people, is not materialistic and has deep spiritual values.

**How can HR help improve a transition associated with an acquisition?**
One of the largest risks in any merger or acquisition is the effect it will have on the human capital of an organization. Changes associated with mergers and acquisitions tend to create increased levels of stress and anxiety among employees. Human resources can help alleviate some of those issues by identifying sources of concern, developing a strategy to address those issues, and then clearly and succinctly communicating the resolution. During the due-diligence phase of the acquisition or merger, HR should work to identify sources of potential conflict (e.g., discrepancies in pay rates, benefits structure and workloads) and attempt to resolve those prior to the execution of the merger.

**How can HR provide global standards while allowing for local flexibility?**
It comes down to identifying what is most important for the organization. Not all aspects and methods of an organization are mission critical, and there is typically more than one way to accomplish the same outcome. If at first a cultural or social norm of a particular locale appears to be in conflict with the standards of the organization, HR should work to identify a middleground or a workaround that protects the productivity and culture of the organization while accommodating the needs of local employees. If a compromise is unacceptable, HR should work with local executives to develop a comprehensive training program that will integrate the culture of the global organization into the local operation.

**Explain how Aramex’s RISE program mirrors the company’s core values.**
The structure of HR practices and policies should parallel and communicate the core values, strategy and structure of the organization. Aramex’s RISE compensation system has four levels—Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers. That system parallels the company’s flat organizational structure of four levels. The acronym RISE reflects Aramex’s commitment to employee career paths and to its philosophy to challenge employees to rise above the ordinary. The labels Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers reflect the company’s expectations for each level of employee.
QUESTION GUIDE

Not getting involved early enough

Human resources should play an early and important role in acquisitions. HR should guide and influence many key decisions that can affect the rest of the acquisition’s success. HR needs to understand the incoming employee population to develop an integration plan. HR should consider where the newly acquired employees are (in terms of geographical location), what roles they will play in the organization, their current compensation and benefits, and how all these items fit into the current and future organization. HR needs to help identify key employees and to develop an appropriate retention strategy to ensure they will remain engaged and part of the new organization.

Not understanding employees’ needs and concerns

HR needs to develop a clear understanding of the effects the acquisition will have on the employees. Acquired employees need to receive regular communications in an open and honest way, and they need to be treated with respect, whether they are being retained or not. They should understand timelines, next steps, benefits and compensation—all the things that can and will have a huge impact on them and their families. A thoughtful and well-planned process can have an enormous influence on the incoming employees’ motivation, morale and respect for their new employer. Further, respecting all employees—even those who will not be retained—shows to the employees who will be retained that the organization will treat them with dignity and respect should their employment circumstances change in the future.

Not including the acquired management in decision-making

If the acquired company’s leadership team is going to be retained, HR should involve them in the integration process immediately and ensure they understand the culture, critical business processes, and how to classify, pay, and review people. If they are not involved in these decisions early on, engagement and trust issues might develop.

Underestimating the effort

Acquisitions typically take longer, cost more money and move more slowly than expected. Organizations need to dedicate significant resources to manage all the dynamics and complexities of the transition. Decisions need to be executed in tightly controlled timeframes, and flexibility needs to exist to respond to sudden changes and unexpected situations.

How has Aramex avoided many of these common mistakes?

Quite simply, executives and employees listened. They learned how to meet the needs of diverse customers, suppliers, job applicants and stakeholders in multiple cultures by listening closely and adapting to local needs. It is often more comfortable for companies that acquire or grow organically to believe they know the business model that should work everywhere, but companies like Aramex that listen closely to key stakeholders are much more likely to succeed. For example, when Aramex acquires new businesses, it learns what works best, and it spreads the use of these practices to other parts of its business. At the same time, Aramex transforms the new acquisition into a success by using best practices throughout the organization that have been identified previously.

How does Aramex ensure that employees know both their job responsibilities and their value to the organization?

Aramex motivates employees by orienting and educating them on what they should do, on what they can take initiative to do and how they bring unique value to the entire customer experience. Aramex provides clear expectations for every set of job responsibilities in the organization, and it works to recognize the value that each employee contributes through HR initiatives that call out excellence and provide performance-based compensation.

How can an organization learn from an acquired company?

Parent organizations should spend significant time and effort analyzing the business strategy, operations and methodologies of the company they acquire. Compare those items to the parent company’s own practices, and develop a strategy that integrates the best practices from both organizations into the new one.

According to the Experts...

“Listen, listen, listen. Learning how to meet the needs of diverse customers, suppliers, job applicants and stakeholders in multiple cultures means you must listen closely and adapt to local needs.”

Dr. Wayne Cascio
Professor, University of Colorado Denver

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Six Avoidable M&A Mistakes
http://chiefexecutive.net/six-avoidable-ma-mistakes
What are some advantages of an alliance-based business model?
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How can a light-asset model help a company grow?
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How can an organization prevent an alliance partner from becoming an eventual competitor?
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What are some reasons to acquire rather than to partner with a company?
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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participant’s Name

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

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What considerations might a global organization make for geographically separated segments of the business?

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How can an organization maintain a global standard of operation while operating locally?

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How does dividing up management by region address cultural considerations in each business area?

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How might a global organization compete more effectively by acquiring smaller organizations?

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What types of experiences might an organization encounter when expanding from a local to a regional to a global player?

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What is experiential marketing?
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How does transparency help eliminate friction during expansion?
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How can an organization protect its culture as it expands?
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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participant’s Name

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

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How can empowering employees help a company grow?

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How can a comprehensive induction plan for new employees foster innovation, loyalty and corporate culture?

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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participant’s Name

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

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How can a company attract and retain talent in different parts of the world?

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How does corporate citizenship help attract and retain talent?

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Why is employee retention so important to the long-term viability of a company?

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How does community involvement help retain talent?

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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participant’s Name

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

What can an organization do to retain talent following an acquisition?

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Why does Aramex advise against “parachuting experience”?

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What types of incentives help retain talent?

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How does promoting from within help retain talent? Are there any pitfalls?

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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

How might an organization promote female involvement and engagement?

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How does “setting your own expectations” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?

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How does “having the right attitude” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?

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How does “asking for opportunities” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?

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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Participant’s Name

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

What is the role of HR in promoting successful growth?

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How can HR help improve a transition associated with an acquisition?

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How can HR provide global standards while allowing for local flexibility?

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Explain how Aramex’s RISE program mirrors the company’s core values.

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PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to complete this worksheet. Comprehensive answers will incorporate information from the video, personal experience and classroom discussions.

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What are some common mistakes that global players make when acquiring local companies?

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How has Aramex avoided many of these common mistakes?

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How does Aramex ensure that employees know both their job responsibilities and their value to the organization?

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How can an organization learn from an acquired company?

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Participant’s Name

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The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Education and health care**
A corporation can contribute to improving educational opportunities within the communities in which it operates by getting involved in education. By assisting and, in some cases, creating schools for the underserved, corporations can have a significant and lasting impact on society. Some opportun

**Learn as you go.**
For small or newly formed businesses, an alliance model can help a firm to break into an established market by learning the details and nuances of the industry under the supervision of an established player. Partner businesses are typically given access to a well-established set of best practices along with a set of supplemental services that they can offer to their customers. For Aramex, partnership with FedEx, a well-established American courier service, gave it insight into how to run a logistics company. The partnership also gave Aramex a means to offer its local customers access to reliable, cost-effective, international shipping routes.

For FedEx, the parent company of the alliance, Aramex offered access to areas in the Middle East and other regions of the world that were previously not serviced by FedEx's mainline service. Through its partnership with Aramex, FedEx was able to learn the nuances of the cultures and business norms in that geography and expand into similar markets with improved chances of success.

**Distributed risk**
Alliances allow organizations to provide services while mitigating certain risks. For example, the FedEx/Aramex alliance allowed FedEx to expand service rapidly into the Middle East without having to learn the sociopolitical environment. For Aramex, the alliance allowed it to provide international services to its customers without the need to purchase expensive airplanes and landing rights, or to employ people all over the world to handle packages. Ultimately, the alliance allowed Aramex to start up locally, grow into a regional company, and eventually into a global player by mitigating the capital requirements of establishing a global company from the start.

**Built-in business**
An alliance-based model brings business to the table for local or startup organizations. In the early 1980s, entering into markets in the Middle East, Africa and India was of great importance to FedEx. There was demand for service to the area, but due to the political instability of the region, FedEx chose to seek out alternative methods for expansion. Upon forming the alliance with Aramex, it was able to provide delivery service to the region. At the same time, FedEx provided Aramex with a steady stream of business (read: cash flow) that provided the foundation for Aramex's rapid growth.

**How can a light-asset model help a company grow?**
A light-asset business model is a method by which companies gain access to equipment, land and other large-ticket items through leasing, partnership and profit sharing rather than through traditional capital expenditures. The model is designed to allow companies to reap profits from the value they add to the process rather than from the ownership of property and capital resources. By keeping capital costs low, companies can invest more money in human resources, marketing and other soft expenses that have a greater impact on the productivity of the business. Asset-light models are particularly effective for service-based companies where equipment is a commodity rather than a differentiator.

**How can an organization prevent an alliance partner from becoming an eventual competitor?**
Keeping an alliance together requires a delicate balance of mutual benefit. Because the premise of capitalism is self-interest, the best way to maintain an alliance is by ensuring both sides receive adequate benefit. The key is to select the right business partner at the outset. Potential partnerships should be defined by honesty, integrity, financial stability, and clarity of expectations, goals and resources that will be shared. It is also wise to set a timeline to re-evaluate the agreement. A business alliance, much like a personal relationship, can last ad infinitum as long as there are open lines of communication and a desire to make it mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

**What are some reasons to acquire rather than to partner with a company?**
It all comes down to control. In some cases, partnerships adequately produce desired outcomes, yet in other cases there are issues that can only be resolved if the larger partner assumes control of the smaller business. For example, if one of Aramex's partnerships with a smaller delivery company were to provide inadequate service (e.g., late delivery, lost packages, unfriendly service), it might be in Aramex's best interest to purchase the smaller company to gain control of its operations and correct the issues.

Another reason to purchase a company rather than to partner with it is to prevent future competition. If, for example, one of Aramex's alliance partners were signaling to split off with the intent to compete directly, Aramex might be served best by offering to buy out the company prior to it terminating the alliance.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

*Culture sensitivity*
An organization that has operations in various parts of the world must consider the local customs, traditions and expectations of each area. Understanding and operating within local norms is critical to being a successful business and a sought-after employer. In some areas of the world, for example, working on religious holidays is considered unthinkable, whereas in other parts of the world, working more than 36 weeks in a year is unheard of and unacceptable. Being aware of a locale’s customs is key to achieving success in that region.

Aside from religious and work-related considerations, other customs include formalities, language dialects and social norms. In retail and storefront businesses in France and certain parts of Latin America, for example, afternoon siestas are part of accepted business standards. Businesses shut their doors, and both employees and customers participate in a period of early-afternoon downtime before re-opening operations for afternoon and evening business. It would be considered insensitive to fail to respect these local traditions.

*Regulatory compliance*
In every area of the world, governments have different sets of regulatory obligations and tax structures. Global organizations must become aware of and operate inline with the requirements of each government entity. In some areas of the world, governments regulate the use of natural resources more heavily than in other areas, and other areas focus on human rights and labor standards. Complying with governmental regulations requires an organization to invest in legal and business experts who are familiar with local laws.

*Standard operating procedures*
The most important tasks for a multinational, global player are to ensure that there is a global standard of operations, while allowing for flexibility to accommodate local traditions, customs and norms. As an organization expands to various parts of the world, it is important to make sure the core operations that define a company (e.g., on-time delivery of packages) remain intact. Consider, for example, if Aramex were to expand to South America where midday siestas are imperative, special consideration must be made (e.g., flexible scheduling) to ensure that employees are allowed their normal siesta while still remaining open for business and in operation throughout the entire business day.

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*How can an organization maintain a global standard of operation while operating locally?*
An organization that operates locally but is managed globally must balance the needs of the local operation with the demands of the global customer base. In many cases, it is a matter of training and preparation that helps a company stay focused. It is also important to identify conflicts with core values and to devise solutions prior to entering into a market to ensure successful execution of the business.

Further, by empowering well-trained employees (both managerial and front line) at the local level to make operational decisions, organizations put many of the day-to-day decisions that directly affect employees and customers in the hands of those who best understand the operating environment. Establishing trust with local managers and employees is the key to ensuring a standard level of service.

*How does dividing up management by region address cultural considerations in each business area?*
By establishing a regional management structure, an organization can keep matters affecting the front line closer to the ground. Regional managers are better able to focus on the needs of their specific region, while being removed enough from the front line to make objective, wide-view decisions. By empowering a regional layer of management, an organization can ensure that matters that affect one locale do not affect surrounding locales or vice versa.

*How might a global organization compete more effectively by acquiring smaller organizations?*
When a global player chooses to enter into a new market, typically there is a steep learning curve associated with the nuances of that new market. One way to effectively shorten the learning curve is to acquire an existing, smaller player in the market and learn from its experience. Often smaller players have tremendous knowledge of their markets, but lack capital and other resources that a global player would typically be able to deliver. In the case of Aramex, acquiring a smaller business in a new market offers it rapid, successful entry into the market with the ability for bidirectional knowledge transfer that helps both companies improve their operations.

The most important consideration for Aramex is to conduct the acquisition in such a way that the talent at the acquired company stays with the company after the merger.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Capital constraints**

Typically, sourcing enough capital to fund an expansion from a local organization to a regional organization to a global player can be difficult. Many organizations turn to financial markets to receive an influx of cash in exchange for certain levels of control over the organization. Aramex, which listed on the NASDAQ in 1997, used the funds it received from the stock exchange to reach beyond its home territory to become a regional carrier. After further investment by a private fund, Aramex exited the NASDAQ and began its path to a global player by forming alliances with a network of more than 40 carriers around the globe.

**Time-zone management**

Doing business in different time zones can be difficult. Having operations across dozens of time zones requires that the company operate in a 24-hour, nonstop business cycle. Adequate management must be available at all times to address problems as they arise. By dividing up into regions, many of these issues can be more easily managed. There will, however, always be a need for authorized decision-makers to be available at the global headquarters.

Besides crisis management, scheduling real-time collaboration between geographically separate parts of the organization can be difficult. For Aramex, collaboration between employees in the farthest eastern areas of its territory with employees in the farthest western areas presents a 14-hour time difference. Even with advances in videoconferencing technologies, there will always be challenges associated with time zones.

**Languages and cultures**

Operating in multiple countries means operating in multiple languages. When a company chooses to expand into a market with a native language different from its own, issues can arise with respect to basic understanding of laws, customs, employee relations, etc. But language is not the only challenge. There are many cultural issues that a company should be aware of before entering into a market. For example, in Japan, discount pricing is considered a sign of inferior products, and white is a funeral color. Linguistic and cultural missteps can be avoided by establishing reliable partner companies and reliable advisers or investors in an organization's target markets. Working according to local customs can allow access to lucrative untapped markets.

**Legalities**

Every country has its own set of laws that govern how businesses may operate within its borders. For example, many European countries have strict regulations regarding customer privacy. Other countries have varying views regarding the protection of intellectual property, the environment and labor standards. All of these variations can represent increased costs in terms of coming into compliance with legal obligations, tax assessments, and the associated costs of human and natural resources.

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**What is experiential marketing?**

Experiential marketing is a way to engage customers with a product or service by allowing them to experience it firsthand. It is a method designed to provide a real-life experience to customers in the context of how they would use a company’s product or service in their daily lives. For business-to-business companies like Aramex, experiential marketing might include a cost-free, risk-free shipment, thereby allowing the potential new client to experience the level of service and quality that Aramex offers over the competition. Beyond new customers, experiential marketing can be used to allow existing customers to try out new product offerings or to receive discounts for loyalty. Experiential marketing is about maximizing the impact of dollars earmarked for marketing.

**How does transparency help eliminate friction during expansion?**

When change comes to any organization, it is typically met with distrust and skepticism. It is human nature to dislike change. However, change is how people and organizations grow. To alleviate the stress associated with growth, it is best to have a policy of transparency and openness. Particularly when acquisitions are involved, the fear of the unknown can be paralyzing to productivity. Open communication, clear messaging and decisive actions will help reassure employees of the security of their jobs, their co-workers’ jobs and that of the overall company.

**How can an organization protect its culture as it expands?**

Investing in a comprehensive training program to indoctrinate newly hired and newly acquired employees is critical to protecting an organization’s culture. Documenting what sets the company apart, what defines the company and what is characteristic of its “DNA” is important to protecting an established culture. Aramex has developed a two-weeklong induction process that inundates new employees with everything Aramex. For senior-to-middle managers, Aramex has developed a corporate university program designed to give a more in-depth look at what defines Aramex’s success.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**How can an organization encourage professional development among employees?**

*Provide a safety net; encourage risk taking*

It is important to give employees the chance to take initiative to develop their own opportunities and ideas. Allow them to “break things,” and to learn from those mistakes. Set up redundancies to protect mission-critical processes so employees can experiment with improvement without negatively affecting productivity. Provide opportunities for learning, innovation and professional growth without the risk of punitive action. Aramex considers risks and failures to be just as important to the business as success and stability.

*Assign responsibilities*

Give employees responsibilities that push their boundaries and expand their horizons. Stagnation, boredom and lack of growth opportunities are often cited in exit interviews as reasons for employee turnover. By pushing an employee to excel beyond his or her previous accomplishments, he or she stays engaged in the business, continues to develop professionally and helps push the organization forward.

*Share knowledge*

It is important to spread good ideas through an organization as quickly as possible. Give employees opportunities to learn from each other, and allow them to provide input on the topics. Employees will appreciate the opportunity to learn new practices and diversify their skills. If an employee or group of employees develops an innovative product, process or idea, allow them to have ownership of the idea and share it throughout the organization. Employee-to-employee sharing encourages further experimentation and professional development.

*Network*

Allow employees to attend industry events to learn best practices that they can apply in their own jobs. Industries are constantly evolving, and business moves at a fast pace, so employees need to keep up with the latest research, knowledge, tools and ideas to stay relevant and at the top of their game. These events will boost professional growth and help them gain the necessary tools to be successful.

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*How can empowering employees help a company grow?*

Boots-on-the-ground employees typically have a unique perspective that upper-level management is not able to witness. Involving frontline employees in planning and decision-making processes gives managers access to information that might otherwise be unavailable to them. By empowering all employees to contribute their opinions and insights to the conversation, an organization can remain cohesive from top to bottom.

This cohesion will help management more quickly identify areas of improvement and opportunities for expansion, both in terms of markets and product offerings, and it will help eliminate costly human resource issues like absenteeism, turnover and suboptimal engagement.

*How can a comprehensive induction plan for new employees foster innovation, loyalty and corporate culture?*

A comprehensive induction-training program for newly hired and newly acquired employees will help foster innovation and loyalty and protect a corporate culture by laying out a framework of trust, commitment, understanding, empowerment and loyalty. As part of the introduction to the company, employees should be exposed to its values, traditions and characteristics that define its “DNA.” They should also be introduced to the professional and collegial aspects that drive the company’s culture.

Also during introductory training, a company might spend time encouraging employees to innovate and take intelligent risks. Giving examples of successes and failures from the past may provide a helpful set of guidelines to the benefits and consequences associated with taking risks.
The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Become attractive to locals**

An advantage that global organizations have over local competitors is the ability to offer recruits opportunities to work elsewhere in the world. But a global organization needs more than opportunities to relocate around the world to persuade highly talented local people to join and stay. Multinational organizations need to provide attractive opportunities for employment, growth and leadership in all regions of the business. Local employees need to see opportunities for career and personal development on their home turf.

**Provide education and training**

A highly effective method for retaining talent is to provide ongoing educational opportunities. Beyond in-house training, many global players have turned to executive MBA programs for their rising-star managers. These programs, provided free of charge in exchange for long-term employment commitments, have proven to be an effective way of keeping local talent after a merger or acquisition. Beyond retaining the employee, these types of programs typically result in employees with a solid understanding of the organization and its strategy, as well as an extended network based on trust, gained from working intensively with colleagues also enrolled in these programs.

**Enhance your brand as an employer**

Global organizations need to focus on creating a strong employer brand to compete in the talent marketplace. Globally recognized organizations have typically assumed that their job opportunities are more attractive to potential local employees than any local competitor, but today, many local, fast-growing, and ambitious companies are more attractive. For global players to draw in the best talent, their employer brand must include competitive compensation; attractive working conditions; managers who develop, engage and support their staff; and regular, open communication. It is a challenge for global organizations to manage the tension between being globally consistent and, at the same time, responsive to diverse local needs. Some degree of local tailoring is often necessary; however, any tailoring must fit within a broadly applied set of employment principles.

In some markets, particularly in Asia, global organizations are extending awareness of their brands as employers by building a relationship between themselves and their employees' families. In all markets, companies are likely to find that many young, aspiring managers view being part of a broader cause and contributing to their countries' overall economic development as increasingly important. Articulating a company's contribution to that development is likewise an increasingly important component of any employer brand.

**How does corporate citizenship help attract and retain talent?**

An organization's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities comprise a legitimate and increasingly important way to attract and retain good employees. In general, CSR initiatives reveal the values of a company and thus can be part of the "employee value proposition." CSR also humanizes an organization in ways that other facets of the job cannot; it depicts the company as a contributor to society rather than as an entity concerned solely with maximizing profits. In areas with multiple players in a single industry, CSR initiatives serve as a genuine point of differentiation. The key to long-term success with CSR programs is to find ways to integrate them with the organization's day-to-day operations rather than simply as a peripheral activity. A well-integrated CSR program will help keep employees engaged with their jobs while fulfilling their desire to benefit society.

**Why is employee retention so important to the long-term viability of a company?**

HR costs are directly correlated with employee retention. Employee turnover, absenteeism, replacement and training costs can directly affect the profitability of an organization (and, therefore, its long-term viability). Beyond direct costs, many indirect costs are associated with a failed employee retention effort: lost productivity associated with the interim period before a replacement can fill the job; the time a co-worker spends away from his or her work to help fill the gap; the cost of formal and informal training to get the new employee up to speed; and costs for advertising and promotional materials, referral bonuses, relocation expenses, and background checks. Customer retention, institutional knowledge, employee morale and corporate culture can also be negatively affected by high turnover rates.

**How does community involvement help retain talent?**

According to several national studies, employees of companies with corporate community initiatives are prouder of and more committed to their employers. Research shows that the higher an employee rates his or her organization's corporate citizenship, the more committed he or she is to the organization. Corporate community initiatives (CCIs) affect team-member morale, spirit and pride. CCIs also instill trust in the employer and a willingness to recommend the organization as a good place to work.

Other studies have indicated that employees develop skills and competencies across a broad range of business-relevant areas, including communications and teamwork, as a result of involvement in CCIs. In a survey of professional women, 83 percent reported that volunteering developed leadership skills; 78 percent reported that it developed communication skills; and more than half reported development in other workplace skills. It also found that 45 percent of employees who have volunteered with their company or co-workers report that they are very satisfied with their jobs, compared to 30 percent who have not. The same survey revealed that that 65 percent of student respondents entering the job market today expect to make a social and environmental impact through their work, and 44 percent indicated they would be willing to take a pay cut to do so.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Retention agreements, early**

The most typical strategy to retain employees post-merger is through formalized retention agreements. These agreements are positioned as a key element of the merger or acquisition agreement and are considered binding in most countries. The agreements that tend to have the greatest affect on employee retention are those that are signed during the due-diligence and negotiation stages. During these stages, it is important to identify which employees in the acquired company need to be retained and to make it clear to those employees that they are targeted for retention. Often as mergers and acquisitions progress, employees become skeptical of and nervous about their positions in the new company. The longer the acquiring organization waits to indicate their job stability, the more likely employees are to seek out alternative employment.

**Retention bonuses**

Retention agreements are often paired with employment contracts and financial bonuses. For example, many companies offer employees equity shares or cash bonuses that are set to vest after a certain time period well after the organizations have merged.

**Esprit de corps**

Beyond financial benefits, there are many other considerations that a company must make to keep acquired employees. Begin with keeping promises. Newly acquired employees often do not have a clear set of expectations for the new company. Whatever the acquiring organization promises must be delivered, on time and without compromise. Clear and open communication becomes imperative. Stay ahead of the gossip mill, and prevent hearsay from hijacking the narrative. Everyone in the organization needs to know how the acquisition will affect him or her. Managers should become experts in the acquired company's culture. Look for ways to fuse together the two companies' cultures. Do not just assume the acquired company will buy into the larger company's way of doing things. Put resources where they are needed. Global organizations with deeper pockets can impress newly acquired employees by giving them resources that they might not have had access to previously. Encourage the acquired employees to ask for what they need to make their jobs easier, more productive and more enjoyable.

**Why does Aramex advise against “parachuting experience”?**

After acquiring a local business, Aramex avoids sending in experts to replace existing management. Rather, it chooses to train the existing employees to the ways of the Aramex organization. Aramex brings many of the newly acquired employees to its global headquarters in Jordan to put them through a comprehensive induction program. Parachuting managers and other employees into a newly acquired company can create needless challenges that are easily avoidable. When outside employees are sent into acquired organizations, employees and existing managers might begin to believe that their positions in the company are in jeopardy and will begin to seek alternative employment.

**What types of incentives help retain talent?**

There are several incentives that an organization can offer to help retain talent, including financial reward, additional resources and retention agreements. Bonuses and pay increases can be highly effective. Also, intrinsic benefits like perceived job security, long-term viability of the company, professional development and career-path opportunities have positive effects on employee retention. Ongoing communication about the merger or acquisition helps relieve anxiety and fear of the unknown, and thereby helps reduce employee turnover.

**How does promoting from within help retain talent? Are there any pitfalls?**

Promoting from within gives employees a clear path of advancement. Employees might become frustrated and look outside the organization if they see no clear future for themselves. A policy of promoting from within also helps stabilize the culture of the organization by minimizing external influences. It also helps prevent senior-level managers from not understanding the daily lives of the people they manage, because at one point they too were lower in the ranks.

There are potential issues with promoting from within. For example, if an organization has mediocre management-development practices, managers will, by necessity, make up their own management practices and start making mistakes. These mistakes will perpetuate and propagate throughout the company. Also, promoting from within has the potential to develop leaders who are resistant to outside opinions and to change itself. It can limit innovation in management styles to what is organic within the organization, and might inadvertently prevent the adoption of best practices identified around the globe. Lastly, these policies can prevent the company from recruiting exceptional talent that is unwilling or unable to start at the entry level.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

Work/life fit
Work/life fit is one of the leading issues women face in today’s workforce. In many areas of the world, particularly in the Middle East, where Aramex is based, women are the primary caregivers for the family unit. For organizations to successfully engage women, considerations should be made that will attract women to a business, keep them engaged in its success and also provide them with the ability to take care of their family obligations. Flexible work schedules, maternity and parental leaves, reduced-hour careers, and career sabbaticals have become commonplace in global organizations that are dedicated to workplace diversity. Further, some organizations have chosen to provide onsite child care, after-school tutoring and other services for parents.

Performance-based pay
Globally, women are paid 75 percent of what their male counterparts earn for the same work. Organizations that are seeking to engage women should strive to provide equal pay for equal work. One way to accomplish this is through performance-based pay. Rather than pay by some arbitrary salary scale, employee pay should be directly correlated to job performance. This method provides an easy-to-explain compensation model that is attractive to hardworking individuals, particularly to hardworking women.

In many globally recognized organizations, performance-based pay has proven to increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and disengagement, and eliminate pay inequity.

Provide opportunities
Global organizations should ensure their human resource practices provide equal and adequate opportunities for women to participate in the business. Traditionally, women are less likely to seek out opportunities when compared to their male counterparts. They are also less likely to participate in self-promoting activities that would garner the attention of management. Organizations need to be aware of these tendencies and make efforts to consider women for project assignments, decision-making and management opportunities. Further, a concerted effort should be made to promote women to executive roles. Universally, 53 percent of women are placed in entry-level positions fewer than 30 percent are promoted to executive management and only 13 percent are in the “C-Suite” (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, etc.).

How does “setting your own expectations” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
Women should set their own expectations for their careers. Too often women accept what is handed to them and do not push for more. Women who expect more from their careers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. Traditionally, Middle Eastern women have been marginalized by a male-dominated society. In business, Middle Eastern women need to recognize that they are blazing a new trail and will not automatically be considered for job opportunities and promotions. By setting their own expectations, women can focus on what they want their career paths to look like, where they want to end up and the best route to get there.

How does “having the right attitude” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
As employee training programs become increasingly more sophisticated, organizations have begun to seek out employees with the potential to learn and grow rather than those who already have a particular skill set. Many organizations have begun to require less practical experience from potential job candidates than was previously required. HR departments have turned to personality profiles and aptitude testing to identify applicants who have a high potential to learn, coupled with an attitude focused on success. Being able to learn from mistakes, push productivity forward and remain positive in difficult situations have become as important to a person’s job candidacy as her technical skill set.

How does “asking for opportunities” help a woman succeed in business, particularly in the Middle East?
Statistically, women negotiate less than men. Women must assert their interests in advanced job responsibilities and promotions to be given the opportunities they desire. Globally, women are underrepresented in executive roles, with fewer than 13 percent of C-Suite positions being held by females. In the Middle East, this number is even lower, with some studies finding fewer than 5 percent of C-Suite jobs being held by women.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Finding the right talent**
As an organization grows from a local to a regional to a global player, it becomes imperative that the right talent is identified and acquired to staff that growth. Defining each role, developing a set of selection criteria, finding appropriate candidates and working closely with executives to choose the right employee is critical to the success of any expansion. An effective human resource initiative pairs HR professionals with line executives to make strategic decisions regarding investments in human capital.

**Keeping the best**
Talent management has rapidly become as important to the long-term success of an organization as securing financial capital or inventory management. Talent management covers all aspects of an employee's relationship with the company, from compensation plans to career development and employee morale. As the world moves more boldly into the information age, human capital and intellectual property have become mission-critical assets that require a sophisticated level of protection, investment and consideration. Human resource departments no longer serve clerical roles; instead they are tasked with finding the right people to add value to the organization.

**Protecting the culture**
When an organization expands beyond its home turf, protecting the culture of the organization becomes exponentially more complicated. HR can help an organization grow by identifying the key elements of the organization's culture and then developing a strategy to keep those elements intact and engrained throughout the organization. The culture of an organization often has many aspects that are not immediately obvious even to those people most entrenched in the organization. HR should lead an initiative to deeply analyze the culture and put together a priority-ranked list of those elements that are critical to instill in the expanding organization.

**Understanding the local community**
As organizations expand, special consideration should be given to each local community in which expansion occurs. Human resources should address everything from social customs to work/life fit. HR should help find a balance between the culture of the parent organization and the way of life in that particular geography. Beyond employee relations, HR should lead the way in community engagement and natural resources protection. HR should work to make the organization a world-class corporate citizen regardless of the geography in which the organization operates.

**Building the bench strength**
Protecting the success of a budding expansion requires consideration for future changes in human capital. Human resources should invest in employee development, mentoring programs and succession planning at all levels of the organization. An organization's “bench strength” represents its ability to survive unexpected changes that result from the departure of key employees or managers.

**Why is young talent attracted to Aramex?**
The Aramex cites a growing interest in global sustainability among young people as a leading reason why it is able to attract talent. It believes that young people view the group as one that cares for people, is not materialistic and has deep spiritual values.

**How can HR help improve a transition associated with an acquisition?**
One of the largest risks in any merger or acquisition is the effect it will have on the human capital of an organization. Changes associated with mergers and acquisitions tend to create increased levels of stress and anxiety among employees. Human resources can help alleviate some of those issues by identifying sources of concern, developing a strategy to address those issues, and then clearly and succinctly communicating the resolution. During the due-diligence phase of the acquisition or merger, HR should work to identify sources of potential conflict (e.g., discrepancies in pay rates, benefits structure and workloads) and attempt to resolve those prior to the execution of the merger.

**How can HR provide global standards while allowing for local flexibility?**
It comes down to identifying what is most important for the organization. Not all aspects and methods of an organization are mission critical, and there is typically more than one way to accomplish the same outcome. If at first a cultural or social norm of a particular locale appears to be in conflict with the standards of the organization, HR should work to identify a middleground or a workaround that protects the productivity and culture of the organization while accommodating the needs of local employees. If a compromise is unacceptable, HR should work with local executives to develop a comprehensive training program that will integrate the culture of the global organization into the local operation.

**Explain how Aramex’s RISE program mirrors the company’s core values.**
The structure of HR practices and policies should parallel and communicate the core values, strategy and structure of the organization. Aramex’s RISE compensation system has four levels—Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers. That system parallels the company’s flat organizational structure of four levels. The acronym RISE reflects Aramex’s commitment to employee career paths and to its philosophy to challenge employees to rise above the ordinary. The labels Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers reflect the company’s expectations for each level of employee.
PARTICIPANT ANSWER KEY

The following answers are key points in the primary and secondary discussion questions. Use this guide to check the answers on your Participant Worksheet.

**Not getting involved early enough**
Human resources should play an early and important role in acquisitions. HR should guide and influence many key decisions that can affect the rest of the acquisition’s success. HR needs to understand the incoming employee population to develop an integration plan. HR should consider where the newly acquired employees are (in terms of geographical location), what roles they will play in the organization, their current compensation and benefits, and how all these items fit into the current and future organization. HR needs to help identify key employees and to develop an appropriate retention strategy to ensure they will remain engaged and part of the new organization.

**Not understanding employees’ needs and concerns**
HR needs to develop a clear understanding of the effects the acquisition will have on the employees. Acquired employees need to receive regular communications in an open and honest way, and they need to be treated with respect, whether they are being retained or not. They should understand timelines, next steps, benefits and compensation—all the things that can and will have a huge impact on them and their families. A thoughtful and well-planned process can have an enormous influence on the incoming employees’ motivation, morale and respect for their new employer. Further, respecting all employees—even those who will not be retained—shows to the employees who will be retained that the organization will treat them with dignity and respect should their employment circumstances change in the future.

**Not including the acquired management in decision-making**
If the acquired company’s leadership team is going to be retained, HR should involve them in the integration process immediately and ensure they understand the culture, critical business processes, and how to classify, pay, and review people. If they are not involved in these decisions early on, engagement and trust issues might develop.

**Underestimating the effort**
Acquisitions typically take longer, cost more money and move more slowly than expected. Organizations need to dedicate significant resources to manage all the dynamics and complexities of the transition. Decisions need to be executed in tightly controlled timeframes, and flexibility needs to exist to respond to sudden changes and unexpected situations.

**How has Aramex avoided many of these common mistakes?**
Quite simply, executives and employees listened. They learned how to meet the needs of diverse customers, suppliers, job applicants and stakeholders in multiple cultures by listening closely and adapting to local needs. It is often more comfortable for companies that acquire or grow organically to believe they know the business model that should work everywhere, but companies like Aramex that listen closely to key stakeholders are much more likely to succeed. For example, when Aramex acquires new businesses, it learns what works best, and it spreads the use of these practices to other parts of its business. At the same time, Aramex transforms the new acquisition into a success by using best practices throughout the organization that have been identified previously.

**How does Aramex ensure that employees know both their job responsibilities and their value to the organization?**
Aramex motivates employees by orienting and educating them on what they should do, on what they can take initiative to do and how they bring unique value to the entire customer experience. Aramex provides clear expectations for every set of job responsibilities in the organization, and it works to recognize the value that each employee contributes through HR initiatives that call out excellence and provide performance-based compensation.

**How can an organization learn from an acquired company?**
Parent organizations should spend significant time and effort analyzing the business strategy, operations and methodologies of the company they acquire. Compare those items to the parent company’s own practices, and develop a strategy that integrates the best practices from both organizations into the new one.
Five lessons for evolving to a global organization

1. Develop global standards of practice, but allow for local flexibility to meet differing employee and customer needs. For example, Aramex has standards of practice set by the corporate office, but it also allows for flexibility within its local businesses to meet local laws, customs, norms, and employee needs and expectations.

2. Build a diverse workforce, and leverage the differences and commonalities. Like Aramex, start by hiring a diverse workforce in your home office and immersing new employees in the company culture. Once they are oriented and sufficiently trained, repatriate them to their homelands to leverage their unique mixture of company and local cultural experience.

3. Make sure the structure of your HR practices and policies parallels and communicates the core values, strategy and structure of your organization. For example, Aramex’s RISE compensation system has four levels—Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers. That system parallels the company’s flat organizational structure of four levels. The acronym RISE reflects Aramex’s commitment to employee career paths and to its philosophy to challenge employees to rise above the ordinary. The labels Rangers, Innovators, Stars and Explorers reflect the company’s expectations for each level of employee.

4. Listen, listen, listen. Learning how to meet the needs of diverse customers, suppliers, job applicants and stakeholders in multiple cultures means you must listen closely and adapt to local needs. It is often more comfortable for companies that acquire or grow organically to believe they know the business model that should work everywhere, but companies like Aramex that listen closely to key stakeholders are much more likely to succeed. For example, when Aramex acquires new businesses, it learns what works best and spreads the use of these practices to other parts of its business. At the same time, Aramex transforms the new acquisition into a success by using previously identified best practices from around the organization.

5. Motivate employees by ensuring that they know both their job responsibilities and their value to the organization. Aramex does this by orienting and educating employees on what they should do, on what they can take initiative to do and on how they bring unique value to the entire customer experience.