

CHAPTER 2

Hiring Foreign Workers

There are many reasons for the company to hire foreigners instead of Thais. The first common reason is a lack of skills among locals that the company cannot find any suitable candidate among a local pool – the obvious ones are English linguistic skills. English proficiency among a local workforce unfortunately still falls way behind their peers in much of Southeast Asia and East Asia. For example, the company chooses to hire an Englishman or a Chinese because of their language proficiency.

Sometimes, the company also pursues a foreigner who can help the business expand internationally, especially in the region where the foreigner has some connections. A multinational company prefers to bring in its top talents from its affiliates around the world to manage a local operation in Thailand. The move could be part of a career development program, or simply they do not trust locals. The fourth reason is the ownership of the company as the company is foreign owned so the shareholders want to ensure that the company is managed by the foreign management.

Many locally owned companies in Thailand hire a foreigner for impressive business development skills, strong relationships with perspective customers in certain parts of the world, overseas market familiarity, technical knowhow and skills, and trustworthiness. For instance, a Thai owned factory hire a Taiwanese sale executive to create more business from Chinese speaking markets. A Thai company who wishes to buy out a hotel chain in Australia may want to hire an Australian consultant to give the local insights.