

# International employees create value in small and medium-sized enterprises



Since 2008 International Community has supported companies in the Aarhus area in their effort to recruit, welcome and retain international staff. Contrary to what many people may think, recruiting international employees is not only for large enterprises, but also for small and medium sized enterprises.

One of the smaller companies in Aarhus who has seen the potential in hiring international employees is Flintholm Global Telemarketing, and director Michael Flintholm is well aware what they bring to the table.

“Large companies are probably already aware of the potential of hiring international employees, but I think that small and medium sized enterprises do not always consider and are aware of the resources internationals can bring to their company. There are many spouses and other internationals connected to International Community, who have really interesting profiles and could for instance be employed for a part-time or contract based position.”

## Large benefit for small companies

According to Flintholm small to medium-sized enterprises, which make up 60% of the Danish private job market, often disregard international employees. For these companies, recruiting and retaining the right people can be key to growth and new export possibilities.

“You do not have to be a large company to employ international staff. I think that more SMEs should benefit from the skills of international employees – especially if they are on the export market They can get a tem-

porary export assistant, who can make a strategy, explore new options on a specific market or give good advice on how the company can penetrate a new market,” says Michael Flintholm.

## Avoid the pitfalls

Michael Flintholm emphasizes that it can be crucial to have an employee that not only knows the language, but also the culture in the country, when you want to pursue new contacts on a foreign market.

“Cultural understanding and awareness is really important when you want to make the preliminary contact. There are some very fine lines when it comes to cultural differences which can be crucial to failure or success. We have a lot of projects in Russia at the moment and therefore we have a Russian employee, who handles these projects. She knows how the companies should be addressed and how to build the first relation. Besides, she knows the culture, so she is well equipped to navigate in the unspoken rules and avoid the pitfalls.”

## Easy access to a network of internationals in Aarhus

Michael Flintholm finds it easy to get in contact with potential international employees. Often he just sends an e-mail to International Community – and then they spread the word to their network of internationals in the Aarhus area by their social media canals and newsletter.

“Many of the internationals moving to Aarhus to work bring a spouse along for the journey. These spouses are often highly educated and have difficulties finding a job in Denmark. And we are more than happy to connect companies with internationals. That is why we are here,” says Tiny Maerschalk, project manager at International Community.