



# WONDERLEON

*STUDY*  
INTERNATIONAL TALENT  
KEY DRIVERS OF THE FRENCH STARTUP ECOSYSTEM



# WONDERLEON STUDY

## Learning about international talent in the French Tech ecosystem



Two years after launch, #REVIENSLEON initiated a comprehensive study with EY, CSA & the ESCP Chair of Entrepreneurship to track and understand better the “Leon” in the French Tech ecosystem.

Results have shown that hiring international talent is a key driver of a company’s growth for French startups & scaleups, whether these talents are French with international experience or non-French. #REVIENSLEON was created to boost attractiveness of the French tech ecosystem; WONDERLEON will do the same in highlighting European tech to reach and appeal to talent from all over the world.

### WHO IS LEON?

- Leon is global: French or non-French
- Leon is experienced: at least 3 years of professional experience
- Leon is well-traveled: at least 2 years of experience abroad

# EDITORIAL

Franck Sebag, Associate/Partner, EY France



Over the past several years, France has earned a prime spot in the global startup ecosystem. The numbers speak for themselves: we have a little over 9400 startups in France, a number that has grown over 30% since 2012[1]. These startups are attracting more and more venture capitalists whose investments increased by more than 145%[2] between 2014 and 2016 (€0.9 Bn to €2.2 Bn) putting France in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Europe, just behind the UK.

French startups quickly integrated the necessity of being as international as possible from day one (the Born Global generation). As a result, they experience strong sales growth outside of France, a high percentage of foreign investors in their capital and an absolute necessity to boost their team with international talent (“Leons”).

This study sheds light on the stakes involved in attracting international talent to startups. In fact, **82%** of the company heads surveyed **consider that the presence of international talent has a positive impact on business growth**. It is reassuring to see that over 63% of WonderLeon member workforces have this profile. Nevertheless, this figure should not mask the fact that, at the same time, **80% of company heads think it is difficult to recruit international talent in France**. These difficulties are due mainly to the complexity of French labor laws or difficulties encountered with administrative procedures. France can truly become a startup nation, but one of the key factors of success is enhancing our ability to attract top recruits to Europe and France, leveling the playing field of international talent.

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[1] French Startup Observatory, French Tech /EY

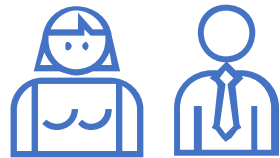
[2] EY Barometer of Risk Capital in France – Annual Review 2016

# A “MIRROR STUDY” CARRIED OUT BY THE CSA INSTITUTE IN MAY 2017

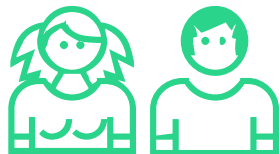


**+80 people interviewed**

Directors & HRD



International talent



**In French startups & scaleups**



- Less than 20 employees



- More than 20 employees



- Scaleup members of #REVIENSLEON:

May 2017

Online and telephone interviews




Quantitative & qualitative insights



# INTERNATIONAL TALENT PART OF THE DNA OF INNOVATIVE BUSINESSES



Workforce	International talent (on average)	% of international talent in workforce	# of nationalities represented
1 to 19 employees	3	43%	3
≥ 20 employees	86	48%	12
Members 	301	63%	20 →

**Nearly 2600 LEONS**  
International talent hired by French scaleup members of #REVIENSLEON over the past 2 years.

**TOP 5 nationalities** represented in the companies interviewed (excluding French)

1. American
2. German
3. Chinese
4. British
5. Canadian

International talent in future hires	> 20 employees: 57%	 Members: 69%
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# INTERNATIONAL TALENT: THE RIGHT RECRUITS TO BOOST STARTUP GROWTH



## TO DEVELOP FOREIGN MARKETS

86%

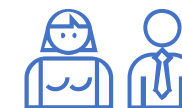
International talent plays a sales role in #REVIENSLEON member companies against 33% in startups with < 20 employees, and 74% with 20+

## TO PROVIDE A DIFFERENT VISION, OUT OF THE BOX

96%

96% of directors feel that international talent has a positive impact on company life & culture – and over 80% on its growth.

### What HRD and directors have to say



*"We are global by definition."*

*"We are more international than other French startups: **80% of our sales are made outside of France.**"*

*"When we brainstorm with a group of people who have all been to business schools in France, we think along the same lines. The melting pot enables us to push the envelope."*

*"Foreigners who come work in Paris or French people who have worked 2 years in China or Australia have necessarily taken risks and risk-taking is very important in innovation."*

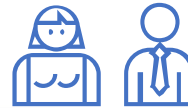
*"They are open-minded (...) They have a greater capacity for adaptation: international recruits are more resourceful."*

# EXTREMELY COMPLEMENTARY MINDSETS



*According to company heads*

**their businesses are**



**international talent is**

Ambitious, Enthusiastic, Strong,  
French, Big Data, Dynamic Activity &  
Growth, Diverse, Innovation,  
Confident, Excellence, Curious,  
Young, Rapid, Sharing



Hard-Working, On the move,  
Communicative, Resourceful, Open-  
minded, Fresh, Multilingual,  
Adaptative, Curious, Risk-takers

# THE CHALLENGE: ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TALENT<sub>1/2</sub>



*What HRD and company heads have to say*

*"As a rule, they aren't disappointed -- they stay."  
"We have no trouble getting them to stay; they like it here."*



*What Leons have to say*

**They think that France is better than other countries for...**

Working with world-class teams



Being at the heart of European innovation



**9 out of 10 recruits**  
consider pursuing  
their career in France,  
half of them for the  
long term (6+ years)



**All of the Leons  
surveyed would  
recommend France**  
to a friend to  
pursue their  
professional career



*HRD and company head initiatives*

To attract international talent, startups and scaleups count first and foremost on **the attractiveness of their own company:**

**1- company culture (65%)** **2. attractiveness of job offer (64%)** **3. financial incentive (only 12%)**



# THE CHALLENGE: ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TALENT<sub>2/2</sub>



*But company heads perceive difficulties*

Limited recruitment budgets and compensation policies that are not attractive enough



Labor legislation / French law



Relations with gov't administration



Their company is not attractive enough yet



Members



71%

57%

57%

57%

≥ 20 employees

74%

59%

33%

41%

Nearly 80% of company heads feel it's difficult to recruit international talent in France

*"What's hard is recruiting a French person who is working in California. We have no way to convince a person who earns \$150,000 over there to come back to France. When they have a personal reason to return, they let themselves be persuaded; otherwise it's a lost cause."*

# DEVELOPING ATTRACTIVENESS: LEVERAGE FOR RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL TALENT



**HRD / company heads**  
depend on 2 main recruitment channels

➡ A time-consuming search that does not necessarily target the best talent



Professional social networks: **82%**



Recommendations: **56%**



**The Leons surveyed found their job via**



Their personal network: **50%**



Job offer websites: **20%**



## DEVELOPING SKILLS –

internally or externally – to enhance company attractiveness:

- Developing a **company culture** and an **employer brand** (especially for scaleups who are “playing in the big leagues”)
- **Getting the word out:** effective communication, job offer visibility– despite recognized quality (especially for small structures).



## IMPROVING THE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE AND THEIR POTENTIAL AS AMBASSADORS

**Over 80%**  
have **no specific welcome / integration  
program** for international talents

*“We are learning how to find talent, but it would be great having a little help.”  
“For me, the visibility of our job offers is key. It’s the most important thing.”*



# WONDERLEON

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