

The emerging market of Interim Management in Portugal

a white paper authored by Acumen,
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Emerging Market

Facing a context of a changing environment and business management paradigms, the idea of strategic development based on Interim Management emerged in Portugal as an innovative venture.

The Republic of Portugal on the Iberian Peninsula joined the European Union in 1986 and is economically in the middle range of prosperous countries. The Portuguese economy used to have a strong agricultural focus, but industry and especially services have now taken that place.

For companies that have or are considering an establishment in Portugal, it is good to know that SMW, with the arrival of Acumen as a partner, can play an excellent role in the need for Interim Management. Also, there are challenging assignments ahead for experienced managers in Portugal or managers from outside Portugal who want to use their specialism here.

In this white paper, Acumen explains the opportunities and possibilities for both target groups in Portugal.



Entering the market

For newcomers, Interim Managers often have a very positive impact. They often play a crucial role in entering the market with new products and services, with or without their local branch. Subsequently, they contribute to the growth of the business.

Also, already established companies in Portugal are increasingly using Interim Managers because they have more experience on a commercial level than the professionals of the company itself. As a result, changes run better, projects or transformations are concluded, and efficiency increases. Due to previous positions and projects in various other companies, Interim Managers have broad experience and are used to applying their expertise appropriately.

Interim Management is beneficial and therefore worth considering if the current employees in the company do not have the experience to make necessary changes or if they do not have the time.

Strategic role

Many Portuguese companies can use Interim Management the same way they work with other professional consultants. Therefore, they are part of the human resources strategy in many organizations. Internal technological changes and external market developments cause the need for a high degree of flexibility in employees. Interim Management also proves that this service is a valuable tool for many companies in this context.

Competitiveness

Experienced Interim Managers can use their broad experience in their temporary role to help a client improve its competitive position. Interim Managers can play a crucial role in revenue growth by increasing cross- or upsell of products and services, developing new pricing strategies, entering new market segments, and gaining greater access to distribution channels.

In terms of cost optimization, the Interim Manager may develop an integrated infrastructure internally to eliminate repetitive roles, integrate operational processes, and strengthen negotiating power with suppliers. The goal is often to improve inventory management and increase efficiency and reorganization in facilities and equipment.



Project Management

With new employees in a permanent job, more time is needed before they have the necessary competencies and specific skills. In the case of a particular project, this time is often lacking, and a person with the desired track record is needed who can immediately begin to achieve the goals set. Interim Managers are used to short-term projects to bring the concentration and dedication required for any project.

Crisis Management

In crisis management, Interim Managers are often considered experts. In times of change, some companies are almost obliged to transform. Transformation is associated with reducing the number of employees and postponing investments.

Interim Management is the ideal solution in times of crisis. Interim Managers are deployable for a certain period, supporting and restructuring and finding suitable changes. Their experience in development skills, problem-solving, and fast and effective action is almost always shorter than that of most line managers. An Interim Manager participates in a project without being emotionally connected to the company, which provides the necessary distance to find the proper change measures.

In a nutshell

Interim Management creates value in times of crisis, decline, or growth by providing organizations with a new perspective. The availability of the desired expertise is temporary and leads to reaching the position where the company wants to be.

Reasons for Interim Management

- short term solution for continuity
- bridging the start of a new employee
- pregnancy, paternity, accident, leave of absence
- managing or accelerating change
- accelerated implementation of a new project or concept
- concluding multi-year contracts
- defining cooperation, partnerships, or joint ventures
- managing reorganizations
- rightsizing, merger, integration, or acquisition

Benefits of Interim Management

- a source of knowledge and skills
- an objective fresh look at the organization
- 100% focus on the assignment
- transfer of new knowledge and skills
- quickly deployable in case of urgent need



Interim Management in Portugal

Interim Management is an emerging strategic expertise in Portugal. It consists mainly of the adequate provision of business solutions by an independent manager, at the board or management level, for a given period. Such solutions include change management, transition management, business recovery, performance improvement, crisis management, and strategic development.

Interim Managers are highly specialized professionals with successful careers in solving problems and formulating and implementing strategies. They work as temporary managers in a company to solve the previously defined problem. They then implement new processes and innovative systems and develop new mechanisms.

Interim Management profile

The ideal profile of an Interim Manager? Since a long familiarization process is out of the question, the Interim Manager must already have a great deal of experience in similar or higher-level positions. The Interim Manager must quickly process large amounts of data and then prioritize and enforce. A track record of successful previous assignments is a significant advantage, as it demonstrates that the Interim Manager can be effective from day one.

Seniority is sometimes seen as a disadvantage for existing managers. However, age is a favorable factor in Interim Management. Interim Managers must have worked in a wide variety of cultures and organizations and have the proven ability to adapt quickly to other business styles.



Career as an Interim Manager

For those thinking about becoming an Interim Manager, here are some considerations.

Professionals are often attracted to the Interim Management market for three main reasons:

1. **Flexibility:** projects are available in a variety of industries, no age bias, need for candidates with experience in multiple fields, no long-term contracts (possibility of breaks) and other circumstances
2. **Professional opportunities:** by working in a dynamic market, candidates take advantage of the opportunity to gain experience in alternative sectors without committing to a permanent position.
3. **Higher liquidity:** for seniors at the end of their career, compensation is up to 30% higher than in permanent employment. Even the younger Interim Manager receives up to 10% more, as clients are willing to pay for immediately available professional skills.

International cooperation

This white paper is a contribution of SMW's partner Acumen from Portugal.

Senior Management Worldwide (SMW) regularly publishes best practice examples from its partners. SMW is an international group of like-minded specialists of interim management providers. They operate in partnership under common principles and standards of excellence. Each partner helps organizations solve critical management issues and influence business outcomes. SMW offers the strongest and deepest network of leading interim executives available anywhere in the world. They combine global reach with local knowledge. With their combined reach and experience, the 25 partner countries offer a wide pool of interim and independent executive professionals across the world.

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