

## Czech inadequacy

What foreign investors want in a Czech country manager, a headhunter said recently, is a good-looking guy or gal who speaks good English and knows how to follow instructions. What foreign owners don't want, the headhunter said, are people who will have too many ideas of their own and cause resistance. Petr Žaluda filled the bill at AXA, where he spent 11 years. He was earning Kč 1m a month, he told [HN](#), but had almost no ability to influence anything, because most decisions were made at headquarters. Becoming CEO at a market leader like Czech Railways gives you the chance to make a difference and satisfy your ego, he said. But the inferiority complex remains, [LN](#) concluded after meeting with him this week. The Evian water he drinks is a reflection of the complexes suffered by a large part of the Czech elite, LN said. Yes, but aren't the foreign owners partly to blame, by overpaying such managers and giving them too little authority? As the Jesuits say, "Give me a child for its first seven years, and I'll give you the man."

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