

Net Expat Newsletter

BRUSSELS - DUBLIN - LONDON - PARIS - THE HAGUE

In order to promote employees' international mobility, Net Expat helps expat partners find worthwhile work in their new host country through 8 programs covering 41 countries.

Dual Career

Expert Opinion

A people-oriented company

Myrjam Ausloos
 Transfer Advisor,
 DuPont de Nemours (Belgium) BVBA



The dual career issue has become increasingly important over recent years. What made you take the decision to offer support to your expat partners?

- We felt that, as of a certain period in time, our employees had increasingly difficulties in accepting an international assignment. The main reason for that was that, over the years, the expat profile had changed. Ten or fifteen years ago, expats

were mostly senior managers whose partner generally had no specific career objective. The expats of today are young people with a partner having a career of his/her own, who is not willing to stop or even interrupt this career in order to follow the expatriated partner abroad.

Du Pont de Nemours developed a "Dual Career Policy" about 4 years ago. What was the most challenging part of this process?

- I guess that the most challenging part was developing and adopting our Transfer Policy in such a way that we were able to motivate our employees and their families to accept an assignment abroad, while at the same time keeping the program financially acceptable to the company.

Was your dual career policy immediately accepted by all levels of management, even by those who had to support directly the cost of it?

- The response to the new policy was very positive. A trailing spouse who feels good in the new host country, creates a kind of 'virtuous circle' that results in a happy expatriate



Integration

Editorial

Challenging journey

Alain Verstandig
 Managing Director,
 Net Expat



We generally meet the expat partners we coach very shortly after their arrival or even before they arrive. In the early days the mood is one of excitement. Rightly known as the "honeymoon" period, this can last from one to two months depending on the country and the person.

Things generally go quite well during this period, the fascination of the voyage blinds people a bit. This period is followed by a more or less brutal return to reality. All the little things that can go wrong, like getting a telephone or opening the electricity meter, start to poison the lives of the new

arrivals. Even worse, there may be problems with the residence permits, or the furniture may have joined the fishes mid-Atlantic.

The partner is particularly exposed to stress during this phase of the expatriation. While the whole family has been sharing the joys of the "honeymoon", the return to reality generally hits the partner particularly hard. The transferee has been fully absorbed with his or her new job from Day One and is rapidly swamped by the workload. But, even when working hard, the professional environment from one subsidiary to another is very similar. If there are children, their powers of adaptation are extraordinary and, even if there are tears, they rapidly make friends and find a "sheet anchor" in their school environment. So, in the final analysis, the partners are the only ones to be



totally isolated from friends, family and the previous job. This is when the real ordeal starts, something that can last a few weeks or months, or even years. It is the prospect of a job that will help them progressively recover their identity and find themselves back in emotional synch with the rest of their family. There can be no question that the professional "rehabilitation" of the partner contributes directly to family stability and to the success of expatriation. It is a great satisfaction for us to follow our candidates on this challenging journey and see them come back smiling after some weeks in their new job! ■

Talents

Supported by





who has the opportunity to concentrate fully on the job. The businesses then gladly accept the extra cost.

From your experience, what makes a good expat/transfer policy in general?

- A competitive Transfer Policy compensates the extra cost and the willingness of the expatriate and his family to work and live abroad, without being too generous. On top of the financial part, we offer our expats programs to facilitate their stay in Belgium, for example schooling, language training, dual career programs, work/life programs and so on. Our Transfer Policy is regularly benchmarked

A trailing spouse who feels good in the new host country, creates a kind of 'virtuous circle' that results in a happy expatriate who has the opportunity to concentrate fully on the job. The businesses then gladly accept the extra cost

against the policies of our frame-of-reference companies.

How appropriate is it for a modern corporation to be people-oriented with its employees? Can you "measure" or benchmark your advantages as a people-oriented company against others that are less so?

- We at DuPont believe it to be very important. Companies that do not meet

the increasing demand for flexibility halfway - and do not offer the possibility of achieving a good balance between the personal and the professional life of their employees - will miss out more and more on talented people. Employers who make no efforts in this respect with their employees will end up with a demotivated crew and a high turnover.

How do you see international mobility in 10 years?

- As more and more companies learn to operate as global organizations, the need for international mobility will increase. However there may be a shift from long-term traditional transferees (e.g. to start up new plants anywhere in the world) to more short-term assignments (e.g. short-term training and development assignments or project work). Short-term assignments are also more easily accepted in young families with dual career parents. There will also be a higher demand for mobility in terms of frequent traveling. Employees will work more in several global networks and this will require extensive traveling. ■

Fairness

A universe of career opportunities

Paul De Gank

HR Director,
BBL International,
member
of ING Group



Mr De Ganck, can you position BBL and ING on the international scene?

- ING is a world leading Group of integrated financial services, with major activities in nearly 70 countries in all continents. The core business is insurance, banking and asset management. The Group was created 10 years ago and has mainly grown through acquisitions in Europe, America and Asia. Since 1998, BBL has been a member of the ING Group, a development that has multiplied the career opportunities of its employees substantially. Just to cite a figure: just in the first half of 2001, there were 61 moves in and out of people coming

from other ING businesses in other countries to BBL (and its subsidiaries) and of BBL people going to ING Group locations.

Extrapolate this fact worldwide over the whole Group and you get an idea of the numbers involved and the importance of a good, equitable and efficient international assignment policy that needs to be managed consistently on a global basis

What is the essence of the International Assignment Policy?

- The policy is designed, of course, to support the success of the business by facilitating

the placement of skills in the global environment in which ING operates. It is the employee who takes responsibility for the success of his assignment, but in order to ensure

professional success, the policy also seeks to accommodate family interests in consistent and equitable ways.

This policy is governed by some well-defined principles, of which the following are some of the most important:

Fairness: the fair treatment of the family, recognizing their contribution to the success of the assignment. This particularly applies to the educational needs of the children and the disruption of dual careers. In this respect there is a clear "partner assistance program", starting with pre-departure briefings, pre-assignment visits, pre-departure assistance such

as cultural awareness and language training, relocation assistance and help in finding a new job for the partner in the host location by providing appropriate external providers. So

Net Expat is of strategic importance to us in reaching our goals of contributing to a real balance between professional and private life, and to the individual quality of life of our expats and their families.

You know, we could use our own network of big companies all over the world who are undoubtedly willing to help another or us in one way. But we prefer professionals for all sorts of reasons. It is better that we stick to our core competencies and that we use the core competencies of the others to create consistent win-win situations. We do not want to be blamed for non-professional behavior. We want to be praised for good partnership. ■

It is better that we stick to our core competencies

The fair treatment of the family, recognizing their contribution to the success of the assignment





Net Expat



We are happy to officially announce that REA (US based) and Net Expat (Europe based) are joining forces and expertise to provide corporate clients with partner assistance services.

We are convinced that this exclusive alliance will increase the global capabilities of a "dual team" that will bring companies global coverage enhanced with the necessary local expertise. With both networks of operations, Net Expat and REA now offer local support in more than 40 countries, with unique and essential up-to-date know-how of the local job markets.

Know-how

Corporate vision on international mobility

Etienne Gousson

International Mobility Manager of the HR Valley consultancy and previously International Mobility Manager of the Danone group



Global executive mobility is one of the tools essential to the development and consolidation of the culture and working methods of any international group.

It is now generally accepted that successful international development is intimately linked with:

Our Customers

- 3M
- Alcatel Microelectronics
- Alstom Power
- BBL International
- Brady
- Bull
- Colgate Palmolive
- Delhaize Group
- DuPont de Nemours
- ExxonMobil
- Gemplus
- Guidant Europe
- Honeywell
- International Paper
- Janssen Pharmaceutica
- MasterCard Brussels Inc.
- Nestlé European Information Technology Operations Center
- Newell Rubbermaid
- Nur
- PerkinElmer
- Procter & Gamble
- Saint Gobain Glass France
- Sogem
- Solvay
- Tractebel
- Tyco-electronics Raychem
- UCB
- Umicore
- UPS
- ...

- ♦ the mobilization of the professional abilities of managers, i.e. the transfer and sharing of know-how and best practice within a group,
- ♦ the ability of managers to react to the sometimes sudden changes in markets, including market variations between different parts of the world. Mobility provides the opportunity to develop one's analytical powers, one's global understanding of developments, and one's powers of adaptation,
- ♦ success in rapidly integrating new business units that are the result of merger and acquisitions. Next to the importance of using the right methods to ensure the process, the open-minded response of the managers concerned makes all the difference.

In this context, successful mobility is one of the basic challenges facing HR management. To achieve this, any HR department has to address the following key issues:

Career development:

- ♦ identify individual mobility objectives for all managers. These may for example be know-how transfer, a step in a career path to maximize an executive's potential, or a training phase.
- ♦ choose the right candidate. It is essential to be sure of both the manager's professional ability and his

or her determination to succeed.

- ♦ supervise integration into the new business unit. This is the role of the local management and the local HR department. Depending on the context, intercultural training or personal coaching may be appropriate.
- ♦ provide the appropriate backup during the international assignment. The most effective solution is the development of a tailor-made support package to prepare the manager for the next phase in his or her career.

Lack of family support is a major cause of failure



Host country integration:

- ♦ ensure that the manager's partner is equally committed to the project. Lack of family support is a

major cause of failure.

- ♦ provide support services to facilitate integration. Primary objectives are to help the family settle in, find accommodation with the help of a relocation company and also, depending on the family situation, offer other forms of support.

- ♦ meet specific demands as, for example, the partner's

professional needs or schooling requirements. Finding the right answers takes time, therefore it is essential to take the initiative as early as possible after the decision to relocate. ■

It is nine months since the management of the Danone group took the decision to create HR Valley. The new venture reflects Danone's strategy of exploiting its know-how while, at the same time, developing its professional potential.

The consultancy offers a single-source service covering the moving, relocation and work permit requirements of anyone planning an international assignment.

The HR Valley mobility team maintains a shortlist of qualified suppliers for each area of activity. The team will support and advise your employees on all aspects of relocation. Relevant tools (checklists, guidelines, etc) are available free of charge on www.hrvalley.com. For further information, please contact Etienne Gousson in Paris, tel: + 33 1 44 35 23 57.

Net Expat Newsletter

Skills

Preparing Working Women

Joanna Parfitt

Freelance Journalist who edits *Woman Abroad Magazine*, <http://www.womanabroad.com>



Women's softer, feminine skills are valuable in the global workplace. Naturally caring, nurturing, enhancing and multi-tasking female skills are more welcome than ever. Add to this a woman's communication ability and you see people fit to slot into today's demanding, global corporation. The latest report from

CIGNA International claims the number of women now working abroad could be as high as 25 per cent. Significantly, the closing paragraph of the report says: 'Female expatriates are highly mobile and enjoy the challenge of working on an international assignment. . . . Many have found the experience, while rewarding, more difficult than anticipated.' The major problem encountered by single women who work abroad tends to be isolation and it is vital that they be prepared for this. A new book that goes a long

way towards preparing women for work abroad, whether in a dual career partnership or working alone, comes from Dr Tracey Wilen of CISCO Systems. Entitled 'International Business: A Basic Guide for Women' the book is wholly comprehensive and candid, dealing with things ranging from packing for a business trip and



Women will never be men in skirts

hosting a dinner party to telephone etiquette and giving a presentation. Whether the women you send overseas are employed by you or are the dual career partners of your employees, the best way to protect your investment, and their sanity, is to prepare them appropriately. Women may be welcome in a man's world these days, but they need treating differently. They will never be men in skirts. ■

Testimonial

The right choice

Hajar Mouatassim

Accompanying Expat Spouse from BBL International

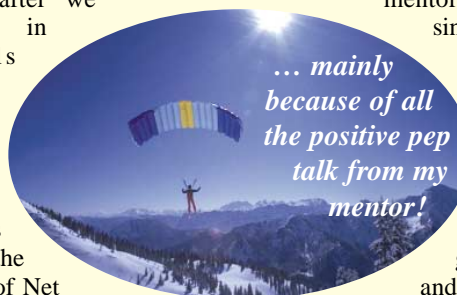


It has been almost a year now since my husband and I moved from the Netherlands to Brussels. It is unbelievable how much can change in such a short period. In the summer of last year, my husband was asked whether he would be interested in being transferred to Brussels for a new job. The idea of leaving my job and moving to another country seriously appealed to me. If things didn't work out well we could always come back, since

Brussels is not at the other end of the world. So it didn't take us long to reach the decision to do it. I finally decided to do post-graduate studies. But it wasn't as easy as I thought. It was after we arrived in Brussels and after I had started my studies that I was offered the services of Net Expat. To be honest, I was quite relieved that I had gotten some professional help in my searching. Even though I had enough time left, I felt relieved that I could slowly

start finding a job, without any pressure. I was already enthusiastic by the end of my first session (mainly because of all the positive pep talk from my mentor!). Every single step in the process was very well thought out and I got help and was prepared all the way. From then on I had sessions on a regular basis, not too often since I also had my studies to think of, but often enough to proceed and stay

enthusiastic and motivated. After every session I felt more reassured. However I would worry sometimes about what I would do if I had finished my studies and still hadn't found a job. After I had spent a half-year studying, I actually found a job. It all went really fast. So there I was, still following my studies and already a job offer for a half-year later! Now I have just started with my new job and, looking back on my life a year ago, I can definitely say that I made the right choice. A choice which has been made a lot easier because of the help I got from Net Expat. ■



NET EXPAT specialises in helping spouses/partners of expatriates to find worthwhile and fulfilling work in their new host country. Would you like more information?

NET EXPAT

See also our Web site at <http://www.netexpat.com>
E-mail: info@netexpat.com

Avenue Louise 287/11
B 1050 Brussels - Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 358 62 28
Fax: +32 (0)2 358 62 29

10 Stratton Street, Mayfair
London, W1J 8LG - United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7544 6827
Fax: +44 (0)20 7544 6870

Boulevard Malesherbes 19
75008 Paris - France
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 27 39 31
Fax: +33 (0)1 55 27 37 00

Alexandra House, The Sweepstakes,
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 - Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)1 664 1731
Fax: +353 (0)1 664 1809

Zurich Toren - Muzenstraat, 89
2511 WB The Hague - The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 42 62 288
Fax: +31 (0)70 42 62 111