

Net Expat Newsletter

ISO 9002



NET EXPAT helps Corporations and Expat Families achieve successful expatriation through a series of Career & Life Transition programs in more than 42 countries. Two programs have been specially developed to facilitate international mobility of your Expats while four other programs help partners of your expats find work in their future host country

NET EXPAT OFFICES THROUGHOUT EUROPE, AMERICA, ASIA.

Dual Career

Corporate Vision

Competitive Advantage in HR

**Tony
Campion**

Human Resources
Manager,
Pfizer Inc.,
Ireland



The ability of multinational organizations to seamlessly relocate key personnel across operations where experience, skills and knowledge are required is a source of competitive advantage in today's Global marketplace.

All too often however, relocation is only focused on the Company colleague and the broad needs of the partner and family, such as housing, schools and transportation. The Colleagues' partners are not usually considered too deeply in terms of their needs or personal aspirations. In many cases the relocation to a different country also presents great opportunities from a career perspective for the partner, but direct assistance to realize those opportunities is usually lacking. Relocations can fail because the partner is unable to settle or find meaningful employment where that is desired which leads to general

unhappiness and affects the Company colleague and his or her concentration on performing in the workplace.

In this instance we have tried to deal with this through the use of a professional organization, which

The ability of multinational organizations to seamlessly relocate key personnel across operations ... is a source of competitive advantage!

focuses wholly on the partners of multinational colleagues being relocated.

The menu approach to utilizing the services of NET EXPAT made it cost effective and the services could be tailored to our needs.

We received dedicated personal support, which assisted in developing a relationship and an

understanding of the needs of the individual.

In Christine's case (see next page), the assistance with CV, interviewing and qualification mapping provided through NET EXPAT was instrumental in helping her find a suitable role in the market place.

Not all Company colleagues partners are interested in developing a career in the country they are relocating to, it is very much a personal issue based on personal circumstances, but it is advantageous to have the services of a provider available where there is an interest. In some cases it may be the difference between the colleague coming to the country or turning down the option. ■



Editorial

Has the pendulum swung too far?

**Alain
Verstandig**

Managing
Director,
NET EXPAT



The emergence of new technologies, as well as the remodeling of international responsibilities, has led to a series of new forms of international mobility. Of these, commuting is the most common today.

Our expat coaching department has been working overtime to solve the problems caused by this

phenomenon. If commuting qualifies as a perfectly satisfactory solution for short-term missions (maximum one year), it's less than that in the case of missions of 1-3 years and worse still, of course, in the case of permanent positions. Too many companies leave the exact nature of this type of transfer to the expat (with or without his or her family). As a result the expat often opts for what looks like the most flexible solution: commuting. Unaware of the family challenges and unconscious of the credibility gap often sensed by local teams towards commuting bosses, these

'long-term commuters' are often confronted with a major crisis after a year.

Unfortunately there aren't many ways of solving this kind of crisis: either limit the opportunity for such forms of mobility (maximum one year and in line with the nature of the mission involved), or offer specific support to such "long-term commuters" to help them face up to the challenge and learn to live with their 'status'. We at NET EXPAT felt it necessary to develop specific tools to deal with this kind of situation, parallel to our "classical" expat coaching procedures. ■

Supported by



AUTUMN 2004 – ISSUE 24 – Office of deposit: Brussels X - P2A9744



Mobility

Integration

Talents



Testimonial

Expatriation in Dublin

Christine Leimer

Expat Spouse from Pfizer Inc., Austria



NET EXPAT: Christine, you decided to leave Vienna for Dublin in mid-2002 to follow your husband. How did you feel about this at the time?

Christine Leimer: I was very excited. My husband was offered a job in Dublin by his employer, Pfizer Inc. It was our first expatriation, and everything looked like going smoothly. I thought the integration process would be easy for all of us, including our 3 year-old daughter.

Pfizer Inc, my husband's employer, gave us great support. We were given relocation aid, language training - and the services of NET EXPAT as I wanted to work. All this support was critical, as everything was new to us in Dublin. Selecting a home within a specific neighborhood or being left by yourself to find a job, has a direct impact on the expatriation experience. It is crucial to have such a well organized support from a multinational employer.

NE: What were the good and bad surprises when you arrived in Dublin?

CL: Apart from the big difference between Vienna and Dublin in the cost of living, the first impressions were not too bad. Irish people are extremely friendly and easy-going. Our daughter went to a nice Montessori school, the Park Academy, where she quickly settled in. The only big surprise



for us was the damp climate: while there was no lasting impact our young daughter was sensitive to it.

NE: What about your own integration?

CL: As I had been working in management roles in Austria, not working in Dublin was out of the question: I would have felt isolated and bored. So I took the initiative and quickly got in contact with headhunters and employment agencies, even before starting my coaching with NET EXPAT. People were open to discussion and I had meetings with several recruiters but, unfortunately, there were no

All this support was critical, as everything was new to us in Dublin

suitable job opportunities for me. I realized later that this was mainly due to the fact, that I presented myself in a way as I successfully did it in Austria before, which was not the most appropriate approach for the Irish job market.

Pfizer Inc. then offered me the services of NET EXPAT: together with my coach, Eleanor, we worked intensively on my CV to adapt it to the Dublin job market. The CV is the key, as this is the main piece of information on which recruiters base their decision on whether to interview you or not. Later on, the CV reinforces the impression they get during the interview. When you change countries, you often forget to adapt the look of your CV to the new local job market.

I also worked on my interviewing skills through role-playing with my coach. Eleanor helped me speak about my education and professional experience in

Vienna, 'translating' my qualifications to match the Dublin market. Not surprisingly, I started to be 'understandable' and more persuasive with the potential employers I met. Eventually I found a really good job with the Bank of Ireland, in a nice atmosphere with pleasant colleagues.

NE: You are now back in Vienna after 2 years of expatriation. How did your repatriation go?

CL: It was surprisingly easy, as returning to a city you have been used to living in for many years before, has less uncertainties than relocating to a place you have no experience of. I'm sure that the only mild 'reverse culture shock' we experienced was due to the fact that we were only away for two years and had stayed in close contact with friends and relatives

in Vienna. But I can easily imagine that, if you go abroad for a longer period of time, the repatriation experience can be quite challenging.

I must say that my husband and I came back enriched by our expatriation, both on the professional and the personal side. Irish people are great folk! Today we feel more open, more mobile, but we are also more aware of the possible challenges of expatriation. My advice to future expat families is to make sure you are properly informed about your new host country, and double-check the details of the terms of your expatriation. Don't forget things like health insurance and reimbursement of medical care: after all, you never know how your kids will deal with the local weather! ■

Report

Managing China's HR Environment

Christa Zihlmann

Mercer HR Consulting, Global Information Services, Switzerland



Despite the general tendency to replace expatriates with local talent at middle management level, the number of expatriates sent to China continues to rise. The main reason for this is related to the fact that assignment patterns tend to follow the flow of foreign investments. Major companies are reviewing their expatriate policies and adapting them to the growing complexity that they are finding in China's second and third-tier cities. Based on Mercer's comprehensive market data and consulting expertise in

China, 'Managing China's HR Environment' provides an overview of the current HR situation in China, as well as a wealth of information on compensation, benefits, employment conditions, tax and expatriate issues. NET EXPAT contributed to this publication by sharing their insights into spouse/family visas and permits. ■

For more information please contact Mark Varsori at Mercer Human Resource Consulting on +41 22 869 30 00 / mark.varsori@mercer.com or visit www.imercer.com/chinaenvironment.



Newsletter

Expatriate Coaching

Classical Mistakes

See Luan Foo

Program Manager,
NET EXPAT,
Singapore



Today's global expatriates work and live in an increasingly complex, competitive and multi-cultural world. They face multi-dimensional challenges, one of which is cross-cultural in nature. Listed below are tips for avoiding two classical mistakes which are too often made by Western Managers in Asia. To be aware of them, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

1. Superiority Attitude

It is readily understandable for an expatriate to be comfortable with his home country culture. However, for an expatriate

assignment to be successful, the expatriate must learn to adapt to the local culture. An open and receptive attitude facilitates this

To be aware and to be forewarned is to be forearmed

process of integration, thus minimizing culture shock. Therefore expatriates should avoid a superior attitude in thinking and behavior, especially viewing everything in the home country as better than in the host country. This



ethnocentric tendency to discount or denigrate the local culture offends the sensibilities of host country citizens.

2. Flaunting Expertise, Experience, Power and Wealth.

To possess intellectual capital and financial resources is one thing; to flaunt them is quite another.

Local citizens accept the premise that expatriates are needed because they bring beneficial expertise and rich experience. This in turn confers certain material privileges on the expatriates, namely higher levels of authority and higher standards of living as manifested by the house/apartments they live in and the automobiles they drive.

It is good to enjoy and accept the privileges; but it is better not to flaunt them. ■

News

A Green Card for China

William Tong

Program Manager,
NET EXPAT,
Hong Kong



Upon the approval of the State Council, the Minister of Public Security Zhou Yongkang and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Li Zhaoxing jointly endorsed Decree No.74 and officially issued the *Regulations on Examination and Approval of Permanent Residence of Aliens in China* for implementation on August 15th 2004.

Eligibility for permanent residence is granted by the government to aliens who meet certain requirements, and with this eligibility they can reside in the country without limit to the period of stay. Aliens with eligibility for permanent residence in a country are

granted certificates of identification, commonly known as "Green Cards". The issuance of *Regulations on Examination and Approval of Permanent Residence of Aliens in China* indicates the official implementation of the "Green Card" system in China. This is a significant move by the Chinese Government to adapt to

This is a significant move by the Chinese Government to adapt to economic globalization

economic globalization, push forward reform and opening-up and the modernization of socialism still further, and

normalize the regulation of examination and approval of permanent residence for aliens in China.

According to the prerequisites specified in the Regulations, eligibility for permanent residence mainly applies to high-level foreign personnel who hold posts in businesses which promote China's economic, scientific and technological development or social progress, foreign citizens who make relatively large direct investment in China, persons who have made outstanding contributions or are of special importance to China, and people who come to China to be with family, such as husband and wife, minors dependent on their parents, and senior citizens dependent on their relatives.

For more information contact NET EXPAT. ■

Some Clients

3M

Advanced Elastomer Systems

AMIS

Alstom Power

BBL International

BD Biosciences Europe

Borealis

BP

Brady

Bristol-Myers Squibb

Bull

Cadbury Schweppes

Cargill

Colgate Palmolive

Cordis

Corus Group plc

Delhaize Group

DuPont de Nemours

Electrabel

Euroclear Bank

ExxonMobil

Gemplus

GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals

Guidant Europe

Honeywell

ING

International Paper

Janssen Pharmaceutica

Kraft Foods

La Poste

MasterCard

Merck Sharp & Dohme

Methanex

Nestlé

Newell Rubbermaid

Nur

PerkinElmer

Pfizer

Procter & Gamble

Quest International

Reckitt Benckiser

Saint Gobain Glass France

Schlumberger

Sogem

Solvay

Sonaca

Sony

Standard Life

Tele Atlas

Tessenderlo

Thermo King

Total

Tractebel

Tyco-electronics

Raychem

UCB

Umicore

Unilever

Unisys

UPS

Whirlpool...

Net Expat Newsletter

HR Tools

Using Metrics to Drive Value through Global Mobility

Michael Elia

Managing Director
Expat Technology
Forum, UK.



As our companies have become increasingly global in their outlook, so our need for, and dependence on internationally mobile employees has grown. At the same time, however, the opportunity of an expatriate career has diminished in its appeal. The yearning to travel the world has been overtaken by the desire for a reasonable work-life balance. With dual career and family issues leading the list of obstacles to employee mobility, and heightened concerns about safety and security, it is imperative for us to ensure that our mobility services are coherent, credible, well communicated and effectively delivered. Gathering meaningful metrics

about how well our mobility program is delivered to assignees was the goal of a recent project of the Expat Technology Forum. A workgroup of Member companies examined current practice and experience with assignee surveys. Its findings were revealing:

- assignees were already in receipt of any number of 'customer satisfaction' surveys from third party service providers (relocation, tax etc);
- these third-party surveys were typically being used to substantiate the narrow performance

The yearning to travel the world has been overtaken by the desire for a reasonable work-life balance.

demands of a service level agreement, but were of limited overall value;

- the content of in-house surveys was either so bland, or so sharply focused on topical areas of concern that they failed to offer broad, meaningful insights on

performance; •not surprisingly, many were concerned about raising expectations of change.

The project has resulted in a new, independently-administered online survey instrument which allows any company to survey assignees and their partners using questionnaires developed through close cooperation among leading, best practice organizations. The instrument has responded extremely well in practice, with rapid deployment

and high response rates. Its capabilities include powerful integrated analysis tools which make it easy to get under the skin of the data to develop a well-balanced, focused remedial action plan.

Perhaps the most unique, compelling feature of the survey tool is that we can compare our results instantly with independent benchmark scores from a growing number of the world's leading companies.

These new metrics offer us the opportunity to sharpen the impact of our programs, improve performance and thereby play our part in driving value through global mobility. ■

The Expatriate Program Performance Metrics Survey (EPPM) is one of several ground-breaking solutions developed by the Expat Technology Forum on behalf of its Members. Current ETF Members include: AstraZeneca, BP, Heineken, Hydro, Philips, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank and Unilever. Further information: www.expatmetrics.com +44 (0)1344 898007



Central America

Costa Rica, the Rich Coast

Ann Dean

Editorial Director,
Living Abroad,
USA.



Located in the Central American isthmus between Nicaragua and Panama, the Republic of Costa Rica is known as Central America's purest democracy. The country enjoys the highest standard of living, the second lowest birth rate and the highest degree of economic and social progress in the region.

The Ticos, as Costa Ricans are generally called, are friendly and

amiable people who enjoy talking and do not make distinctions based on social class. When making introductions, Costa Ricans usually shake hands. Women may hug and pat each other on the back. In most social

do not step back from someone who is speaking to you

situations, you will find that Costa Ricans position themselves very close to one another, particularly when conversing. Although you may be unaccustomed to this at first, do not step back from someone who is speaking to you, as they may be offended.

You will find the business environment in Costa Rica to be dynamic and modern. The country has one of the highest percentages of lawyers per capita in the world.

Though generally well regarded, the government continues to grapple with its large deficit and large internal debt. The need to modernize the state-owned electricity and telecom sectors stays among the changes that need to be addressed in this country.

The Costa Rican education system is one of the most advanced in Latin America. The government provides education to its residents for free, and imposes mandatory education for children

up to the ninth grade. As a result, Costa Rica has the highest literacy rate in Latin America. So, if you are considering an assignment to Costa Rica, know that the beauty of the country and its progressive atmosphere among Latin American countries should make your stay extremely rewarding! ■



We help you expat your talents

Web site: <http://www.netexpat.com>

NET EXPAT

e-mail: info@netexpat.com

NET EXPAT OFFICES THROUGHOUT EUROPE, AMERICA, ASIA.