

Net Expat® Newsletter

Spring 2009

Expats Coaching | Dual Career Solutions | Expats Assessment

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Offices throughout America, Europe and Asia-Pacific



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International Mobility at BNP PARIBAS

Testimonial



Odile Cochet

Group Human Resources, International
Mobility and Deputy Head, BNP PARIBAS,
Paris, France.

Alain Verstandig: What does
international mobility look like
today at BNP PARIBAS?

Odile Cochet: An international
assignment is more than ever a
key step for an employee working
at BNP PARIBAS. We promote,
encourage and strongly support
international mobility to build up
an even more international
corporate culture and to foster the
exchange of expertise throughout
the group. The number of

Working together with
host-country managers
and HR departments,
we've developed a new
mobility policy that we
are very proud of

international assignees is rapidly
growing, particularly to so-called
"emerging" countries and regions
(e.g. China, India, Central Europe).
The length of the assignments has
not changed much: a typical
assignment is still around three
years. We're also seeing the
emergence of new types of
assignments: "local +" and
"commuters." Although these
offer a great deal of flexibility, they
are not necessarily well received
and do pose certain dangers,
among them potential
tax issues.

AV: You launched a 360-degree
review of the support offered to
your mobile employees and their
partners. Can you tell us more?

OC: Indeed. In early 2007, we
launched a substantial internal
survey to better understand the
expectations and fears of BNP
Paribas Expats when faced with
potential international assign-
ments, as well as their satisfaction
level with the support offered at
that time. The results were
extremely useful and revealed a
couple of key requests, among
which were the following:

- more transparency with regard
to career opportunities worldwide
or throughout the world
- a solution to the dual career
situation with support for Expat
partners wishing to continue or
pursue their careers abroad. ■■■



Reset!

Editorial



Alain Verstandig
Managing Director,
NET EXPAT

Reset: I come across this
expression more and more.
Reset, let's look again
at the way key
fundamentals have
been tackled so far.



I must admit that I
like it. Set alongside
President Obama's "yes
we can" these calls to "Reset" on
the lips of some of the most
influential leaders of the world,
far from calling for some kind of
pointless popular rebellion, begin
to really mean something: more
regulation in frantic financial
markets, more sustainability in the
way we use resources, more
communication between countries
that have forgotten how to speak
to each other, no more nuclear
weapons threatening our children's
world. Why not? I like these ideas
even if they look as if they come
from a naive young teenager. The
point is that they don't: these calls
to "reset" are coming from the
most powerful people in both the
public and the business worlds, and
by a growing number of people
who support them.

So, what about you? What can
you reset? Whatever position you
hold in your international
mobility department, how do you
want to grow your international
talents and move your employees
and families around the globe? If
you had this button and the
power to press it, what would be
your "reset" in international
mobility? ■



Net Expat® Newsletter

■■■ Working together with host-country managers and HR departments, we've developed an entirely new mobility policy that we are very proud of: It is now global and transparent, known and appreciated by all parties, and the majority of our employees' requests are included in this new policy. We also introduced career assistance support specifically for our Expat partners delivered by NET EXPAT. Since its introduction over a year ago, we have been pleasantly surprised by the substantial number of partners taking advantage of NET EXPAT services with positive results. Expats and their partners are welcoming the support; this program is truly making a huge difference in easing the decision making and integration of the whole family, including of course our employees. Many BNP Paribas' partners have made a seamless transition from having a career in their home country to continuing that career abroad. This also eases anxieties during the repatriation phase when the overseas

assignment is complete. Our HR managers who offer mobility opportunities to our employees have confirmed that this makes presenting the opportunity of an international assignment that much more appealing, and they've found that the employees' decision-making process is much smoother with the introduction of this enhanced support.



AV: *Despite our ever-connected world, you have also invested in Intercultural Training.*

OC: That's right. On top of the e-learning tools available on our intranet, which certainly have their limitations, we have invested in face-to-face Intercultural Training for our employees. These training sessions have been very well received. They assist Expats and their partners in understanding the host culture, lifting cultural barriers and moving beyond stereotypes or incorrect first impressions. This is a very lively

program, and it's rewarding to watch previously guarded employees cast away their defense mechanisms and learn that cultural differences can actually enrich people's lives. Spousal support and Intercultural Training were new to BNP Paribas, but today are very much expected by transferees. In my point of view, all international employers should move towards these programs as the additional cost is small compared to the benefits they bring to both employers and employees by contributing to a true culture of mobility.

Spousal support and Intercultural Training were new to BNP PARIBAS, but today are very much expected by transferees.

AV: *What can you tell us about the repatriation phase?*

OC: Because international mobility is typically limited to a five-year period, obviously repatriation works best when there is a position waiting for the employee when he or she returns home. The problems typically arise for Expats who have been abroad for over five years. These

Repats normally do not have positions when they return, and they have grown accustomed to living as an Expat. Readjusting to life "back home" can often be difficult, and this combined with less autonomy and "social status" are most often at fault in cases of failed repatriation. At this point, we don't offer any form of repatriation training, but we are considering it: the very nature of this challenge, which is not only of a cultural nature but also behavioral, makes it all the more delicate.

AV: *How do you see mobility in a few years' time?*

OC: Mobility will continue to increase, but we'll probably stop talking about "Expats." We'll see more mobile employees operating under a variety of imaginative mobility roles. I also see more specific support systems such as those previously mentioned. These will be indispensable in convincing employees to accept assignments abroad, and should remain at the forefront of our minds: what's important is keeping a career path in mind, and not simply moving people around in order to fill gaps. ■

The challenges of recruiting internationally

Expert opinion



Stephane Wajskop
Managing Director of Careers in Europe,
Brussels, Belgium.

Alain Verstandig: *Careers in Europe is a leading player in pan-European recruitment. How do you work?*

Stephane Wajskop: We attract and preselect high potential graduates throughout Europe for our client companies. We have developed recruitment tools to

help companies target the 'international' candidates i.e. the graduates and early-career professionals who have an international mindset, are mobile and speak multiple languages. Our services include pan-European search and selection together with physical and online recruitment events. Not only do we have

databases of 50,000+ top candidates, we also build strong relationships with numerous pools of top candidates: universities, student and alumni associations, leading websites and so on.

The talent war will be back soon. Not recruiting talent for one or two years has a high price to pay when growth returns!

AV: *Why do companies recruit internationally?*

SW: Historically, companies were not open to recruiting graduates across borders. They considered that graduate recruitment was a local

activity. This has changed tremendously in the last ten years: there is now much greater willingness to develop the 'global' management of tomorrow as a means of building the truly global company they aspire to become. Companies also realize that they need to reach the same recruitment quality standards across their

group despite weaker recruitment teams in some countries. This is why attracting and preselecting candidates is often a global initiative, while each country remains in charge of final



Permits Foundation: Expatriate Partners Employment

Testimonial



Kathleen van der Wilk-Carlton

Board Member, Permits Foundation, The Hague,
The Netherlands.

This survey examined the views of 3300 expatriate spouses and partners of 122 nationalities, currently accompanying international employees working in 117 host countries for over 200 employers in both the private and public sector. It provides evidence that a lack of spouse or partner employment opportunities adversely affects global mobility of highly skilled international employees. A few focused and simple improvements on the part of employers and governments can make a triple win for families, employers and the countries in which they work.

Key findings for employers

A lack of spouse or partner employment opportunities adversely affects global mobility of highly skilled international staff. The spouses and partners of internationally assigned staff are a highly educated and under-utilized

talent pool, with diverse professional backgrounds and nationalities. Acknowledging and supporting their employment needs and advocating more flexible work permit regulations will enhance international mobility. According to accompanying spouses and partners, nearly 25% of international staff had previously turned down an assignment (22%) or terminated an assignment early (7%) because of concerns about the partner's employment or career. This is probably the tip of the iceberg since the survey questioned only those who are currently on assignment. Moreover, the responses from the younger age groups and male partners indicate that the problem is likely to increase in future if nothing is done about it. Over three-quarters of respondents would welcome help with finding employment and certainty of getting a work permit. Less than one fifth felt they had received adequate

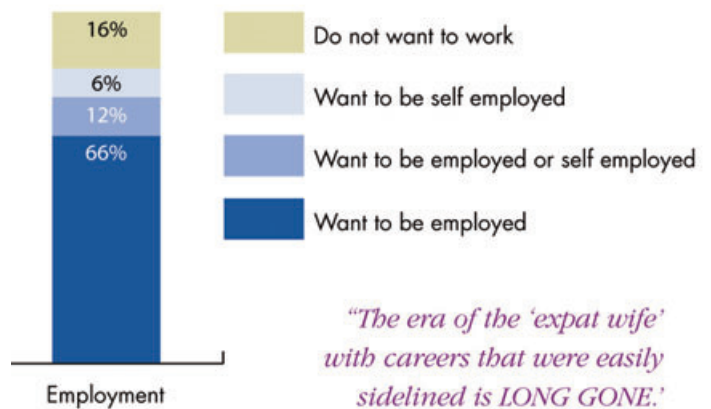
support in these areas. Almost 90% of spouses and partners were employed before expatriation. This figure fell to 35% during expatriation. Three quarters of those who are not working want to work. This is particularly so among the younger age groups, men, graduates and unmarried partners.

of respondents. This is an important signal to governments that want to attract top international talent to enhance inward investment.

The role of spouse employment in the relocation decision

The majority of spouses and partners say that their own

EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS IN THE HOST COUNTRY



Key findings for governments

Work permits for spouses and partners are one of the keys to location attractiveness for highly skilled international staff. Spouses who work will contribute both skills and revenue to the host country economy. Countries that enable spouses and partners to work are attractive destinations for 96%

employment and career was important in the decision to accept the current assignment (83% for male partners, 67% for female partners). This is particularly so among the male spouses, younger age groups (80% of the under 35s say their own employment is important...), unmarried partners and those with a university degree. ■■■



recruitment.
AV: *What are the challenges companies recruiting internationally face?*

SW: *Within a company, the number of international recruits is small compared with the overall recruitment target and therefore proper resources are not always allocated. The most common challenges international recruiters face are:*

1. attracting candidates:

- The world is big: let's say you want to recruit top European graduates in marketing or German-speaking engineers. Where do you start?
- Which message will you develop? Will you take into account cultural differences? Will you communicate in the candidate language? In English?
- Costs: what budget do you have per hire? Are you ready to pay travel expenses for face-to-face interviews?

2. preselecting candidates:

- You need to define common selection tools and processes among all recruiters, divisions or countries involved (application

form, competency matrix, recruitment process, etc). Tools like the ExpAdviser measuring candidate's expatriability might help you in this.

Crisis times represent windows of opportunity to recruit better candidates

- CV analysis: you do not read international CVs the same way. You need to have some familiarity with international education, internships, multicultural experiences, language knowledge, specific soft skills (empathy, intercultural sensitivity)

AV: *What is your perception of today's economic environment?*

SW: This is the third economic crisis we have experienced as a company. The situation seems to be stabilizing, some saying that the crisis will last till the end of 2009 and others till 2010. Whatever the timing, crisis times represent windows of opportunity to recruit better candidates than in times where there is a talent shortage. And with fewer major companies recruiting they also offer the opportunity to stand out as an employer of choice. Companies must avoid at all costs disappearing from the recruitment market: the talent war will be back soon. Not recruiting talent for one or two years has a high price when growth is back! ■

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Cap Gemini
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Tchibo
Tele Atlas
Tessenderlo
Thermo King
Total
Tractebel
UCB
Umicore
Unilever
UPS
Vallourec
Volkswagen
Whirlpool
...

■ ■ ■ The positive impact on being employed abroad

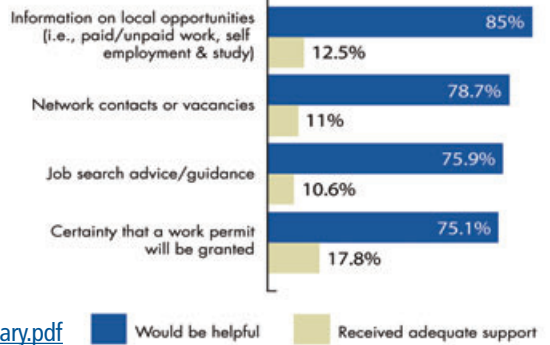
Not all spouses want to work and some are very happy to take a career break. However, there appears to be a clear link between working and positive feelings about the assignment: spouses who are working are more likely to report a positive impact on adjustment to the location, on family relationships and on their health or well-being than spouses who are not working. Spouses who are working are more likely to report a positive impact on their willingness to complete the current assignment, to extend the current assignment if given the opportunity, and to go on a new assignment than those who are not working. ■

You can read the full report at :

http://permitsfoundation.com/docs/permits_survey_summary.pdf

SUPPORT SERVICES

Around 80% of spouses would welcome the following support but few received it:



The Business is Relocation, the Strategy is Quality

Networking and Quality



Helmut Berg,

President of EuRA, Managing Shareholder, RSB Deutschland GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

What is very good today, will only be good tomorrow. Is the Relocation world today the same as it was 10 or 20 years ago? No, it is not. It has turned into a truly global product. Its definition has also changed and broadened from just the 'HomeSale' product, which was the beginning of everything.

Relocation Services today are very often understood to be Destination Services: Orientation, HomeSearch and Settling-in. Is that all clients want, however? Is that all the industry can provide? Expatriation has always been complex. At the same time it is becoming more important for the success of corporations in an economic world that is constantly getting more international. Clients are asking for more support, expertise and guidance.

EuRA Offers a Platform for Networking and Quality Enhancement

Although we have some networks of relocation management companies, business associations and other loose groupings of providers,

the main characteristic in the relocation industry is that most providers are rather small entities. As single "fighters" they can sometimes feel uncomfortable, so they look for a platform where they can find partners, share experience, develop and learn further.

Although we know that networking is a major component of the attractiveness of EuRA – don't miss our next conference in Vienna from 22 – 24 April 2009 – we are convinced that the major task of EuRA is to support our members by offering training and development opportunities.

Two strong pillars: CERP and EuRA Quality Seal

EuRA offers two pillars of training and accreditation: The CERP (Certified European Professional) at levels 1, 2 and 3; this was developed in the EARP (European Academy of Relocation Professionals). The CERP is targeted at the individual, whatever their position.

The EuRA Quality Seal – implemented in November 2007 – is the world's first and only accreditation for relocation providers. The EuRA Quality Seal offers not only the advantage of an additional competitive edge for providers; it also offers a great advantage to the clients. Somebody who has never worked with Relocation Services before or only in certain parts of the world will face a market which is less and less transparent, with very experienced providers and very new ones. Clients need to find criteria which will help them choose the right provider. With the EuRA Quality Seal they have a thorough and impartial basis for choosing. A provider holding the EuRA Quality Seal has, in a sense, been 'pre-screened'. This is the basis on which EuRA will continue to offer information and training. We cannot make our members successful, but we have an obligation to provide them with the tools they need to help them achieve success. ■

Further information on

www.eura-relocation.com

Net Expat®

We help you expat your talents

NET EXPAT helps Corporations and Expat Families achieve successful expatriation through a series of Career & Life Transition programs in more than 41 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

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