

Net Expat Newsletter

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BRUSSELS - DUBLIN - FRANKFURT - 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.



France

A way to go...

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If the United States' decision to liberalize access to employment for expatriate spouses is the start of a trend, France is unlikely to be the first country to follow suit. Current rules allow spouses/partners to accompany expatriates to France, but prohibit them from taking salaried employment. This can come as quite a surprise to spouses who have interrupted their own careers to move to France and are unwilling

to forego all prospects of professional activity during their stay abroad.

Indeed, having some form of professional activity is one of the best ways to break out of the expatriate "bubble" to which they were so often confined in the past.

Ideally, the enterprising spouse should be able to find a French employer before making the move. The latter would then sponsor a long-stay work visa application, separately from the application being processed at the initiative of the worker's host company.

This is not often feasible, however, and most spouses find professional opportunities only after an initial adaptation period that enables them to determine, in particular, to what extent language skills, often acquired years earlier, are still "operational".

Even without language skills, expatriate spouses survive and prosper!



Editorial

Short-Termism

Alain Verstandig

Managing
Director,
Net Expat



We are reorganizing, you are reorganizing, they are reorganizing...

Yesterday I was practicing this exercise in verb declension with my daughter and finding that it fits the present situation perfectly. Mobility and adaptability are the essence of the times we are living through, and one needs an almost instinctive sense of flexibility in order to survive.

And yet, if we are to believe the results of a survey we recently made of our clients, the overwhelming majority wants to believe in a return to normal in the next few months. So flexibility will be a matter for the longer term and, in the meantime, the medium-term issues will be back on the agenda.

Meaning what? That, in matters of international mobility, a short-term approach to HR will backfire in the short... and the long-term. Forget your expats and they will quickly forget you.

We normally talk in this newsletter about Expat partners, and here I am talking to you about your expats and local hires, the cornerstones of your international mobility strategy.

*Forget your Expats
and they will quickly
forget you.*

For over a year now, and for a sizable proportion of our existing clients, Net Expat has worked with expats on two very specific types of projects that can be of interest to you:

• **Coaching/mentoring of expats:** this stimulating program (I love giving it ...) is a short and intensive one-on-one coaching with the aim of

facilitating the integration of your expats and assuring the success of their assignments. Key aspects include adaptation of business vision to new local realities, emotional resilience...

• **Outplacement of expats:** past undertakings can quickly look like present betrayals. Living through a reorganization can be a painful experience for an expat, who can find him or herself converted overnight from a favored employee to a superfluous cipher. Our professional job-finding service for expats has proved to be invaluable not only in solving personal crises, but also in validating a company's global mobility policy.

It goes without saying that tomorrow's expatriation candidates are also interested in having an idea of how they will be treated tomorrow.

Let none of us be rattled by the pressures of the short term! ■

Dual Career

Mobility

Integration

Talents

Supported by



Immigration procedures for spouses

For expatriates sent on assignment to France, visa applications are initially sponsored by the French host company. Application may be made simultaneously for admission of the expatriate's spouse and children under 18. This procedure is referred to as "famille accompagnante" because the family either accompanies the expatriate travelling to France or arrives shortly thereafter (3 to 6 months maximum).

Other categories of immigrants may qualify to bring their spouses and families to France under the same procedure, as long as the initiative comes from France rather than from the foreigner in his or her country of origin. Examples include trainees, seconded workers, and students on

grants or scholarships.

The "famille accompagnante" procedure is by far the simplest for families moving with expatriates. In no case, however, does it entitle the spouse or older children to take employment.

There is only one immigration category, where the spouse of an expatriate, whatever his or her nationality, has full and immediate

access to employment in France, whether s/he comes to France with the expatriate, or years later: family members of European Union nationals.

Nationals of the 15 EU states as well as, by extension, Swiss and EEA nationals (EU plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) benefit from the free movement provisions of European

Community law when moving between member states, whether for purposes of employment, provision of services, study, etc.

To exercise these rights fully, the EU national must be able to be accompanied by his or her family, thus creating rights for family members of

EU nationals, even if the latter are themselves third country nationals.

Thus a Pakistani spouse married to a British national moving to France, will be entitled to a residence permit allowing him/her to take employment, no matter what status the British national has in France. Using the same example, as the Pakistani's rights to reside and work in France are derived from the British spouse's residence there, the question arises as to the effect

separation or divorce would have on the Pakistani's immigration status in France. In fact, the European Court of Justice ruled over 15 years ago that the relevant Community law provisions did not mean that the third-country spouse "must necessarily live under the same roof" as the EU national.

The Court has not yet ruled, however, on the consequences of all possible cases involving divorce and/or the EU spouse's departure from the host state, leaving open the question of whether an EU national can intentionally deprive his or her non-EU spouse of all protection as regards residence and employment in the host state where the couple had settled, by provoking separation and then divorce, thus possibly adding "a new terror to marriage"! ■

Even without language skills, expatriate spouses survive and prosper!

Education

Graduating through the glass ceiling

Amie Mounieime

expat partner from Johnson & Johnson Cordis



"You will be much more prepared for the work scene if you have a better understanding of how things are done here!" said my coach from Net Expat during our first appointment.

He could not have been more right!

After extensive job searching and several interviews, I accepted an assistant level position that Net Expat found with a well-known company. After several months of working and talking with my colleagues, and after learning about their own impressive

backgrounds, I realized that I was in a new host country where education is the key and my undergraduate degree in French was proving to be a major setback.

My coach knew I wanted to move into a higher position within the company, so we

sometimes we have to change the old beliefs that fit our old life to new beliefs that fit our new life

began brainstorming different ideas to find the right path for me. I had relevant corporate experience and I really wanted to be in a managerial position but, without the proper degree, my high hopes of moving up were unrealistic.

The best choice, and definitely not an easy one, was to apply for an MBA program. This would complement the experience I already had and raise my chances of a good career. I applied and have been accepted into an excellent MBA Program this fall.

After a hard struggle, I believe I am finally on the right path and have learned that sometimes we have to change the old beliefs that fit our old life to new beliefs that fit our new life. ■



Magellan-Belgium is born

The Magellan network, founded in France, is a professional platform enabling international HR managers and international mobility specialists to meet, debate issues and share information. Created on the initiative of representatives of a group of companies with international HR commitments, it now brings together more than 130 multinationals in 13 countries.

The underlying objectives are:

- Discussion and benchmarking of HR practices and international mobility policies
- Creation of services that are genuinely adapted to the needs of companies.

Magellan-Belgium has the mission of representing specific Belgian HR interests within the framework of an existing international network.

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Newsletter

Survey

Dual Career and International Assignments Survey

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ORC is delighted to announce the publication of the fourth in a series of surveys on Dual Careers and International Assignments. If you are interested in further details about the survey, please contact Siobhan Cummins at Siobhan.Cummins@orcinc.co.uk.

In today's global marketplace, international assignments are extremely important, ensuring that multinational companies remain competitive. Therefore, it is essential for companies to attract and retain internationally mobile employees. One of the most important factors in determining the success of an overseas assignment is the willingness of a spouse or partner to leave home - and possibly a career - to live abroad.

The phenomenon of dual careers is a fundamental issue for companies when planning and implementing their expatriate policies and practices. The significance of dual careers and the provision of effective support mechanisms have become increasingly important topics for multinational companies during the last ten years.

To assist companies in gaining an understanding of the trends and practices other businesses employ and to identify best practices, ORC conducted its fourth Dual Careers and International Assignments Survey in 2002. The research

was carried out amongst 300 multinational organizations worldwide (UK, Europe, USA, Australia, and Asia-Pacific)

The survey highlighted the following:

- Spousal support typically increases once the assignment has started
- The level of support required by companies in this survey has doubled when compared with previous surveys in 1992 and 1996.

More and more companies have formalized spousal assistance as a part of their expatriate policy

- Language training is by far the most common (74%), cultural orientation (40%) comes second, followed by payment toward further education (36%), work-permit (35%), and job-search assistance (33%).

Growth in awareness of dual career issues

The most common reason for assignment rejection is concern over spousal/dual career issues. Companies are becoming increasingly aware of dual career issues. Three-quarters of participants believe that dual career issues are an important factor when relocating employees internationally. A quarter of companies have developed new international policies and practices to take account of the dual career issue, while three-

quarters intend to add this provision to their international assignment policy. This is a significant change from the 1996 survey when only 17.6% of companies planned to develop a dual career policy.

The main driver behind companies developing dual career policies is the increasing need for employee mobility, followed by making the assignment policy more attractive to employees.

Companies are also creating dual career policies as part of an organizational effort to make the workplace more family-friendly. Additionally, companies commented that having spousal assistance provisions was a factor in increasing employee acceptance rates for assignments.

Conclusion

The survey confirms the fact that dual career issues are a major determinant in planning expatriate assignments. Success in attracting a global talent pool willing to undertake international assignments depends greatly on the spouse's willingness to go on the assignment. The new generation of expatriates, who more often than not have a professional spouse, adds to the need for companies to provide comprehensive spousal support schemes. Assignees now expect appropriate support for their spouses/partners to enable them to enjoy a meaningful life away from home without sacrificing their careers. Failure to satisfy these needs can easily lead to rejection or failure of the assignment. Multinationals typically offer a wide range of spousal assistance before and during

Our Customers

3M
Advanced Elastomer Systems
Alcatel Microelectronics
Alstom Power
BBL International
Brady
Bristol-Myers Squibb
Bull
Cadbury Schweppes
Colgate Palmolive
Cordis
Corus Group plc
Delhaize Group
DuPont de Nemours
Electrabel
ExxonMobil
Gemplus
Guidant Europe
Honeywell
ING
International Paper
Janssen Pharmaceutica
Kraft Foods
Merck Sharp & Dohme (Europe), Inc
Nestlé European Information Technology Operations Center
Newell Rubbermaid
Nur
PerkinElmer
Procter & Gamble
Reckitt Benckiser
Saint Gobain Glass France
Sogem
Solvay
Sonaca
Sony
Tractebel
Tyco-electronics Raychem
UCB
Umicore
UPS
Whirlpool
...

the assignment, and there is a trend towards providing more support.

The survey shows that the importance of dual career issues continues to increase. To ensure the right talent is available for international business, companies need to regularly review their spousal policies and actively search for new and more effective ways to provide support. Without this employees may just stay put. ■

Net Expat Newsletter

Testimonial

Expert Opinion

Two are better than one

Francine Burlet

expat partner
from ING



The first months of expatriation are definitely challenging for the accompanying partner: after house and school hunting, and the thousand happinesses of trying to make a new home in a new host country, the last thing you want to think about is your own job hunt. Managing family and a career abroad is daunting. But if you can't be the person you want to be by just attending social network events or children's birthday parties, services such as the Net Expat Career Program provide the help you need abroad to hold onto your profession.

I discovered my personal coach right upon my welcoming session. The first benefit of our meetings was a much-needed period for introspection: after the hectic pace of relocation, I was able to make contact with myself again! But I soon discovered the advantage of being two in the job search jungle. My coach started by assessing my personal and professional background, allowing me to stand back calmly, analyze my skills and reset my goals. If life is a ten-speed bicycle,

most of us have gears we never use. And that's maybe something you wouldn't dare to think about unless you have professional help at your side. My coach turned out to be a tireless listener, revealing without judging.

As soon as we were ready for the fight, he armed me with a new set of tools and acted as a real pacemaker, giving rhythm and structure to the search. His persistent guidance through the local media and professional networks, his reassuring presence before and after the job interviews, his expertise in work law and multicultural exchanges were precious energy savers. He made this classic job hunt a highly spirited enterprise and a way of

mastering the employment process for the rest of my expatriate life. ■

...revealing without judging ...



Understanding your employees

Paul De Ganck

H R Director Central
Departments and
International Assignments,

Willy Graulus

International
Assignment Manager,
BBL International,
member of ING Group



Mr. Graulus: It's true that for some time now we pay more attention to our Expat partners. Things are changing, we have been aware of the frustration of many of them, and they themselves have changed: Expat partners are much keener to work these days, which only shows how much society is evolving.

Today, BBL and ING can claim to have set aside the necessary budgets and put a real philosophy of Expat partner management into effect. This is completely consistent with our in-house policy of "diversity" that emphasizes a gender balance and a mix of nationalities and cultures in all ranks and at all levels of the company.

Mr. De Ganck: Our expats can be broadly classified in two groups. First, we have the managers who are "generalists" and have been designated for, or are already

occupying, key positions. And then we have the "specialists", high-value experts covering a precise field. There is not much difference in the socio-professional and educational profile of the partners of these two categories. Moreover, the forms of support we offer them are the same.

The only minor difference is that, under certain conditions, there is room for flexibility. In addition to the usual transfer with partner and children, in some cases we can allow commuting from the country of origin. In these cases the family doesn't always have to join our employee. But commuting still is an exception and is not a viable option in every case...

A third type of transfer also crops up with us, i.e. what you could call "structural transfers" that are associated with the establishment of functional Group-wide units known as "Shared Service Centers".

These longer-term transfers may affect partners who might suffer from cultural differences and who do not always have the benefit of special training. This can pose a problem of access to the job market in a situation where the partner's income may be essential to maintaining the living standards of the family. ■

NET EXPAT specializes in helping spouses/partners of expatriates to find worthwhile and fulfilling work in their new host country.

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