

# Net Expat Newsletter

Expats Coaching • Dual Career Solutions • Expats Assessment

Offices throughout Europe, America, Asia



## Corporate vision

### Jens Debus

Head of Center of Expertise "Expatriate Management", Airbus, France



## The daily challenges of an Expatriate Management Center

created on January 1st 2005 in Toulouse as the first transnational HR department. It is staffed with 16 people who manage all Airbus expats (except blue collars) around the world, and I have the pleasure

Reduced bureaucracy, consistency and transparency are our main drivers. The center has been empowered by each Airbus entity to establish terms and conditions for all expat contracts, manage all expatriations, and handle all vendors. A true transfer of competence and empowerment has been implemented in favor of the staff of the Expats Management Center. ■■■

**NET EXPAT:** Tell us more about Airbus International Mobility.

**Jens Debus:** Airbus is quite unique in its way: we manufacture a single product, but the production process is spread over 16 locations, which presents a bunch of logistic challenges. With Airbus becoming a global player, our need for expats is increasing constantly. We currently have 1264 assignments in 115 cities spread around 58 countries, plus approximately 1100 blue collar expats. Our internationally mobile population comprises 60% transfers and 40% secondments. Even if women only represent 10% of current assignments, they count for 20% of assignments in 2006, which is 64% more than in 2003.

**NE:** In order to manage all these mobile people, Airbus has created a single Center of Expertise. What are the reasons behind this choice?

**JD:** In 2001 Airbus was transformed into a single integrated company. The Expats Management Center was

to head this team. We have four main objectives: to Improve Airbus expatriate management, to establish a "Global Assignment Policy framework", to develop Expatriate Vendor management, and to build up a proper expatriate management IT system. Our ambition is to increase the

*We have to face difficult internal clients who still believe that "the more you scream, the more you get"*

service level to our expats, while becoming more cost-efficient and getting closer to each Airbus function.



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## Editorial

### Alain Verstandig

Managing Director, NET EXPAT



The year 2006 is confirming both the growth in international mobility and the various forms it can take: detachment, local +, commuting, etc. But unfortunately multinationals are missing out on the communication challenge in many instances and, as a result, more and more 'mobile employees' are facing up to the prospect of a move in a mood of

## Pre-decision and pre-departure support

profound uncertainty: uncertainty about how they are going to live up to expatriation, how their families will cope, and how the repatriation experience will affect them... Will this help them in their careers, and can they even calculate the return on their investment?

Yet the solutions needed to resolve these uncertainties are really not that far away, nor very complicated: they

come down to a matter of clarification and communication. NET EXPAT has been providing pre-decision coaching for many years now, as well as pre-departure coaching generally. The sole objective of these programs is to help future expats see ahead clearly and understand what is in store for them.

Are you really aware of the level of uncertainty you are exposing your mobile employees to? ■

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Dual Career

Mobility

Integration

Talents

**NE: What are your current challenges?**

**JD:** Our first challenge is to strengthen the Expat Management Center and its working practices: we need to align all contracts and expat conditions. When we started the Center, we inherited more than 180 different templates. Believe it or not, we're operating today with 28 different expat policies which are applicable to different parts of Airbus, including 28 different packages and methods. The target is to centralize all this in a single global policy framework to ensure greater consistency. In our future "Global Assignment Policy framework", we intend to establish six different policies, taking into account the variety of international assignments: short-term assignments, medium-term assignments, developmental assignments, permanent transfers, 'Local Plus' and commuters. The

establishment of the Expat Management Center was an absolute prerequisite for this major integration. Since the establishment of the Center, we have accomplished a fantastic job of benchmarking with other multinationals, and documenting what Airbus has been doing throughout the company. This has highlighted **c u r r e n t p r a c t i c e s**, needs and gaps - and I must say that there are no more "hidden corners" within Airbus now!

One of the gaps identified was Spousal Assistance, which had not been offered by Airbus in the past: drawing on the experiences of our expats and the results of surveys revealed that this absence of support was a major source of complaint.

**NE: How is your HR team facing up to its daily challenges?**

**JD:** As you might imagine, the day-to-day pressure on each of us at the Center is substantial: one of our very central challenges is to stay always tuned in and available. We are a "voice to talk to" whenever the topic of international mobility comes up. We're therefore under constant fire from our internal Airbus 'customers'. On top of the obviously demanding expats, we have to face difficult internal clients who still believe that "the more you scream, the more you get". Going through an expatriation is a very sensitive experience for all expats, impacting on both their private and professional lives.

*We definitely need to continue to train and coach our own HR staff to maintain the high standards of our Center*

Therefore negotiating, advising and managing expats requires much more than just technical expertise from each team member of the Expat Management Center. You need a substantial dose of emotional resilience to manage all these personal issues properly and to draw the exact limit of your involvement in them.

In this respect, the 2-day group coaching sessions organized by NET EXPAT for the whole HR team at the Expat Management Center, coupled with individual coaching sessions, was a "première" for Airbus and has demonstrated its relevance. The impact was greatly appreciated, and we definitely need to continue to train and coach our own HR staff to maintain the high standards of our Center. ■

**Testimonial**

**Amye Meyer**

*Expat Partner from UPS, Switzerland*



## Moving to Switzerland

**NET EXPAT: What is the context of your move to Switzerland?**

**Amye Meyer:** My husband and I moved to Switzerland on June 1st of last year near Biel. We moved here for his career with UPS. Prior to our

*...people are really the same, but in a different "packaging"*

move we had not been to Europe. So, the decision to move or not was the biggest challenge that we faced. One of my fears prior to the move was that we would be forced to move from a 6,000 sq ft house in Atlanta, USA, to a small apartment in the city. I also wanted to make sure that we lived close to other English-speaking Americans. Another fear was that I had heard that Swiss people are rude. My expectations were so different from the reality, as I later found out. We

do not live close to other Americans, but I have found this to be beneficial to me as I learn to integrate into the Swiss culture. I now believe that people are really the same, but in a different "packaging". Sure, there are some people who are rude, but also some that are very kind.

Upon arriving, I met friends right away. Neighbors brought us flowers, vegetables, jam and other welcoming gifts.

I began taking German lessons last September and continue to do so. I love the opportunity to learn another language and this now gives me the possibility to communicate with the locals in their mother tongue. I had a traumatic experience only 2 months after living here that required me to have bypass kidney surgery. I can remember being so scared that my family was not here

to help me through it. It turned out to be quite the opposite: our new Swiss friends rallied around us giving us support that I am so thankful for. Although, my husband has a very high-profile job, he stayed in the hospital with me the entire time.

We have had a very close relationship for eight years now and through that experience we became even closer.



**NE: You have been helped by Angelika, your NET EXPAT Coach, during this transition period. What added value did you gain from this coaching?**

**AM:** Angelika helped me a lot during my transition period. I was struggling with the fact of not working. She helped me to realize that I am not defined by a "job" but

rather by the person I am. She also helped me to understand the magnitude of changes that both my husband and I encountered. I have learned so much from this entire experience. I learned that the important thing is to be open with yourself and others. I have met

*Angelika helped me to understand the magnitude of changes that both my husband and I encountered*

many friends from all over the world and some I know I will have for a lifetime. I have also learned that quality of life is so much better than quantity. My stress level is dramatically less than when I lived in the States. We are now expecting a baby girl (our very own "Swiss Miss") this month and can't wait for her to be here and travel with us. We feel that we are giving her a huge opportunity to see the world as it really is and not restricted to one geographic location. ■

# Newsletter

## Corporate vision

# Outsourcing is not synonymous to abdication

### Wim De Paepe

Director Global Business Services, Compensation & Benefits EMEA, Procter & Gamble, Belgium



Procter & Gamble partnered with IBM in January 2004 to provide support for Employee Services and more than 140,000 employees working around the globe.

Both the size and the scope of the agreement made it one of the largest outsourcing partnerships in the world. The agreement called for IBM to support an extensive array of services, including: payroll, benefits administration, salary planning administration, relocation & expatriate services, travel management and travel expense accounting.

When we entered this agreement, both P&G and IBM understood the potential value, and the risks involved in such a far-reaching undertaking. Two years later, we are pleased to say that we are seeing positive results not just in financial savings, but also in service level improvements and innovation. It has become, as we'd worked for from the very outset, a partnership rather than simply a contractual agreement. To us, this has made – continues to make – all the difference.

In fact, P&G CEO A.G. Lafley has said publicly on various occasions that our partnership with IBM (as well as similar agreements for support in other areas with Hewlett Packard and Jones Lang LaSalle) have helped deliver

beyond-expectation competitive advantage and value creation to the Company, making it one of the most important achievements in P&G's recent

***Even when it's working, don't underestimate the effort needed to continue making it work***

history. The partnerships also have helped greatly reduce both the time and cost of new acquisition integration, which has enabled the Company's October acquisition of Gillette. Was it easy? No. But is has



proven well worth the ongoing effort. In a large outsourcing arrangement, you can never underestimate the dedication it takes to make it work. And, even when it's working, don't underestimate the effort

***It is best to "put your house in order" before you sell it***

needed to continue making it work. Outsourcing is not synonymous to abdication; that approach inevitably will result in failure. We saw very quickly that a strong governance organization -- at both senior and executional levels -- is indispensable. This takes focus and manpower. Don't forget to include these costs when you are outlining details and projected saving of your deal. We also learned another key element of building a successful outsourcing: it is best to put your house in order before you sell it. For example, if you have vastly differing expat policies, it will be complicated and disorganized when one provider steps in and tries to streamline. If your provider then puts the administration in a central location, you will quickly see all the contradictory policy applications surfacing. Confusion and increased costs will probably be your fate. Faced with the option to either streamline first or outsource first, we luckily decided to streamline, then outsource. Specifically, we created a truly global set of policies for expatriation, then centralized administration of it in a few locations. And we then outsourced. Changing too many things at the same time is designing for failure. I have seen other large companies who have attempted the reverse order. If you speak with their HR people, they'll no doubt quickly share the complications they encountered. ■

... to be continued in our next newsletter.

## Some Clients

3M  
ACNielsen  
Advanced Elastomer Systems  
AIRBUS  
Alstom  
AMIS  
Apple  
AVIVA  
AXA GMST  
BD Biosciences Europe  
Borealis  
BP  
Brady  
Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Bull  
Cadbury Schweppes  
Cargill  
Colgate Palmolive  
Cordis  
Corus Group plc  
Danisco  
Delhaize Group  
Dexia  
Diageo  
DuPont de Nemours  
Electrabel  
Electrolux  
Euroclear Bank  
ExxonMobil  
Gemplus  
General Motors Belgium  
Givaudan  
GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals  
Goodyear  
Guidant Europe  
Honeywell  
ING  
INSEAD  
International Paper  
ITOPF  
Janssen Pharmaceutica  
Kraft Foods  
La Poste  
Leroy Merlin  
L'Oréal  
MasterCard  
MBDA France  
Merck Sharp & Dohme  
Methanex  
Nestlé  
Newell Rubbermaid  
Nissan Europe  
Nur  
PerkinElmer  
Pfizer  
Procter & Gamble  
PSA Peugeot Citroen  
Puratos  
Quest International  
Reckitt Benckiser  
Saint Gobain Glass France  
Schlumberger  
Sogem  
Solvay  
Sonaca  
Sony  
SWIFT  
Standard Life  
Tele Atlas  
Tessenderlo  
Thermo King  
Total  
Tractebel  
Tyco-electronics  
Raychem  
UCB  
Umicore  
Unilever  
Unisys  
UPS  
Volkswagen  
Whirlpool...

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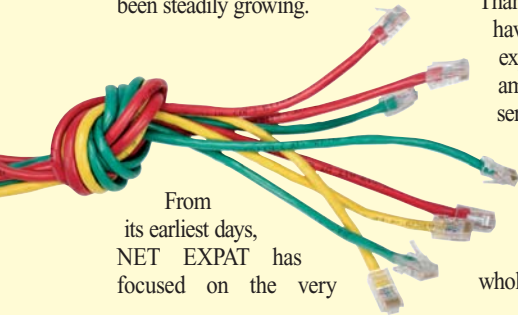
## DEVELOPMENTS

**Nathalie Brotchi**

Director Global Services,  
NET EXPAT



Every time I talk to any of you, I get the same comment: you are impressed by NET EXPAT's development. So for the benefit of you, our readers, let me confirm that indeed the company has been steadily growing.



From its earliest days, NET EXPAT has focused on the very

## How has NET EXPAT grown over the years?

specific problems of dual careers, expatriate coaching and issues around repatriation. We believe in innovative and personal approaches and that has allowed us to adapt all our programs as closely as possible to the needs of mobile employees. Thanks to our specialization, we have accumulated invaluable expertise, which has positioned us amongst the worldwide leading service providers in our segments.

Today, NET EXPAT eases international mobility in more than 41 countries around the globe, and through the whole cycle of mobility:

**When evaluating an international assignment:** The ExpAdviser® is a latest-generation psychometric test, used at recruitment level or when an expatriation is anticipated, to assess people's "expatriability". It is helping employers, future expats and their families anticipate potential issues linked to the challenges of expatriation. Ultimately, usage of the ExpAdviser® test as a tool and implementation of the results maximizes the chances of success of mobility.

**Before, during and after an assignment abroad:** NET EXPAT

provides a series of career and life transition programs starting as early as the pre-decision and pre-departure phase and finishing with a set of repatriation programs for the expat or their partner.

We owe all this to you, our clients, who have shown us such confidence, increasingly using our range of services in more and more countries, and pushing us to develop new programs to constantly improve. Thanks also, of course, to our global NET EXPAT team who, every day, are reinforcing the reputation of NET EXPAT. ■

## NFTC

**William R Sheridan**

Vice President International HR Services, National Foreign Trade Council, New York, USA



Starting in 2000 we witnessed a drop in the number of 'traditional' expatriates across geographies and industries. This was mainly due to the general slowdown of the global economy and most national economies. The primary explanation was cost reduction efforts, associated with extended, usually 'family'-based cross-border assignments.

After September 11, 2001, another contributing factor in some regions was concern for the security of business travelers, assignees and assignee dependents. More recently natural disasters, civil conflicts (Iraq, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, etc.) have also impacted on the number of traditional assignments.

The shift during the period 2000 through 2004 to unaccompanied 'extended business trips' or 'single-status' assignments is now having unintended consequences. As

## Where have all the Expats gone?

national economies and the global economy are improving, as the need to find and develop new energy reserves accelerates, as the economies of China and India continue to be robust, the needs for expatriates is outdistancing the current supply.

To some extent the potential pool for cross-border assignees is dropping as (1) a backlash to reduced programs offered (under some duress during the period 2000 through 2004); (2) the employment opportunities for good jobs in the individual's home country; and (3) the influence of demographics in North America, Western Europe and Japan where the 'Baby Boom Generation' is starting to retire with fewer potential replacements.

So, rather than 'where have all the expats gone', the real issue is 'where will multinationals get the new ones from?' This issue is a special challenge for multinationals in such diverse sectors as energy, information

technology, engineering and construction, and communications. Smart multinationals are investing efforts in sourcing from non-traditional geographies such as Central Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Pakistan, and are putting

greater emphasis on accelerated training and development. The pace of globalization has continued to accelerate. Employers who understand all the above are the ones most likely to be successful over the next 20 years. ■



We help you expat your talents

**NET EXPAT**

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 • Web site: <http://www.netexpat.com> • e-mail: [info@netexpat.com](mailto:info@netexpat.com)