

Auxilium Expatbiz Services is an alliance of experts in different fields delivering services and products to companies and individuals from the US and other countries with business or other economic interests in Central Europe. This edition of our »EuroGateway Publications« is a Management Paper for your exclusive use and to give to your business partners. **Together we create value across cultures!**

Managing your International Workforce

In today's world with an emphasis on intellectual property and financial management, HR value and knowledge management one of company's greatest assets often are overlooked – the core being the long term health and retention of the specialized and upper management workforce. As far back as 2003 HR Professionals, Support Services and expatriate practice experts met to discuss Best Practices for Managing their International Workforce.

New challenges

There is no doubt that multi-nationals as well as many smaller to medium sized firms are faced with a changing, more diverse workforce driven by higher, faster paced productivity and market demands than business has had to face to in the past. This new mobile workforce is often married with children. According to a study reported by Hilly van Swol-Ulbrich, 66% of Expats have children between 5 and 12 years old. While the reasons for international assignments are rarely any longer perks, but to solve bottom-line real-time problems, the fact is that 40% leave the company after two years if they don't receive help with expatriate obstacles. In essence companies are growing their talent and then basically walking them out the door by not giving them the holistic support that the vast stress that relocation puts on them and their families requires.

Relocation Services for the whole Family

Many companies fail to recognize the effect of stress on the expats and the overall impact this has on their ability to perform at their best. Providing support can be done through EAPs (Employee Assistance programs) with a combination of free as well as paid services and need to begin prior to the move and extend well into or after the move with services for the whole family. This investment is a small one compared to the overall cost of relocation, training and most importantly knowledge loss to the company if the person is not effective, does not complete the assignment or leaves the company soon after the completion of the assignment. Realistically there are many issues to consider for an effective international program beyond moving of household effects and the basic logistics of the move, ranging from providing evaluation of the appropriateness of assignee relocation, pre-move support, cross-cultural training, family considerations, support for the spouse from pre- to post move career and life coaching, tending to the needs of the kids and help with their adjustment as well as support for the expats. Moving is beyond just packing the household and settling into a new location, but involves nearly all the high stress factors listed on any stress test. International assignees are generally highly resilient people, but like all people, need support to ease the strain of moving, cultural change and starting a new position that will enable them to make the greatest impact on their new environment and stay committed to the organization over the long run.

What can be done to make the transition successful?

The first thing to do is to find out the tools, strengths and expectations that your assignee has. Is this the right person for the job? Spend some time finding out what your employee would like to gain from this experience and what his/her family needs are. Conduct relocation trainings to show connections and gaps in expectations and strengths. Address cultural difference to avoid culture shock and rejection of the new work and living space. These two pieces will give your assignee a much bigger chance of mastering the new situation at a much earlier stage. As one participant summed up the conference in 2003: "This (sic.: all the stress of moving, getting settled, repatriating and making career choices) was what I lived through myself. Many people think these are soft issues, but the holistic view of the family is really a very hard issue affecting the bottom line." Two closing questions to ponder: how much value do your expatriates offer your company? How much of an investment are they worth?

Author of this edition of »EUROGATEWAY PUBLICATIONS« is:

If you have any questions regarding this publication or are interested in more information, we invite you to contact the author Sandra Weiner M.ED, M.C.C.!

Sandra M. Weiner is a certified master coach, author, Managing Partner of 1-Focus International, and a Managing Member of **Auxilium Expatbiz Services**.

Sandra Weiner, M.Ed, M.C.C. | MANAGING MEMBER
Auxilium Expatbiz Services

Gluckweg 10 | 12247 Berlin | Germany

USA: +1 860 866 5218 | Germany: +49 30 809 35 105

s.weiner@expatbiz.eu

edited by **Dr. Frank Herdmann | LEAD MANAGER**
and amended by **Jacquelyn Reeves, M.S. | MANAGING MEMBER**

We invite you to visit our website (<http://expatbiz.eu>) and to sign up to »EUROGATEWAY LEADER«, our database for doing business successfully in Central Europe!