



NEWS RELEASE

Is Overseas Assignment for you?

> Since our students who hold an international qualification may be offered an overseas assignment in the future, they should know more about an international career

26 July 2005, Singapore - An overseas assignment is the goal of many global business executives. It allows the opportunity to experience living in another country, gain valuable international business exposure, and greatly enhance the chances of achieving greater career success in global companies.

Since our students who hold an international qualification and have access to the Informatics Global Employment Services may be offered an overseas assignment in the future, we have listed five important questions for them to consider before the time comes. These five questions are from the International-Business-Careers.com Website.

1) Do you tend to be judgmental?

The single most important factor in working in another country on an international assignment is the ability to accept and work within the culture, customs, beliefs, and attitudes of that country.

The majority of successful business executives achieve their success through a strong personality and making decisions based on their personal background and experience.

However, when moving to another country, the executive is placed in a new environment where his or her background has little relationship to their new surroundings. The first reaction is frequently to 'take control' of the situation and apply that strong personality. Nothing could be worse!

The only way to be successful in an overseas assignment is through relationships that encourage the local employees to cooperate with the expatriate manager.

2) Do you enjoy people, or are you task oriented?

As a manager working in an international assignment, your primary job is certainly to accomplish the corporate goals and objectives.

However, in many cultures throughout the world, the most important aspect of life is the support of the community, the people, the family. Unless there is a clear understanding of the motivations of employees, the manager may create animosity and jeopardize the productivity of the company's operation.



3) Are you flexible and welcome change?

Dealing with the unexpected is common in many countries, and can be especially challenging for U.S. managers who go overseas, since they are more accustomed to a relatively stable business regulatory environment.

The involvement of governments and politics in business is not unusual in many countries around the world, and especially in economically under-developed countries.

The ability to be open to unexpected situations and challenges, some of which may be uncontrollable, is another important attribute for the international manager.

4) Do you like family and friends around you?

It is less likely in today's economic environment that companies will pay for full family relocation to foreign countries. More often, overseas assignments are made with shorter term contracts of 12-18 months, rather than the older 2-3 year agreements.

This allows the company to circumvent the more costly relocations. However, it is not unusual for one of these shorter term assignments to be extended before it ends.

Therefore, many international assignments will require your ability to function effectively away from home, away from friends, and away from family for periods that may be extended up to 36 months.

Another recent trend is extending the time interval between 'home leave'. Home leave is when an expatriate periodically returns home for one or two weeks. Again, these delays, or in some cases cancellations, are motivated by the company's desire to reduce costs and increase profitability.

5) Is it good news if your spouse can go with you?

This is a hard question to answer. Having a spouse on a foreign assignment certainly can be nice --- **If** the spouse enjoys the assignment! In the majority of spousal relocations, it is not likely they can also be employed in the foreign country. So what do they do all day?

Therefore, it is important that the spouse of a global executive also answer each of the questions on this page, as he or she will be just as immersed in the new environment as the employee.

In fact, overseas assignments are frequently much more difficult for the spouse because he or she is not working 10-12 hours a day, which easily fills the employee's time. For the spouse, sitting in a home or apartment in a country that may have a different language creates isolation, which can be a real problem.

[Source: International Business Center Newsletter]



About Informatics Group

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