



Newsletter: "Obstacles of a Secondment"

Nowadays it is normal to be able to travel. Flights are getting less and less expensive, and many people already say one of their hobbies is actually travelling. Everything is global. But why is it so difficult then to change the country for career reasons? Well, the answer is quite simple: you are not going on vacation, you are actually leaving your comfort zone. This goes along with a certain amount of anxiety. It is just this anxiety that keeps Global Mobility Professionals busy- we are here to make this anxiety go away.

What are the typical concerns, that future expats have before the first-time-transfer? Here is a small selection:

1. What does this career step actually mean for your private life?
2. What about the pension?
3. Will the good education of my children assured, and how?
4. Will there be any impact on my health due to the host location, different working hours, etc.?
5. Am I treated the same way as all other expats are? Do we all get the same benefits?

These concerns are only too natural and it is important to deal with them cautiously. It is not always easy for a HR Business Partner or Global Mobility Professional to address these concerns and to find a solution. It is a very personal talk too. So, this is the first obstacle – how do we get the future expat to open up and address his concerns in this talk?

Well, as pragmatic as it might sound, one possible solution is to show the employee what the company is already doing to have this „safety net“. Address these concerns by showing that a policy exists which grants certain benefits such as intercultural training, mentorship, pension plans etc. and more importantly their consequent and fair application to all expats in order to generate trust with the future expat. This way, the employee realises that the company is already well aware of what kind of concerns the expats have and that the company is prepared for it. Such a policy is important to show the inner structures of a secondment in both a transparent and trustworthy way. It shows the culture how employees are dealt with in this company.

However, it is also true that most of the secondment policies grow in the course of time. At the beginning they are mostly small and simple guidelines, and then simply grow with time and the increase in expats volume. At some point, time is there when the company should review their guidelines and adapt it to the new circumstances. A consultant can help you to discuss the questions and to help find the appropriate policy for the respective company, so that the common objective of the company and the expat is reached: a win-win-situation.