



IDONEITA' LINGUA INGLESE

ENGLISH – EM

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Department of Business and Economics
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RICEVIMENTO: SU TEAMS
VENERDÌ ORE 18:00-19:00

STUDIO 3, 1° PIANO
FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE, GIURIDICHE E POLITICHE
SANT'IGNAZIO, 84 (BIBLIOTECA ECONOMIA)

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IDONEITÀ LINGUA INGLESE

CdL magistrale Economia Manageriale



MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
LESSONS		LESSONS		LESSONS		TUTORATO	
TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS	
26 April	18:30-20:00	27 April	18:30-20:00	26 April	18:30-20:00		
3 May	18:30-20:00	4 May	18:30-20:00	5 May	18:30-20:00	6 May	15:00-16:30
10 May	18:30-20:00	11 May	18:30-20:00	12 May	18:30-20:00	13 May	15:00-16:30
				T 19 May	15:00-16:30	20 May	15:00-16:30
				T 26 May	15:00-16:30	27 May	15:00-16:30
		T 1 June	15:00-16:30			3 June	15:00-16:30

Working Across Cultures

MARKET LEADER



Business English

Adrian Pilbeam

UNIT 10

International assignments

ML p. 40

This unit looks at some of the reasons for sending employees on international assignments and also some of the difficulties.



BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 From a company's perspective, what are the benefits of sending employees on international assignments? And what are the disadvantages?
- 2 What are the benefits to the employee of living and working in a foreign country? And what are the challenges?
- 3 What countries or parts of the world could be considered as 'difficult' for employees from Western countries? Why?

INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

Career-minded professionals
 Emerging markets
 Global workforce
 Persuade people to uproot themselves
 Domestic responsibilities
 A high-flyer
 To cap an executive's progress
 One drawback
 Staff on secondment
 Suffer attrition rates
 Returnees
 A big anticlimax
 Jump stages in their careers
 Mismatch the expectation
 Use the kudos of their international experience

International assignments – challenges and opportunities



by Alicia Clegg

A Every week, Claire Sandford does battle with elementary Mandarin in between managing the requirements of clients in PwC's Beijing office. **B** By the time she and her husband return to London from her two-year secondment, the 34-year-old executive expects to have mastered the basics of the language and, through her expanded professional circle, be firmly plugged into the fabric of the world's next economic superpower. **C** Ms Sandford is just one member of a large army of career-minded professionals criss-crossing the world to gain experience of emerging markets. **D** Charles Macleod, Director of Resourcing at PwC – which has 1,200 employees from its global workforce posted outside their home countries – explains why it pays to speed up the flow of skills from mature to developing economies. 'If you have someone in Europe who could produce twice as

much return in Asia, it makes sense to move them from markets in the northern hemisphere to parts of the world where activity is continuing to build.' **E** Exposing promising employees to emerging markets has become a strategic necessity. As Mr Macleod points out, tomorrow's multinationals will come from today's emerging markets. 'Wherever you trade, it is going to be really important to have people who understand how business is done in Asia and the Middle East.' **F** But persuading people to uproot themselves can be a battle. The biggest hurdle is the mismatch between the time when professionals are happiest to travel – when they are young and single – and the time when they have most to contribute as mobile workers: after they have acquired skills, but also domestic responsibilities. So what happens when personal and professional considerations come into conflict? **G** As one of the most geographically

diversified banks, HSBC has a long-standing policy of sending its rising stars on international assignments. Sometimes a high-flyer may not want to make a move abroad. In such situations, says Paul Ryder, HSBC's Head of Resourcing, the bank's policy is to respect the person's wishes. But the practical effect of missing out on international experience is to slow and ultimately to cap an executive's progress through the business. 'As individuals, we all make choices and know that there are consequences from those choices.'

G But one drawback of global mobility is its expense. Recent research by PwC and Cranfield School of Management showed staff on secondment can cost three to four times their home-country salaries. They also need hours of administrative support. And many companies fail to recover their investment. Within a year of coming home, 15 per cent of staff had left their organisations. In the worst cases, employers suffered attrition rates approaching 40 per cent.

H One explanation is that after proving themselves in another culture, returnees find coming home a big anticlimax. 'If you bring someone back to the desk they left three years before, the likelihood is that you have lost them,' says Mr Gartside. 'To win the mobility battle, you have to demonstrate consistently that people who are willing to work abroad can jump stages in their careers.'

I In a global economy, businesses desperately need people who understand and feel at home in other cultures. Employers who mismanage the expectations of their returning staff should not be surprised if they use the kudos of their international experience to explore avenues elsewhere.

INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. Career-minded professionals
2. Emerging markets
3. Global workforce
4. Persuade people to uproot themselves
5. Domestic responsibilities
6. A high-flyer
7. To curb an executive's progress
8. One drawback
9. Staff on secondment
10. Suffer attrition rates
11. Returnees
12. A big anticlimax
13. Jump stages in their careers
14. Mismanage the expectation
15. Use the kudos /'kju:dɒs/

15. a. Use the praise and honor received
11. b. Those returning from international experiences
7. c. To limit an executive's career
8. d. One negative aspect
1. e. Professionals oriented to improve their career
14. f. Not consider the employees' expectations
2. g. Economies experiencing economic growth
6. h. Those who have the potential to be successful
3. i. International labor pool of workers
13. j. Quick advancements in the careers
4. k. Persuade people to leave a familiar place
9. l. Staff temporarily assigned to other organization site
10. m. rates of high turnover
5. n. Household responsibilities
12. o. A disappointing end

VOCABULARY

A

Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each phrase from the article.

- 1 '*... does battle with elementary Mandarin ...*' (lines 1–2)
 - a) has arguments with her Chinese colleagues
 - b) finds Mandarin a difficult language to learn
- 2 '*... to have mastered the basics of the language ...*' (lines 8–9)
 - a) have a good basic knowledge
 - b) know only a few basic expressions
- 3 '*... be firmly plugged into the fabric of the world's next economic superpower.*' (lines 10–12)
 - a) have a good network of contacts
 - b) understand the culture well
- 4 '*... criss-crossing the world ...*' (line 15)
 - a) studying foreign cultures
 - b) travelling frequently from one country to another
- 5 'But persuading people to *uproot themselves ...*' (lines 38–39)
 - a) change their jobs
 - b) move to another country

VOCABULARY

A Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each phrase from the article.

- 6 '*... to cap an executive's progress through the business.*' (lines 61–62)
- a) be the final stage in their career
 - b) prevent their career advancing
- 7 '*... suffered attrition rates approaching 40 per cent.*' (lines 77–78)
- a) had large numbers of people who left the company
 - b) had large numbers of people who complained about their assignment
- 8 '*... returnees find coming home a big anti-climax.*' (lines 81–82)
- a) suffer from culture shock
 - b) are disappointed at the lack of new challenges
- 9 '*... the kudos of their international experience ...*' (lines 96–97)
- a) the experience they gained
 - b) the benefit to their reputation and CV

VOCABULARY

B Word search

Find words or phrases in the article which fit these meanings.

- 1 when someone is sent somewhere else (often abroad) to do a different job for a limited period of time (paragraph A)
s..... **secondment**
- 2 sent somewhere (usually abroad) to do a job there (paragraph C)
p..... **posted**
- 3 used to describe an employee who is likely to be successful in the future (paragraph D)
p..... **promising**
- 4 a problem or difficulty that you must deal with before you can do something else (paragraph E)
h..... **hurdle**
- 5 a combination of things that do not work well together (paragraph E)
m..... **mismatch**
- 6 something that might be a problem or disadvantage (paragraph G)
d..... **drawback**
- 7 handle something badly (paragraph I)
m..... **mismanage**

C Word partnerships

Match the verbs (1–5) with the nouns (a–e).

- | | | | |
|---|------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | to recover | a) | a return |
| 2 | to acquire | b) | experience |
| 3 | to produce | c) | at home |
| 4 | to feel | d) | skills |
| 5 | to gain | e) | their investment |

1 e
2 d
3 a
4 c
5 b

D Sentence completion

Use the word partnerships from Exercise C in the correct form to complete these sentences.

- Consultancy companies always try to the best they can from their consultants' time.
- People who live and work abroad have the chance to a lot of of different cultures.
- Sending people to work abroad is very expensive, so it is important that companies by making good use of a returning employee's skills and experience.
- People who have successfully lived and worked abroad for a number of years usually in foreign cultures.
- Giving young employees different jobs, sometimes in different countries, enables them to that are essential for their future careers.

1 produce --- return
2 gain --- experience
3 recover their investment

4 feel at home

5 acquire skills

READING**A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and answer these questions.

- 1 What reasons are given in favour of sending employees on international assignments, especially to emerging markets in Asia?
- 2 What are some of the difficulties and disadvantages for companies of sending employees on international assignments?

Reading

- A** 1 So they can gain international experience, especially of emerging markets in Asia, where the multinationals of the future will come from.
Because they will produce a bigger return in Asia.
It is considered an essential part of their career development.
- 2 Some employees are reluctant to go abroad at a time when they have new family responsibilities.
It is extremely expensive.
A significant number of employees leave their company soon after returning from an international assignment.

READING**B Understanding details**

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 How long will Claire Sandford spend in China?
- 2 What will be the benefit to her of having lived and worked in China?
- 3 What two international companies are mentioned in the article?
- 4 Why is it sometimes difficult to persuade some young professionals to work abroad?
- 5 What is HSBC's policy about international assignments?
- 6 Does HSBC insist that people go on an international assignment?
- 7 What can be the result if an HSBC employee does not want to go on an international assignment?
- 8 According to recent research, what are the costs of sending employees on international assignments?
- 9 According to research, what percentage of employees leave their company soon after returning from an international assignment?
- 10 Why do they leave?
- 11 What should companies do to try to prevent returning expatriates from leaving the company?

READING

B Understanding details

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 How long will Claire Sandford spend in China?
- 2 What will be the benefit to her of having lived and worked in China?
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- B**
- 1 Two years
 - 2 She will have learnt some Mandarin and will also have established a professional network in China.
 - 3 PwC and HSBC
 - 4 Because by the time they have the right professional skills, they also have family responsibilities.
 - 5 That all its most promising young employees should go on international assignments to gain international experience.
 - 6 No, it doesn't.
 - 7 It could affect and harm their career prospects.
 - 8 The cost can be three to four times their home-country salaries, plus lots of administrative support.
 - 9 Fifteen per cent, and in some cases up to 40 per cent
 - 10 Because they feel their experience abroad is not rewarded – they often come back to a similar position to the one they had before going abroad.
 - 11 Companies need to make sure that employees returning from an international assignment move up the career ladder.