

The Relocation Experience

The Executive's Experience and Insights

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Many of our assignments are cross border searches and it is not uncommon that the preferred candidate is based in another country than the location of the role. We reached out to some of the people that we placed as a part of a relocation process to share their experiences.

Tell me about your decision to make an international move. What was your key motivator?

Many candidates state the chance for personal and professional development as the main reason for relocation. Some candidates have the ambition to come back to their home countries whereas others are open to move permanently, or to take on a new relocation in due time.

Apart from the role itself and the career path it can build for the professional, the location and compensation package (expatriate or local package) play a strong part in the decision.

For the professionals with dependents, the decision has other factors as well (ie. the importance of adequate schooling for those with children, the local language and career opportunities for the spouse etc).

"The decision was quite easy as my biggest motivation was the opportunity for the role as well as the compensation package. My biggest question was concerning my family but I finally decided to move alone and travel back to visit them on breaks" - professional moving from India to Russia.

"A relocation could prove beneficial in me building a substantial and meaningful network" – professional moving from UK to Turkey.

"The decision was easy as I was offered a great job offer combined with a lovely location and fantastic expatriate support" – professional moving from Ukraine to UK.

What were the key challenges you faced?

We saw that the key challenge was the expectation of the new home country compared with reality. Depending on location, cultural differences and language are major challenges that professionals face.

"Biggest challenge is the cultural adjustment that was hard to prepare for. This took a while but it became better with time" –professional moving from India to Russia.

"First three months will be a transition, you will be comparing it to your home/previous country and will be adjusting. Sometimes you can be overly critical of the new place but It is normal. Give yourself some time" - professional moving from Ukraine to UK

What helped most in this transition?

We found that the most important elements are the support of the company and the personality of the professional moving abroad.

"The support from other colleagues and especially the ones with expat experience" - professional moving from Germany to UK.

"It was very helpful that I felt the support of the HR and Line Manager. Apart from introducing me to the organization, they also tried to introduce me to the culture of the new country" – professional moving from India to Russia

"I immediately started socializing and taking on activities in order to fit in the new environment. The more people you talk to, the more you'll learn the inside scoop about the habits and culture." - professional moving from Greece to Germany.

A Global Mind-Set

Success abroad hinges on something we call a global mind-set. This mind-set has three main components: intellectual capital, or knowledge of international business and the capacity to learn; psychological capital, or openness to different cultures and the capacity to change; and social capital, the ability to form connections, to bring people together, and to influence stakeholders—including colleagues, clients, suppliers, and regulatory agencies—who are unlike you in cultural heritage, professional background, or political outlook. The most effective international leaders are strong in all three dimensions. (Harvard Business Review, 2010)