



How to align personal and business needs?

*Nothing is more difficult than being a HR manager in times when people **do** want to be mobile, but only on their own terms! How do you align personal wishes and expectations with company needs?*

Last November, a group of international companies came together in the Netherlands to discuss the issues. Although nobody had a ready, one-size-fits-all answer, the peer level discussion did generate some ideas. Below I will share with you some of the issues discussed. More next time!

Trends in expatriation

There is a clear trend showing that expatriation in itself is changing. Some organisations have fewer expatriates compared to 5 years ago; others have kept the same numbers, mainly due to the nature of their business. However, most organisations have seen only a slight

There is a clear trend showing that expatriation in itself is changing. Some organisations have fewer expatriates compared to 5 years ago; others have kept the same numbers, mainly due to the nature of their business.

decrease in the actual number of expatriates, but they have experienced a different type of expatriate. Commuter and short-term assignments are becoming the norm, and are gradually replacing the traditional life timer. These types of

Spouse, children and friends remain at home and continue their own life, while the expatriate makes a 'slightly' longer commute by going, for instance, from The Hague to London on a Monday - to return Friday night for the weekend.

assignments have clearly less influence on somebody's personal life. Spouse, children and friends remain at home and continue their own life, while the expatriate makes a 'slightly' longer commute by going, for instance, from The Hague to London on a Monday - to return Friday night for the weekend. Several of the organisations present had a number of years experience with these commuter assignments, and both the organisation and the expatriate were satisfied. The only point that was made was that usually after 5 to 6 years people needed a break from such a work routine.

The Dual Career issue

We all know that nowadays spouses, whether they are male or female, are no longer willing to give up their career. Different organisations have different solutions in this respect but what seemed

to work well is to involve the spouse in the briefing meeting, and to give them an official say in the decision making process.

None of the companies present provided any compensation for loss of income. However, all do provide benefits and assistance. The level of support differs, ranging from offering a job-hunting course* for spouses at the new location to full service partner support structures, run

Different organisations have different solutions in this respect but what seemed to work well is to involve the spouse in the briefing meeting, and to give them an official say in the decision making process.

by volunteering spouses supported by the organisation. Whether it is viable or not to have such a support structure depends on the number of spouses your organisation has. But judging by some of the cases presented it seems there is a clear business need for offering true support for spouses.

About the writer: Nannette Ripmeester is an internationally acclaimed expert when it comes to making a success of working abroad. She is managing director and founder of Expertise in Labour Mobility (www.labourmobility.com), a knowledge broker on issues related to mobility on the international labour market. *The 'job hunting courses' for spouses mentioned in the article above is one of the products of ELM.