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# Coaching Expatriate Managers

**Abstract:** The motives for assigning a manager overseas are numerous. The responsibilities of these managers are: infiltrating new markets, supervising effective rapid growth of the company, technology transfer, management of cooperative partnership, conveying organizational values and norms, and building global communication ability. The process of acquiring the host country culture is very complicated and multifaceted. The paper addresses aspects of coaching expatriate managers.

**Key words:** Cross-cultural coaching, acculturation, expatriate managers

In the last few years, globally assigned jobs in international organizations have witnessed a massive shoot up (Chmielecki, 2009).

The expansion of the international economy, subsidiary companies and other businesses, as well as a rise in intergovernmental and nongovernmental establishments has effectively multiplied the total number of expatriates (Chmielecki, 2012).

As a result, expatriate directed change has become a vital part of human resource management which is not just for subsidiary corporations, but also global companies (Osman-Gani & Tan, 2005), governments and other establishments.

The effective output or accomplishment of expatriates solely relies on a number of factors, one of which is the capability of acquainting themselves with the way of life in the host country (Przytuła, et. al. 2015).

A group of researchers (Shin, Morgeson, and Campion, 2007) state that there is a rock hard backing in the expatriate journals for the principled presumption of expatriates adapting to the new customs of the surrounding by revamping and adjusting themselves to merge into the host country's customary beliefs and way of life. Statistical analysis indicates that the modification of expatriates is a crucial predictor of accomplishments (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005) which provide identical backing.

The reason why most people choose to work overseas is because it affords them the priceless opportunity to set themselves apart from their contemporaries and also assists in creating talents or abilities that will be of great value either to their present or prospective employers. The thing about working overseas is that it educates people on how to deal with ambiguity and modern conflicts. With the recent diversity and several cultures taking over the work scene, acquiring a new language and building intercultural conversation skills overseas, come in handy for managers when they go back to their home country (Rozkwitalska, Chmielecki, and Przytuła, 2014).

Expatriates' intercultural efficiencies now bear great significance (Zakaria, 2000; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Nevertheless, in the ever changing, distinct international environment, the expatriate always performs various roles usually depicted as a traveler, a foreigner, a tight rope walker, and even a refugee (McKenna & Richardson, 2002).

Indisputably, expatriates are crucial actors in the international economy, playing the role of 'human link in global trade' (Ward, Bochner, and Furnham 2001, p. 168).

## Shortcomings in internationally assigned jobs

Though, internationally assigned jobs are seen as the major elements for MNCs, countless expatriate managers have failed in the international organization (Rahim, 1983; Bennet et al., 2000).

- The result (that is, success or failure) of expatriate appointed jobs is based on their early departure to their home country. Nevertheless, internationally assigned jobs may be termed as a failed attempt for subsequent reasons:
- Deferred productiveness and commencement time,
- Interruption of the co-existence between the expatriate and citizens of the host country,
- Dent to the image of the corporation,
- Misplaced priorities (Bennet et al., 2000).

Foreign assigned jobs fail mostly because expatriate:

- May lack the needed charismatic skills for intercultural communication,
- May not possess the technical know-how,
- May not be propelled to work abroad (Bhagat&Prien, 1996; Tung, 1981),
- May fail to converse well with the host country employees,
- May lack the ability to pass on managerial skills to the host country,
- May fail to acquaint self with total features of the host custom (Caligiuri et al., 2001; Rahim, 1983).

The problem of adopting and acquainting themselves with physical and cultural divergence in the new environment does not only affect expatriates but their families as well.

## Acculturation

It is not so easy helping expatriate managers accomplish a stress free acculturation. There is no final point as to which one could be confirmed as 'acculturated'.

Researchers (Mendenhall et al., 2002) resolve that there is a significant body of research on the selection, coaching and development of expatriates. Yet, the difficulty of finding the operative way of elevating expatriate efficiency and fulfillment is irreplaceable (Earley and Peterson, 2004).

**Table 1. Suggestions for Expatriate Development**

Author	Suggestions
Tung (1982) – intercultural coaching for expatriates should comprise of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Geographical, accommodation, climatic, and school information</li> <li>2. Presentation of indigenous culture, customs and values</li> <li>3. Cultural adoption coaching</li> <li>4. Language coaching</li> <li>5. Coaching for flexibility of orientation</li> <li>6. Knowledge and experience</li> </ol>
Oddou (1991) – expatriate coaching and support should entail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language coaching</li> <li>2. Enough time off to get ready for the change</li> <li>3. Effective test clarification</li> <li>4. Dependable time to time prospects between the international and local site administration teams</li> <li>5. Starting regular conversations with the expatriates</li> <li>6. Allocating mentors</li> <li>7. Creation of social interest groups for families of expatriates.</li> </ol>
After examination of intercultural coaching in European organization, Brewster and Pickard (1994) agreed that coaching should change expatriates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural awareness and its impact,</li> <li>2. The intelligence to live and be successful in a strange culture,</li> <li>3. Ability to comprehend and deal with emotional problems.</li> </ol>
Zakaria (2000) advised a new intercultural coaching style, which consists of two types:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experienced coaching to spur influence and behavioral reactions, which forms the foundation of intercultural efficiency skills, and as well improve the mentality;</li> <li>2. Intellectual coaching to spur intelligence reactions, particularly cultural consciousness and interpersonal talents and the improvement of sociocultural adoption.</li> </ol>
Petranek (2004) recommends a “four C approach” for international human resource growth:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperation (association),</li> <li>2. Collaboration (cooperation),</li> <li>3. Communication (conversations),</li> <li>4. Culture (norms and values).</li> </ol>

**Source: Wei-Wen, Chang (2005) Expatriate Training in International Nongovernmental Organizations: A Model for Research. *Human Resource Development Review*, December, 4; 440, pp. 450.**

## Coaching compared with training and mentoring

Corporations are aware of the advantages of a stress-free acculturation and try to increase the chances of a successful temporary residence by selecting the right people and giving them the right coaching opportunities.

One of these is counseling, helping expatriate managers cope with the problem of a temporary move.

Mentors usually transfer their personal and professional abilities, personal experience and cognizance to their mentee (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1999). Apparently, there is much benefit in being mentored by someone with personal experience to cite. That is the reason why senior executives in companies play a significant role in acculturation coaching (Harvey, Buckley, Novicevic and Weise, 1999).

Nonetheless, there are lots of restrictions. For instance, what worked for the mentor might not work for the mentee because:

- Both are in a separate world and therefore, the context of their experiences is different from each other.
- The mentor and the protégée both have different leadership and personality models.

Moreover, support as this usually comes from afar.

Expert training represents an interdisciplinary approach. It focuses on the improvement of

well-being, accomplishments and professional growth as well as making individual and organizational change easier [Grant and Cavanagh, 2004]. The course of coaching is well enacted in many countries. It is growing a global profile. International Coach Federation (ICF), a global association for expert training, founded in 1995, is today, a leading world organization, recording over 14,000 members. The organization is committed to promoting the training profession by devising high professional excellence, providing independent qualification, and developing a network of credited trainers ([www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)).

However, there are several other organizations operating worldwide:

- International Coaching Community,
- European Coaching Institute,
- European Mentoring and Coaching Council,
- International Association of Coaches,
- Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision,
- International Consortium of Coaching in Organizations,
- Professional Coaches and Mentors Association,
- Worldwide Association of Business Coaches,
- American Coaching Association,
- Association for Coaching and others.

The main notions of coaching are:

- Assisting,
- Cooperative and equalitarian co-existence between coach and client,
- Attention to the development of the client via an individualized, client-based process (Grant, 2003).

Coaching exists in intercultural contexts. Rosinski (2003) came up with a training process that emphasizes influencing cultural divergence at the individual, corporate and national level.

Over the years, the use of professional coaches by big corporations has grown immensely (Wales, 2003).

Executive training is composed of several services and specialties:

- Anger management and stress control,
- Presentation ability,
- Leadership,
- Technical planning,
- Team building.

There is a couple of definitions of executive coaching, one of which is 'assisting relationship established between a client endowed with managerial power and accountability in an organization and a consultant who uses

a wide variety of behavioral styles and methods to help the client to attain a mutually recognized set of goals' (Kilburg, 2000, 142).

That is to say, the training process is a systematic, purposeful process, that aims to make sustained change easier, by nurturing the progressive self-directed learning and personal development of the executive (Grant, 2003).

The main role of coaching is challenging and motivating clients to reflect on optional views and try new methods. Seriously thinking, planning and action are vital characteristics of coaching styles. The role of a coach is to motivate clients to get out of their distressed work scene to determine their thinking patterns and the impact of those styles within their significant surroundings. Intellectual view plays a major role in training. It is worth noting that in the expatriate surrounding the client is enveloped by people whose intellectual patterns are possibly going to differ much. In coaching, cooperative setting of goals and action are very important. Coaches give support and motivate the client to expand existing talents and abilities. The performance of any coaching style solely relies on the personality and expert competencies of the coach (Anderson & Kampa-Kokesch, 2001). Selecting a coach is therefore very important, particularly in an intercultural setting. Obviously, coaches ought to possess a high level of competence in order perform efficiently. According to Chapman, Best and Casteren (2003, p. 272) the compulsory characteristics for an 'able coach' are:

- Interpersonal abilities,
- Communication abilities,
- Self -management;
- Training experience (e.g. goal-setting, planning etc.);
- Measure of experience;
- Technical abilities.

But, for the coach who works with expatriates, should possess a few additional traits:

- A recognition and respect of the client and the host country culture,
- Self-consciousness in relation to the coach's own cultural history,

- Personal experience of cultural adoption and adjustments,
- Intimation with theory, study and practice in intercultural psychology, conversation and administration.

The use of “cultural maps” and dimensions by coaches during their sessions and discussions is a welcomed idea. The best-known writers on this subject are Hofstede (2001), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), Inglehart and Baker 2000; Schwartz 1999; Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz (2002).

Although there has been a cause for arguments between researchers on whether the use of maps is really valid, for example, see Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997); Hofstede (1996, 2002); McSweeney (2002), and their impact on administrative practice, that includes the intimation and coaching of expatriates (Bing, 2004).

Take note that ignoring significant details of the results of such magnitude across cultural diversities can lead to failure. Osland, Bird, Delano, and Jacob (2000) believe that cultural divergences are a good place to start, where managers can discover cultural counterintuitive and develop complicated explanations of the behaviors they notice in a strange culture.

Additional crucial views of acculturation efficiency and the work of coach are:

- Expatriate managers’ own cultural background (Stening and Hammer, 1992);
- Cultural factors of the coach;
- Age and gender.

## The limitations of coaching

Although, over time coaching is gaining more recognition and it’s shooting up business wise, there are still a number of limitations to be looked into:

- Some managers have no need for a coach (Laske, 1999),



- Some managers don't answer to coaching,
- The client may begin to depend on the coach (inhibiting acculturation),
- Expatriate may not respond well to coaching in the early stages of their sojourn due to stress they may be experiencing at this time.
- Because many of these expatriate assignments are carried out in developing countries, there is no assurance that qualified coaches will be willingly available in the host country
- High-quality executive coaching can be very costly.

## Conclusions

Acculturation is an energetic, dynamic and total process. It influences an individual's effective behavioral and intellectual domains interactively and is quite often changeable.

A stress free acculturation is one of the most crucial factors that pave the way for success in international assignments. Coaching enhances formation between optional cultural intimation.

Expert coaching is highly action-based, an approach that assists clients to achieve meaningful goals. Expert coaches who have vast knowledge and experience in intercultural psychology, administration and communication should be capable of making a solid contribution towards improving the accomplishments and personal fulfillment of contemporary expatriates.

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