

Expatriation programme

The **Snow CC** expatriation programme is designed and proven to support those leaving for or arriving in a host culture to live and work. It aims to get them 'up and running' quickly, effectively and – perhaps most importantly - comfortably in their new environment. The programme comprises five different elements. Together they form a complete package that prepares and equips the expatriate for a successful assignment abroad.

The five elements of the expatriation programme are:

1. The acculturation process or 'culture shock'

Anyone living in a host culture that differs from their home culture will go through a psychological and social adaptation process known as *acculturation* or *culture shock*. This is a recognised and well-researched phenomenon: it is a condition of emotional, social and practical disorientation that can severely affect home and work life. During this period the expatriate experiences living and working abroad as stressful and may well blame the host culture for everything that is 'wrong'.

This module takes the expatriate through the acculturation process. It addresses the following topics:

- the phases of the acculturation process - how it works
- how to recognise and manage your own acculturation process
- a SWOT analysis of yourself – what character traits will help you through the process? Which might hinder you and how will you manage them? What are the external factors that might support or threaten your performance and well-being?
- what are you looking forward to? What are you dreading and what can you do about this?
- how does the process of the working partner differ from that of the accompanying spouse? How can you support each other in this?
- an examination of the competences and skills you possess which can be employed and developed to facilitate your acculturation process.
- practical planning and management of your move and/or arrival in order to minimise stress and (emotional) discomfort. Het patroon van het proces – de *highs en lows* – inzien en leren herkennen

The module results in a personalised and practical expatriate toolbox, filled with insights, strategies and development points for effective *culture shock* management. It offers valuable support not only to those expatriates who are preparing or just beginning their assignment: those who are in the middle of their acculturation process can also greatly benefit from it.

2. The Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC™)

The Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC) is a valid and reliable on-line self-assessment tool that measures the current level of development of 4 competences that have been defined as being crucial to the intercultural success and well-being of the individual. It results in an extensive written feedback report which contains personalised insights and practical suggestions for further competence development. This report serves as useful input for part 1 of our expatriation package – the *acculturation process* or *culture shock* (see above).

The 4 critical competences that the IRC measures are:

- *Intercultural Sensitivity*
The degree to which a person takes an active interest in others, their cultural background, needs and perspectives
- *Intercultural Communication*
The degree to which a person actively monitors their own communicative behaviours when interacting with people from other cultures
- *Building Commitment*
The degree to which a person actively influences the social environment, concerned with integrating different people and personalities
- *Managing Uncertainty*
The degree to which a person appreciates the challenges of culturally diverse environments as an opportunity for personal development

3. Intercultural Awareness

This element of the *Expatriation Programme* addresses the concept of culture and cultural differences. It covers the following topics:

- what is culture? How does it work?
- how does culture affect our perceptions, our reality?
- what effect does our own *cultural baggage* have on our assumptions and expectations when in a different culture?
- how do cultural stereotypes arise and how can we avoid them?
- how can we anticipate and manage cultural differences?

4. Culture specific briefings

This element of the programme offers valuable insights into the values, assumptions, expectations and behaviour of the foreign culture in which the expatriate will be living and working. How can you interact with the host culture appropriately and effectively, whilst retaining your own cultural identity? It includes the following topics:

- What are the specific cultural differences between your own culture and the host culture? We examine these differences using a practical cultural framework – Professor Geert Hofstede’s 5-D model.
- What makes the people of the host culture ‘tick’? What is the true motivation behind the behaviour you observe as an expatriate?
- What are the drivers behind your own culturally determined behaviour? How do they differ from those of your host culture?
- Where, when and how can the expatriate expect to feel the impact of these specific cultural differences when living and working in the host culture? i.e. in communication, meetings, leadership styles, team work, social interaction etc.

5. On-going coaching

Once they have made the move to their host culture, expatriates can greatly benefit from regular or intermittent coaching. This can be useful in a number of ways:

- to help the expatriate through phases of the acculturation process that he/she finds particularly challenging
- to clarify and de-mystify particular situations or incidents and offer strategies for dealing with them
- to offer emotional support, coupled with practical advice

Coaching can take place face-to-face, on-line or via phone.

Accompanying spouses

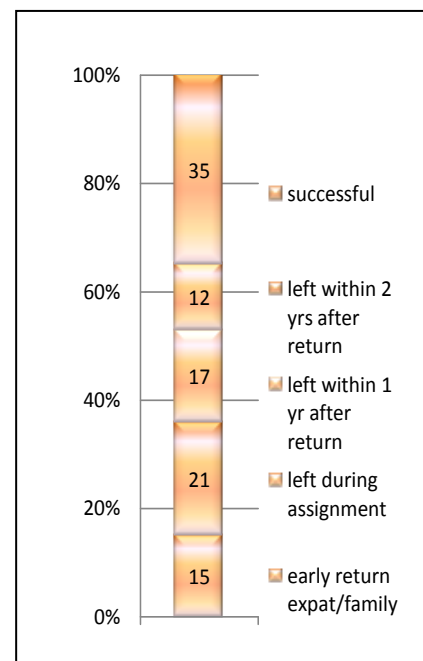
We strongly recommend that spouses accompanying their partner on their assignment abroad also follow the programme. Statistics show that one of the most frequent reasons for early return of the expatriate to his/her home culture is the maladjustment or non-adjustment of the accompanying spouse and/or children. When couples follow the programme together they also learn how to recognise how their partner is getting on, what phase of their personal process they are in and how each of them is

coping with it. In this way couples are able to offer extremely valuable support to each other throughout their stay abroad.

Why bother with our expatriation programme?

Our expatriation programme can have a significant positive effect on the success of a foreign assignment. It benefits both the expatriate and his/her organisation. Here are just some of the reasons for bothering:

- Living and working in a foreign culture can be an extremely emotional and stressful experience. An expatriation programme offers insights, tools and strategies to significantly reduce and even prevent some of this upheaval. This results in the expatriate's improved well-being and productivity.
- Over 35% of expatriates either return to their home culture earlier than originally planned or leave the organisation during the foreign assignment (see table). This is costly to the organisation. An expatriation programme can reduce this likelihood.
- Expatriates are often selected for their new position on the basis of their professional competences and/or management track record within their *home culture*. This is no guarantee for similar success in the *host culture*, where approaches, practices and expectations may be quite different and additional intercultural competences are required. The expatriation programme offers understanding of the impact of culture, specific cultural differences and development of the competences crucial to managing the experience, the professional function and other people successfully.



For further information, or to discuss your or your organisation's expatriation training needs, please contact **Candida Snow** at:

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