



White Paper

International Relocations Require Language & Cultural Training

Investing in long-term employee happiness with pre- and post-departure training





Table of Contents

- 1** The current state of relocations
 - 2** Visas & Language Requirements
 - 3** Language training and its impact on employee morale
 - 4** Strategies to implement language for relocating employees
 - 5** Benefits of language tutoring for your workforce
 - 6** Conclusion & summary
-

Introduction

Employee relocations, especially international ones, are pivotal moments for businesses seeking to expand their global footprint. It's a crucial career moment for the relocating employee, too.

Despite the claims that full-time in-office work is dead, nearly 60% of the companies polled by Atlas Van Lines expect their relocation budgets to increase in 2023, proving that relocation is here to stay.

Introduction

Moving is one of the most stressful life events an adult can go through (only behind death and divorce). Moving internationally requires significant buy-in and support from the company requesting the relocation and the employee.

Managing these transitions can be a complex task. Corporate international relocations demand careful planning and execution to ensure a smooth transition for both the employee and the company responsible for the successful relocation of their employee (and family).

Post-pandemic, 29% of global workforce mobility moves are international, according to [data](#) by Atlas.

Language Training and Visa Requirements

Language proficiency is frequently mandatory for anyone relocating to a new country, so language tutoring isn't just nice to have but necessary before the relocating employee (and their family) can live in their new location long-term.

Many countries have introduced language proficiency tests as a prerequisite for visa applications, aiming to ensure successful integration into work and social life. While some tests only require a basic understanding of the native language, others require cultural testing, too. The last thing a relocating company wants is for a relo to hang in the balance of a language test, which is why tutoring is critical during pre- and post-departure.

The level of proficiency varies by country, as well as by visa type. Here are some of the countries that require language proficiency to apply for a visa:

Switzerland

Estonia

Romania

Austria

Papua New Guinea

Botswana

Australia

Indonesia

New Zealand

Belgium

Canada

Global LT teachers are uniquely equipped to prepare students for Visa language testing and can prepare students for the test *and* life in their new location.

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL RELOCATION ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

Making language and culture a box to tick or a throwaway task can be detrimental to the long-term success of an international relocation. Employee happiness depends on external recognition of their acquired skills more than pay and benefits. Learning a new language and being able to apply that learning both at home and at work means that employees will feel more connected and appreciated by their organization before they pack their bags ahead of a move.

Something that is often overlooked is the impact an international move can have on an employee's morale. A study by the IMPACT Group found the following:

- 56% of respondents experienced emotional or personal challenges that lasted three months or longer following the move
- 20% experienced emotional challenges during or after the move that had a significant or very significant effect on their ability to focus on their new role
- 41% were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable sharing personal challenges related to the move with their manager/HR
- 25% of respondents ranked their feelings of loneliness as high or medium before the move; after the move, 47% ranked it high or medium

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL RELOCATION ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

Making new friends and avoiding loneliness during an international move is hugely helpful to the emotional well-being of relocating employees. Loneliness can reduce performance, limit creativity, and impair reasoning and decision-making. Addressing the well-being of your employees helps them acclimate both personally and professionally so they can concentrate on their new role. Language and cultural training play a huge role in that.

If a relocating employee can't communicate in their new community, feelings of not belonging or feeling disconnected are highlighted. It impacts their family members, too. Spouses and children need to be able to connect to schoolmates and neighbors in their new homes to feel like they're making progress in creating new relationships. Communication is at the heart of connection.

In a recent relocation survey by [Graebel](#), they reported that over 94% of international relocating employees said they would have done something differently or asked their employer to do something differently if they ever relocated again. What was on the wish list? 31% of those respondents said they would have liked to receive language and culture training pre- and post-departure.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RELOCATION

Thorough Pre-Assignment Assessment

One of the critical factors in ensuring a successful employee relocation is conducting a comprehensive pre-assignment assessment. Before any employee embarks on an international assignment, it is essential to understand their unique needs, preferences, and concerns. Relocation managers should initiate a dialogue with the employee to determine their expectations, family situation, and any potential challenges they foresee.

In the study by Atlas, 32% of global employees said they would decline a relocation assignment because they lacked spousal support. Knowing what motivates an employee – and their families – through wellness benefits like mental health sessions, a tour guide in their new location, or even a yearly pass to a museum in their target destination can make or break a relocation.

Regarding language and culture training, the pre-assignment assessment can help identify the employee's proficiency in the host country's language and familiarity with its culture. Based on this assessment, a customized language and culture training plan can be developed to bridge any gaps and ensure a smoother integration into the new environment. The last thing you want is to spend time, money, and human resources moving an employee across the world only to find out they can't assimilate into their new culture.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RELOCATION

Comprehensive Language and Culture Training

Language and culture are often underestimated factors that can make or break an international relocation. Insufficient language skills and cultural awareness can lead to misunderstandings, decreased productivity, and potential business setbacks. To mitigate these risks, relocation managers should prioritize language and culture training as part of the relocation package for both the relocating employee and their families. Family language training is critical because the number one reason international relocation assignments fail is because of a spouse being unhappy in their new location, whether because of a lack of community or not being able to communicate effectively with new doctors, teachers, and neighbors.

This training should encompass both pre-departure and post-arrival phases:

Pre-Departure Training: Offer language courses that focus on the specific needs of the employee's role and the nuances of the host country's language. Cultural sensitivity training should cover customs, etiquette, and business practices to prepare employees for the new work environment. Global LT offers live, interactive cultural experiences focusing on real-world outcomes like water cooler talk for the relocating employee and even how to understand American football (and everything in between). Cultural training for spouses and families can include knowing the school system in their new home, understanding healthcare benefits, or even how to call the police. Those valuable life skills are, in many cases, life or death and should be considered mandatory training pre-departure.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE RELOCATION

Comprehensive Language and Culture Training

Post-Arrival Support: Continue language and culture training after the employee has arrived in the host country. Encourage participation in local activities, provide cross-cultural coaching, and offer ongoing language support to ensure a smoother integration into the local community and workplace. Often, an employee's language teacher is the only consistency they have during their move, and their relationship becomes a lifeline to their new culture. Global LT's mobility culture training is provided to a relocating family for a full calendar year, ensuring a successful integration.

Many Global LT ex-pat students report becoming friends with their language teacher upon arrival in their new location because, often, that's the only person they know. Language tutoring goes beyond conjugating verbs and memorization. For relocating employees, it's their lifeline to community and happiness in their new home.

Relo consultants facilitating international moves should encourage regular participation in their pre- and post-departure language training. It gives employees and their families something to focus on other than the logistics of a daunting move, and learning new skills can bolster confidence during every part of a relocation.

Benefits of Offering Language Tutoring to Your Workforce

Benefits of offering language tutoring to your workforce include:

- **Increased employee satisfaction.** Employees who learn a new language often feel more confident and motivated at work. This can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Global LT offers business training so employees feel confident and equipped to give presentations, engage with prospective clients, and even craft emails in their non-native language. It also gives their new colleagues a good impression, especially if the relocating employee's native language is English. It signals a dedication to understanding their culture and a willingness to integrate fully.
- **Improved customer service.** Employees who speak their customers' language can better understand their needs and provide excellent customer service. This can lead to increased customer loyalty and repeat business. It's no longer okay to assume that your clientele only speaks English.
- **Enhanced global business opportunities.** Businesses with a multilingual workforce are better positioned to take advantage of international business opportunities. This can lead to increased sales and profits.

Effective Communication Matters

By investing in language and culture training, companies can empower their employees to communicate effectively with their new colleagues, build strong relationships in their new homes, and contribute positively to the success of the international assignment, which means less turnover and more productivity (a win-win and clear ROI).

In corporate international relocations, ensuring a successful transition for employees is paramount to achieving business objectives. By following these three strategies—thorough pre-assignment assessment, comprehensive language and culture training, and a robust support network—relocation managers can significantly enhance the chances of successful employee relocation. No one wants a failed relocation, least of all the employees who moved across the world, likely with family in tow.

Giving your workforce the support they need before they embark on a significant life journey means giving them the best chance to succeed upon arrival and throughout their stay.

Global LT has been the leading language and cultural training provider for over 40 years. We teach any language, anywhere in the world, and we hire the best teachers who truly understand what it's like to be an ex-pat (since many of them are, too!)

Summary & Conclusion

Offering language benefits to your organization results in increased employee retention and engagement, better business relationships with clients and prospects, and decreased miscommunication and frustration in the workforce. Closing the language skills gap at work is not a hypothetical problem that can be made a future problem. It is real and has a significant financial impact on organizations that don't address it.

Global LT offers virtual, 1-1, or group language tutoring of over 100 languages, anywhere in the world. Our teachers are trained to focus on language learning that results in real-world success both personally and professionally.

Through a personalized mix of learning solutions, we ensure that every student learning a language has a clear path to success by relying on behavioral science, custom learning curriculums, and e-learning tools to equip your workforce with the knowledge they need to thrive.

sales@global-LT.com

www.global-LT.com