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On The Edge

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Answering Your Questions Regarding International Assignments

Repatriating International Assignees: How Employers Address the Challenge

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Welcome to **On the Edge**, a monthly newsletter from **ExpatEdge®**, that answers your questions regarding international assignments. This month, Virginia G. McMorrow, manager, publications for ORC Worldwide's international compensation practice area, answers your questions regarding the challenge of repatriating international assignees and provides a brief look at how employers today are addressing the challenge.

- [What are some of the issues the company must address when repatriating an employee from an international assignment?](#)
- [How are Employers addressing this challenge?](#)

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What are some of the issues the company must address when repatriating an employee from an international assignment?

When your assignees are returning home after one or more international assignments, the company must address a number of issues, including the overall planning process and who, within the company, will oversee that process.

From the expatriate's perspective, career planning and the best use of any skills they have learned while on assignment are important factors. How the company uses the employee's experience will eventually affect the employee's decision whether or not to remain with the company when the assignment has been completed - even if the employer guarantees a job in one of the company divisions. Consider the following questions:

- What new responsibilities will the employee have in the home country?
- Is it more appropriate for the assignee to work in another foreign location where the company also operates?
- Who will fill the vacancy left behind by the repatriating assignee? Another expatriate or a local national?
- What about the family? Will HR extend a helping hand with cultural readjustment?

- How can HR keep the employee from leaving the company once they return home?



How are Employers addressing this challenge?

According to ORC Worldwide's **2006 Worldwide Survey of International Assignment Policies and Practices**, here is a brief look at how employers today are addressing the challenges of repatriation.

How much advance notice is provided to an expatriate prior to repatriation?

- Timing varies (39 percent)
- Three to six months (28 percent)
- Up to three months (18 percent)
- Between 6 and 12 months (8 percent)
- Timing depends on suitable opening at headquarters (5 percent)

Does your company guarantee a job on repatriation?

- No (48 percent)
- Yes, depending on what jobs are available (34 percent)
- Yes, employment at the same level (17 percent)

Who within the company has primary responsibility for handling repatriation?

- HR on a centralized basis (31 percent)
- HR on a decentralized basis (22 percent)
- Business unit on a decentralized basis (22 percent)
- Specialized expatriate management on a centralized basis (9 percent)
- Business unit on a centralized basis (8 percent)
- Specialized expatriate management on a decentralized basis (4 percent)

What kinds of assistance does the company provide to assist with repatriation?

- Networking and home leave visits during assignment (50 percent)
- No assistance (32 percent)
- Information services to keep the employee informed of home-country developments (30 percent)
- Financial assistance (21 percent)
- Mentoring program (14 percent)
- Debriefing/knowledge transfer sessions (14 percent)
- Re-acculturation sessions (12 percent)
- Further job education (12 percent)

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