



# Coaching<sup>1</sup> Expatriate<sup>2</sup> Managers

**S**ending employees abroad can provide significant<sup>3</sup> opportunities for companies as well as for employees, so it's no wonder that<sup>4</sup> the number of expatriates around the world is constantly<sup>5</sup> increasing. Unfortunately, it's not all wine and roses<sup>6</sup>, since "transplants" onto foreign soil<sup>7</sup> suffer from<sup>8</sup> culture shock and lack of understanding of their new milieu<sup>9</sup>. BEM's Michał Chmielecki provides a few tips<sup>10</sup> on coaching of the executives<sup>11</sup> delegated overseas<sup>12</sup>.

Expatriate managers – be it delegated or newly hired<sup>13</sup> ones – are responsible for<sup>14</sup> penetrating new markets<sup>15</sup>, overseeing<sup>16</sup> operational start-ups<sup>17</sup>, transferring technologies, managing joint

ventures or transmitting organizational culture. They become key players in the global economy, acting as the human link<sup>18</sup> in international trade. They

are not the strongest link, though, unless they are properly eased into<sup>19</sup> their new environment and properly motivated.

<sup>1</sup> **coaching** | trening, instruktaż

<sup>2</sup> **expatriate** | expatriant, osoba mieszkająca poza własnym krajem

<sup>3</sup> **significant** | znaczący

<sup>4</sup> **(it's) no wonder (that)** | nic dziwnego, że...

<sup>5</sup> **constantly** | stale

<sup>6</sup> **it's not all wine and roses** | nie wszystko gra, nie jest za różowo

<sup>7</sup> **soil** | ziemia (np. ojczysta)

<sup>8</sup> **to suffer from sth** | cierpieć na coś, od czegoś

<sup>9</sup> **milieu** | środowisko, otoczenie

<sup>10</sup> **tip** | porada, wskazówka

<sup>11</sup> **executive** | pracownik szczebla kierowniczego

<sup>12</sup> **overseas** | za granicą

<sup>13</sup> **newly hired** | świeżo zatrudniony

<sup>14</sup> **responsible for** | odpowiedzialny za

<sup>15</sup> **to penetrate a market** | przeniknąć na rynek, zbadać sytuację rynkową

<sup>16</sup> **to oversee** | nadzorować

<sup>17</sup> **start-up** | nowo powstała spółka

<sup>18</sup> **link** | ogniwo (łańcucha), połączenie

<sup>19</sup> **to ease sb into sth** | ostrożnie kogoś wprowadzić, stopniowo kogoś wdrożyć (np. do pracy)

## Failures<sup>20</sup> in international assignments<sup>21</sup>

Although foreign assignments are viewed as<sup>22</sup> a key strategy for MNCs<sup>23</sup>, many expatriate managers are unsuccessful in foreign organizations. Expatriate's performance<sup>24</sup> depends on<sup>25</sup> a couple of factors, one of them being the ability<sup>26</sup> to adjust<sup>27</sup> themselves to the host<sup>28</sup> culture. Expatriates have to fit into<sup>29</sup> new cultural environments by modifying and adapting their behaviour<sup>30</sup> to match<sup>31</sup> the host country's cultural values, norms and paradigms<sup>32</sup>.

It's not only expatriate managers who may be unable to adapt to the physical and cultural differences of the new environment. The same problems concern<sup>33</sup> their families. Studies show that if the family does not successfully adapt to the host country's culture, the whole expatriation could be in jeopardy<sup>34</sup>.

## Acculturation<sup>35</sup>

Adapting to the new culture, i.e. acculturation, is a complex and multidimensional<sup>36</sup> process. Assisting expatriate

managers in achieving<sup>37</sup> a smooth<sup>38</sup> acculturation is no easy matter. Trainers, coaches<sup>39</sup> and researchers<sup>40</sup> claim<sup>41</sup> that cross-cultural<sup>42</sup> preparation for expatriates should include, among others, language training, cultural assimilation training, information about geography, climate and accommodation<sup>43</sup>. In addition, cross-cultural preparation should develop expatriates' awareness<sup>44</sup> of culture and its influence<sup>45</sup>, knowledge of how to survive<sup>46</sup> and succeed in a different culture, and the ability to handle<sup>47</sup> emotional challenges<sup>48</sup>.

## Culture shock

Culture shock may significantly hinder<sup>49</sup> an expatriate's ability to establish<sup>50</sup> friendships with local people. The symptoms may include homesickness<sup>51</sup>, nervousness<sup>52</sup>, depression, mood swings<sup>53</sup> and even hostility<sup>54</sup>. Managers often display<sup>55</sup> hypersensitivity to<sup>56</sup> criticism, aggressiveness and domineering behaviour. Proper training and support can prevent<sup>57</sup> or lessen<sup>58</sup> most of these unfortunate<sup>59</sup> reactions.

Organizations understand the importance of such smooth accul- ►

<sup>20</sup> failure | porażka

<sup>21</sup> assignment | przydział, zadanie

<sup>22</sup> to view sth as | uznawać/uważać coś za

<sup>23</sup> MNC (Multinational Company/ Corporation) | spółka/korporacja międzynarodowa

<sup>24</sup> performance | wydajność, wyniki

<sup>25</sup> to depend on | zależeć od

<sup>26</sup> ability | zdolność, umiejętność

<sup>27</sup> to adjust | dostosowywać

<sup>28</sup> host | pełniący rolę gospodarza, goszczący kogoś

<sup>29</sup> to fit into sth | pasować do czegoś, zgadzać się z czymś

<sup>30</sup> behaviour | zachowanie

<sup>31</sup> to match | pasować, być zgodnym z czymś

<sup>32</sup> paradigm | schemat, model (np. zachowania)

<sup>33</sup> to concern sb | dotyczyć kogoś

<sup>34</sup> to be in jeopardy | być zagrożonym, być w niebezpieczeństwie

<sup>35</sup> acculturation | akulturacja, adaptacja kulturowa

<sup>36</sup> multidimensional | wielowymiarowy, o wielu aspektach

<sup>37</sup> to achieve | osiągnąć

<sup>38</sup> smooth | gładki, bez zakłóceń

<sup>39</sup> coach | trener

<sup>40</sup> researcher | badacz

<sup>41</sup> to claim | twierdzić

<sup>42</sup> cross-cultural | międzykulturowy

<sup>43</sup> accommodation | zamieszkanie, zakwaterowanie

<sup>44</sup> awareness | świadomość, wiedza

<sup>45</sup> influence | wpływ

<sup>46</sup> to survive | przetrwać

<sup>47</sup> to handle sth | poradzić sobie z czymś, dać rady

<sup>48</sup> challenge | wyzwanie

<sup>49</sup> to hinder | przeszkodzić, spowolnić

<sup>50</sup> to establish | założyć, nawiązać

<sup>51</sup> homesickness | nostalgia, tęsknota za domem

<sup>52</sup> nervousness | zdenerwowanie, napięcie

<sup>53</sup> mood swings | wahania nastroju

<sup>54</sup> hostility | wrogość

<sup>55</sup> to display | okazywać

<sup>56</sup> hypersensitivity to sth | nadwrażliwość na coś

<sup>57</sup> to prevent | zapobiec

<sup>58</sup> to lessen | zmniejszyć

<sup>59</sup> unfortunate | niefortunny, niepożądany

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turation and attempt to increase the likelihood<sup>60</sup> of a successful sojourn<sup>61</sup> by trying to select the right people and provide them with appropriate training opportunities via<sup>62</sup> coaching.

## Coaching expats

Professional coaching represents a cross-disciplinary<sup>63</sup> approach<sup>64</sup>. It aims at<sup>65</sup> the enhancement<sup>66</sup> of well-being<sup>67</sup>, performance and professional development as well as the facilitation<sup>68</sup> of individual<sup>69</sup> and organizational change. The core<sup>70</sup> concepts of coaching are: helping, collaborative<sup>71</sup> and egalitarian<sup>72</sup> relationship between coach and client, and focus on the development of the client through an individualized<sup>73</sup>, client-centred process. Coaching is used in cross-cultural contexts and over the last couple of years organizational use of professional coaches has grown considerably<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> **likelihood** | prawdopodobieństwo

<sup>61</sup> **sojourn** | pobyt (np. tymczasowy)

<sup>62</sup> **via** | za pośrednictwem

<sup>63</sup> **cross-disciplinary** | interdyscyplinarny

<sup>64</sup> **approach** | podejście

<sup>65</sup> **to aim at sth** | być skierowanym na coś

<sup>66</sup> **enhancement** | poprawa, ulepszenie

<sup>67</sup> **well-being** | dobro

<sup>68</sup> **facilitation** | ułatwienie

<sup>69</sup> **individual** | jednostkowy, osobowy

<sup>70</sup> **core** | kluczowy, fundamentalny

<sup>71</sup> **collaborative** | wspólny

<sup>72</sup> **egalitarian** | równy, egalitarny

<sup>73</sup> **individualized** | zindywidualizowany

<sup>74</sup> **considerably** | znacznie, znacząco

<sup>75</sup> **relationship** | relacje, związek

<sup>76</sup> **to form** | utworzyć

<sup>77</sup> **authority** | władza, zwierzchnictwo

<sup>78</sup> **responsibility** | odpowiedzialność

There are a number of executive coaching definitions. Coaching can be viewed as a relationship<sup>75</sup> formed<sup>76</sup> between a client who has managerial authority<sup>77</sup> and responsibility<sup>78</sup> in an organization and a coach who uses a wide variety<sup>79</sup> of behavioural techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually<sup>80</sup> identified set of goals. In other words, the coaching process is a systematic goal-oriented<sup>81</sup> process that aims to facilitate sustained<sup>82</sup> change. The choice of coach, therefore, is vital<sup>83</sup>, especially in a cross-cultural setting<sup>84</sup>.

## Coaching skills<sup>85</sup>

What are the essential<sup>86</sup> competences of the effective executive coach? This is a challenging and important question. The necessary attributes of a 'capable<sup>87</sup> coach' are: communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-management<sup>88</sup>, coaching craft<sup>89</sup> (e.g. goal-setting<sup>90</sup>, planning, etc.), breadth<sup>91</sup> of experience and technical skills.

However, the coach who is working with expatriates should have a couple of additional traits<sup>92</sup> as well – an appreciation for<sup>93</sup> the culture of the client and the host country, self-awareness<sup>94</sup> in terms of<sup>95</sup> the coach's own cultural background<sup>96</sup>, personal experience in cultural adaptation and acculturation, familiarity with<sup>97</sup> theory, research and practice in cross-cultural psychology, communication and management.

<sup>79</sup> **wide variety** | duża różnorodność

<sup>80</sup> **mutually** | wzajemnie, wspólnie

<sup>81</sup> **goal-oriented** | zorientowany na cel, celowy

<sup>82</sup> **sustained** | stały

<sup>83</sup> **vital** | decydujący, rozstrzygający

<sup>84</sup> **setting** | scenaria, otoczenie

<sup>85</sup> **skill** | zdolność, umiejętność

<sup>86</sup> **essential** | podstawowy, zasadniczy

<sup>87</sup> **capable** | zdolny, kompetentny

<sup>88</sup> **self-management** | odpowiedzialność za samego siebie, umiejętność samodzielnej pracy

<sup>89</sup> **craft** | rzemiosło, fach

<sup>90</sup> **goal-setting** | wyznaczanie celów

<sup>91</sup> **breadth** | szerokość, szeroki zakres

<sup>92</sup> **trait** | cecha

<sup>93</sup> **appreciation for sth** | docenianie czegoś, uznanie wobec czegoś

<sup>94</sup> **self-awareness** | samoświadomość

<sup>95</sup> **in terms of** | pod względem

<sup>96</sup> **background** | środowisko, pochodzenie

<sup>97</sup> **familiarity with sth** | znajomość czegoś

<sup>98</sup> **to gain popularity** | zyskać (na) popularności, zdobyć rozgłos

<sup>99</sup> **fast-growing** | szybko/pręźnie rozwijający się

<sup>100</sup> **to consider** | rozważyć, brać pod uwagę

<sup>101</sup> **to respond well to sth** | dobrze na coś reagować

<sup>102</sup> **overly** | nadmiernie

<sup>103</sup> **to inhibit** | pohamować, powstrzymać

<sup>104</sup> **severe** | poważny, dotkliwy

<sup>105</sup> **to be receptive to sth** | być na coś otwartym

Although coaching is gaining more and more popularity<sup>98</sup> and is a fast-growing<sup>99</sup> business, there are several limitations that need to be considered<sup>100</sup>. Some managers don't want to have a coach, some don't respond well to<sup>101</sup> coaching. The client may become overly<sup>102</sup> dependent on the coach (inhibiting<sup>103</sup> acculturation), especially when the expatriate is under severe<sup>104</sup> stress (early in the sojourn). This may not be a time when they are receptive to<sup>105</sup> using the reflective<sup>106</sup> space provided by coaching. And since so many expatriate assignments take place in developing countries, there is no guarantee that appropriately<sup>107</sup> qualified coaches will be readily available<sup>108</sup> in the host country.

## Conclusions

There's a clear need for professional coaches who have broad knowledge and experience in cross-cultural psychology, management and communication. Success of the biggest corporations depends on it, as it's the only way to help the newly arrived expats mesh with<sup>109</sup> the foreign corporate culture and everyday life. ■

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<sup>95</sup> **in terms of** | pod względem

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<sup>104</sup> **severe** | poważny, dotkliwy

<sup>105</sup> **to be receptive to sth** | być na coś otwartym

<sup>106</sup> **reflective** | refleksyjny, zamyślony

<sup>107</sup> **appropriately** | właściwie, stosownie

<sup>108</sup> **readily available** | łatwo dostępny

<sup>109</sup> **to mesh with sth/sb** | zazębiać się, pasować do siebie, dopasować się