
THE NECESSITY OF PROFESSIONAL MENTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXPATRIATE'S ADAPTATION ON THEIR RETRIEVAL TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES

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Abstract: It's a fact that modern organizations apply practice for a professional usage of the newly acquired knowledge and experiences acquired by the expatriates during their work outside their home countries. The complete set of new knowledge and skills makes these managers more competitive at their organizations plus outside, in the job market. Raising awareness among managers, with particular emphasis on expatriates and in general all employees, the permanent need for knowledge transfer is inevitable. Analyzes show that primarily, it is necessary for all stakeholders (employees, expatriates, HR management service, organization itself) to take a concrete strategy that will facilitate the process of communication within the organization ie. communication between managers expatriates and other employees. In that part it is inevitable to do additional research on the question of why in this global era of business and multicultural co-operation, the transfer of knowledge is difficult and what are the reasons for it?

For this purpose, research shows that the need for the role of a mentor to manage the process of transfer of knowledge by the expatriate and the parent company is more than a necessity. The strategy is to intensify the efforts for more efficient realization of the already existing repatriation program, which is supplemented with the role - mentor. This commitment does not require significant additional resources, and improves the level of realization of the activities of the already existing program.

The paper is aimed at analyzing the current situation in the companies and finding a model that will determine the role and significance of the mentoring as an element that will contribute to the unwanted flow of information and process of professional communication and transfer of knowledge at the organization, thereby and experiences are aimed at the competitive advantage of the organization. The appointment of a person in the form of a mentor or sponsor in the home organization through the sharing and exchange of information personally or through an official website or an intranet creates suitable preparation and distribution of monthly or annual reports aimed at greater effectiveness and efficiency of the organization.

Negative business-related information is often as important as the positive ones, and taking into account that the sharing of positive information is simpler, it is necessary for the home organization to be clearly positioned as an organization that is fully transparent in the internal environment and promotes open communication in relation to all questions that managers need. In this way, more work needs to be done to inform managers engaged in foreign affiliates for negative news, covering all the important aspects of the work of the home organization such as lost contracts and deals, sectoral reorganizations and staff outflow.

Keywords: expatriates, knowledge transfer, managers, mentors

1. INTRODUCTION

During the stay of the international task, managers may feel that they have lost their relationship with the parent company's organization and may feel neglected and forgotten.¹⁷⁸ The organizational commitment from the parent branch during the assignment is in correlation with the motivation of the managers, because if there is irregular communication, feelings of isolation are created and their dissatisfaction increases and this can cause wider negative implications.¹⁷⁹ Activities undertaken to reduce the feeling of isolation constitute a precondition for effective

¹⁷⁸ Jassawalla, A., Sashittal, H. C. (2009). "Thinking strategically about integrating repatriated managers in MNCs". The International Journal of Human Resource Management, Vol. 48, No. 5

¹⁷⁹ Stevens, J.M., Oddou, G., Furuya, N., Bird, A., Mendenhall, M. (2006). "HR factors affecting repatriate job satisfaction and job attachment for Japanese managers" The International Journal of Human Resource, Vol. 17, No. 5

repatriation, as this can only create a working climate of acceptability by the home organization in order to allow expatriates to have a smooth transition during their reintegration. For these reasons, it is recommended that the organizational form of human resource management in the home organization take full account of the importance of having cross-cultural communication, ie interaction between international managers with the home organization during the task in the host country.¹⁸⁰

2. BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR THE SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF EXPATRIATES AFTER COMPLETING THE TASK

Authors Jassawalla state that, when arriving at a task in the host country, among other things, it is desirable that the parent company has found a way to direct its activities towards the creation of informative mechanisms, primarily for reasons of this type of communication in almost all global organizations because good information management is a continuous process that should take place at all levels in modern businesses.¹⁸¹ In multinational and global organizations, the required work or task requires interaction; in these circumstances, the exchange of information is particularly relevant, as there is generally a great need for coordination between the home company and the foreign operation. In the context of communication between managers and home organizations, it should not be just a formal dialogue within formalized processes that are linked exclusively to the needs of the foreign subsidiary's task. The parent organizations that will establish a reciprocal and functional relationship with managers during the assignment will be able to influence their expectations and readiness for their reintegration into the home organization, as information obtained through frequent communication will have an insight into the business environment and environment in the home country, and thus facing less surprises and less unfulfilled expectations about organizational change.¹⁸² These findings indicate that the organizational strategy for human resources management that evaluates more accomplishment in the foreign branch ie the expatriation process and ignores the career progress of the expatriates will contribute to ineffective reintegration upon return. By contrast, the strategy for regular contact with foreign affiliate managers and the systematic sharing of news and information would be positively related to the effectiveness of re-integration of ex-patriots upon return. According to Adler, in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to apply a number of methods and techniques that are in the function of successful communication, such as establishing a system of effective interaction with managers during the task that promotes the sharing of opportunities for continuous promotion as well as sharing good news and news related to the events in the home organization. It can be implemented by appointing a person in the form of a mentor or sponsor in the home organization, sharing and sharing information through an official website or an Intranet of the organization, as well as the preparation and distribution of monthly or annual reports that are distributed to all foreign subsidiaries of the parent organization.¹⁸³ Negative business-related information is often as important as the positive and taking into consideration that the sharing of positive information is simpler, it is necessary for the home organization to be clearly positioned as an organization that is fully transparent in the internal environment and promotes open communication in relation to all the issues that managers need. In this way, more work needs to be done to inform managers engaged in foreign affiliates for the negative news coverage, covering all important aspects of the operation of the home organization such as lost contracts and deals, sector restructuring and staff outbreak. In this context, a successful dialogue between task managers and the parent organization regarding sharing and negative news will lead to more positive reintegration results as it will help expatriates prevent or at least avoid unpleasant surprises.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Black, J. S., Gregersen. H. B., Mendenhall, M. (1992). "Toward a theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment". *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4

¹⁸¹ Bogićević, B., Aleksić, A. (2005). "Internacionalni menadžment ljudskih resursa i organizaciono učenje". *Economic Annals*, Vol. 50, No. 167

¹⁸² Adler, N. (1981). "Re-entry: managing cross-cultural transitions". *Group and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3

¹⁸³ Dowling, P.J., Welch, D. E. (2004). *International human resource management: Managing people in an international context*. London: Thompson learning

¹⁸⁴ Ying, G., Rammal, H. G., Dowling, P. J., (2016) *Global Talent Management and Staffing in MNEs* Emerald Group Publishing Limited

According to Paik also examines the dynamics of communication between international managers and the home organization. The responsible persons for human resources management in the units of operation agree with the assertion that the established communication activities during the task can provide a very useful contribution in connection with the forthcoming repatriation of the expatriates. At the same time, they add that managers during an international task should identify potential areas that require more extensive and more responsible communication and hence the responsibility for establishing and maintaining interaction with the parent organization is imposed on the international managers themselves.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, the managers themselves also agree that frequent communication with the parent organization is the basis for successful work, but still the self-initiated establishment of such a connection will not mean better and more quality work done, but an additional burden on their already dynamic positions in the foreign subsidiary. The international task is a complex task and requires full commitment. In fact, during the task, managers are faced with a number of new challenges that require strong focus and concentration, and it is quite understandable that their main priority is aimed at fulfilling work duties and responsibilities in the foreign subsidiary rather than establishing a positive correlation with the parent organization. Therefore, it is of particular importance in a cross-cultural environment that the parent organization exerts an effort to establish a functional network of mutual information and establish more successful forms of communication and cooperation with its managers sent to foreign subsidiaries. Studies by Jassawalla also suggest that cross-cultural communication should be a continuous process that takes place at all levels in the work environment. This is especially important because in addition to the communication activities between managers and the home organization that are mainly related to specific actions for everyday professional situations, there should always be an opportunity to develop relationships not only between managers and certain individuals such as mentor or sponsor, but with the parent organization as a whole.¹⁸⁶

In existing programs, mentoring as a tool for successful human resource management in organizations, ie appointing a person in the form of a mentor or sponsor, is the first step towards ensuring a good transition from the host country to the home country. In addition to the fact that the implementation of the mentoring program is of crucial importance for the expatriates, the organization itself, that is, the home institution will have a significant benefit. The formal involvement of a mentor by the organization can primarily help managers adapt to changes during the duration of an international task and their contribution can also ensure consistency during repatriation.¹⁸⁷ According to Jassawalla, mentoring is a professional relationship between the manager-expatriate and a person within the parent organization appointed in the form of a mentor, which is usually an older and more precise member of the organization, has more formal powers than the manager himself, has a personal dedication and share in the success of the international task and is responsible for career development and progress. There is strong indication in the academic literature so far that the appointment of a mentor before completing the international assignment provides enough time to establish and develop a quality relationship between the expatriate and the mentor. This in turn results in a consequent positive effect in terms of greater attachment and loyalty to managers because employees who feel somewhat "related" to their home organization demonstrate a more positive attitude towards the inevitable repatriation that will follow after the end of the task. In short, the main task and responsibility of the mentor will be to monitor the career development of the expatriates and to offer continuous guidance and counseling, hence the logical conclusion is that this concept needs to be implemented before, during and after completing an international task.

Prior to the engagement of international managers in the host country, it is in fact a period when organizations need to start a mentoring program because theoretical preparation is a necessary foundation that could be of great importance in the further cycles of the international task, ie when the international manager has the opportunity to experience go through all areas of work in the organization.¹⁸⁸ Primarily, the mentorship of managers

¹⁸⁵ Evans, P., Pucik, V., Barsoux, J. L. (2002). *The global challenge: Frameworks for international human resource management*. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc

¹⁸⁶ Jassawalla, A., Sashittal, H. C. (2009). "Thinking strategically about integrating repatriated managers in MNCs". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 48, No. 5

¹⁸⁷ Zhuang, W-L., Wu, M., Wen S-L. (2013). "Relationship of mentoring functions to expatriate adjustments: Comparing home country mentorship and host country mentorship". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 24, No. 1

¹⁸⁸ Szkudlarek, B. (2010). "Reentry—A review of the literature". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 34, No. 1

before leaving the task would be accomplished through professional cross-cultural preparation designed for international managers in order to gain insight into the day-to-day operations of the foreign subsidiary as well as to develop the necessary managerial competencies that the manager should possess for management in a multicultural environment. It is considered that the benefits of mentoring precisely during the international task are multidisciplinary and in this cycle typical development activities by the person appointed as a mentor can be of formal and informal character. The work and efforts of the mentor of a formal character are in the role of an advisor who contributes to the improvement of the realization of the work goals and tasks through regular consultations regarding overcoming the problems that arise in the current work of the international task. In the same way, the mentoring during the task by intensifying the cooperation and the manager's relationship with the parent organization in the form of informal inter-organizational communication such as the transfer of important information from the organization's headquarters, such as current strategic changes, social and political changes and the movements of direct competition in business are vital. Finally, in order to achieve maximum benefits after the completion of the task, it is necessary to include all the activities in the mentoring program in order to provide relevant career advice, which will at the same time represent the basis for the start of the independent work of the expatriates. Given the whole potential the functionality of the mentoring program appears to be that the appointment of a person as a mentor represents a real solution to a number of problems related to the reintegration of expatriates because through their professional and psychosocial support they can greatly contribute to the planning and implementation of the transition of expatriates from the country host to the home country.¹⁸⁹

2. CONCLUSION

Current practice shows that the mentoring program is an obvious step at an organizational level, i.e. at the level of the institution, but determining the criteria on the basis of which an appropriate mentor would be chosen is just as important. It is recommended that the organizational form for human resource management take into account persons who have at least one international task in the selection of a mentor, mainly because of their experience. Finding and engaging an individual who is also a representative of senior management in the home organization, which, for example, is often the expatriate himself with a number of successfully completed international projects and tasks, is one of the most suitable candidates for selecting a responsible person for a mentor. At the same time, in order to achieve successful mentoring work, potential characteristics related to the creation of successful mentors include personal international experience in the relevant field, significant influence and dedication for advocacy of the interests of the managers of the expatriates (especially during repatriation) and developed skills for building interpersonal and professional relationships.

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