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SELECTING AND PREPARING PERSONNEL
FOR CHINA ASSIGNMENTS

Ronald Jean Degen
International School of Management Paris

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Selecting and preparing personnel for China assignments

ABSTRACT

A method for selecting personnel for China assignments and preparing and helping them in adapting to the culture is presented. The purpose is to avoid the cost of failures in assignments that can range from \$ 300 thousand to \$ 1 million (Black & Gregersen, 1999). The proposed selection process is based on the critical success qualities necessary in non-Chinese manager to operate successfully in China identified by Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 1-27), complemented by personal and family qualities for successful expatriates researched by Avril & Magnini (2007, p. 54-55), Guthrie & Stevens (2003, p. 240), and for China in particular by Lund & Backer (2005, p. 73). The proposed preparation and help in adaptation are based on the studies of Stroh, Linda, Black, J. Stewart, Mendenhall, Mark E., & Gregersen, Hall B. (2005, p.93 and 107) and Ching-Hsiang, Liu, and Hung-Wen, Lee (2008, p. 180-181).

Key words: China assignment, selecting expatriates, preparing and helping expatriates, adapt to Chinese culture, retaining expatriates

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Importance of a method to select and manage China assignments

An improper method for selecting personnel for China assignments and a faulty process for preparing their adaptation to the culture can generate substantial costs for the company. These eventual costs comprise the cost of moving personal and their families to and from China, the cost of the time they use receiving full salaries trying to adjust unsuccessfully to the Chinese culture, and the indirect cost of their poor performance on the Chinese operation during this time before they are repatriated. The cost of one failed international assignment based on the research of Black and Gregersen (1999) can range from \$ 300 thousand to \$ 1 million.

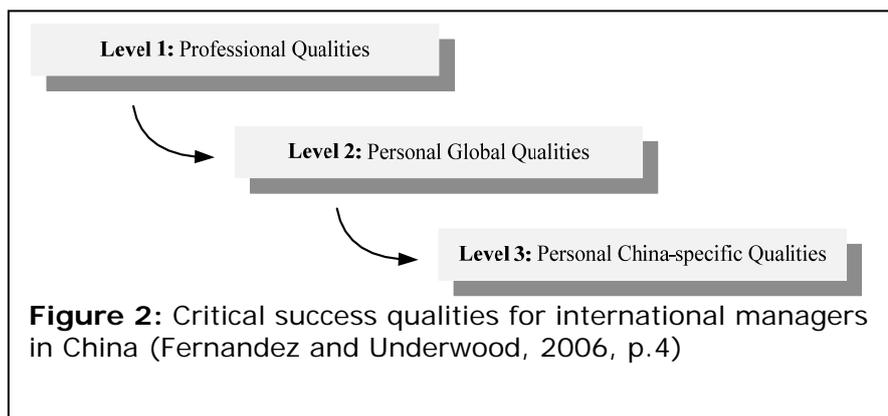
The failure of international assignments to China can originate from four causes: the improper selection method of the person and his family for the assignment, the deficient or no training of the selected person and his family for the cultural aspects it will face during the assignment, inadequate or no help in adapting the person and his family to the cultural environment, and the lack of a motivating plan for the person when repatriated after finishing the assignment. We will use as framework to address the solutions for these four causes the simplified generic functions of managing people, represented in Figure 1, adapted from Stroh, Linda, Black, J. Stewart, Mendenhall, Mark E., and Gregersen, Hall B. (2005, p.17). The figure also illustrates the ultimate objectives multinational companies have in selecting candidates for the China assignment. These objectives are: to manage successfully the transformation and expansion of its Chinese service operation and, after their return, to be ready for other similar difficult assignments, as part of the process of building successful global leaders.

Criteria for selecting candidates

In selecting candidates for China assignments it is important to note that their track record in Western assignments does not guarantee effectiveness in China. Although that past performance is an important criteria for selecting candidates, the values associated with the individualistic management styles of people in Western societies differs

considerable from the collectivist and Confucian styles of the Chinese (Lund and Backer, 2005, p. 59).

In a research with successful international manager in China Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 1-27) identified critical success qualities necessary in a non-Chinese manager to operate successfully in China. They organized their findings into three levels: professional qualities, personal qualities, and personal China-specific qualities, as illustrated in Figure 2. Their point being, that a candidate for a China assignment must first prove his professional qualifications in other assignments, then show the ability to work in an international environment, and then demonstrate the necessary capability to adapt to the cultural and business challenges posed by China.

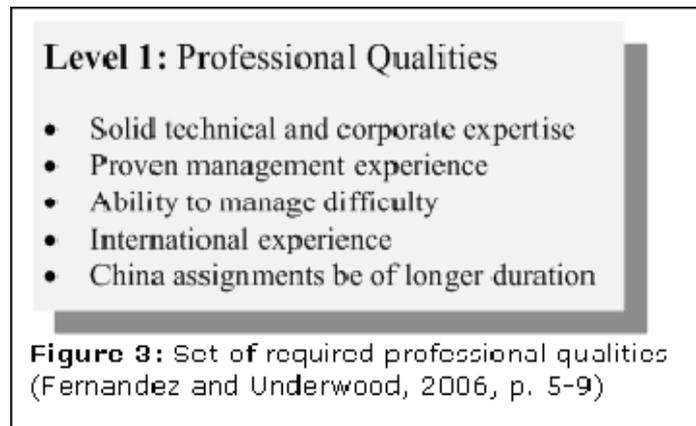


The critical success qualities for international managers in China identified by Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 1-27), illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5, can be summarized as follows:

Level 1: Professional Qualities

The professional qualities of the candidates shown in Figure 3, are not surprisingly, the first set of qualities that candidates have to have for a China assignment. These qualities comprise 'solid technical and corporate expertise' plus 'proven management experience'. They are important because the expectations of the Chinese employees of their expatriated managers are very high. The local Chinese are rapidly gaining expertise in

business and expect the expatriate managers to contribute to their learning experience with superior knowledge and skills. Those managers that don't meet the expectation will rapidly run into trouble because they will lose the respect of their subordinates.

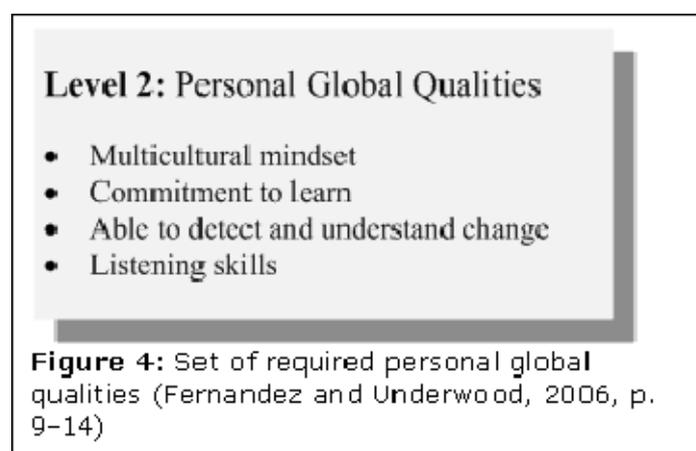


Another critical aspect of the professional qualities of the candidates is the 'ability to manage difficulty'. Every senior manager must manage complex relationships with employees, business partners, superiors, regulators, competitor and customers. In China these relationships are more complex and difficult to manage because distance from headquarters, language barrier, and cultural differences. For this reason, a prior 'international experience' is critical for a manager to succeed in China. Having had the experience in adapting to the business culture of at least one previous international assignment makes the adaptation to the Chinese business environment easier. Because of the time and effort required to adapt it is recommended that 'China assignments be of longer duration'. People that have only a short assignment of two or three years tend not to invest enough effort to adapt to the local culture because they have the expectation to move on soon to a new assignment.

Level 2: Personal Global Qualities

The personal global qualities, shown in Figure 4, are those necessary to manage in any international assignment and especially in China. These

qualities are the 'multicultural mindset' and the 'commitment to learn'. The "multicultural mindset" is the willingness to recognize the limitations of one's own culture and accept and adapt to the culture of the host country. This means making the necessary cultural adjustments to adapt to the business practice of the host country and not come with preconceived ideas thinking that you can operate as in the home market. This means that a manager to be successful in international assignment must be flexible, open and adaptable to new business cultures. Additionally they must be 'able to detect and understand change'. In developing markets, especially in the fast growing Chinese market, they must constantly adapt to keep pace with the cultural and market developments and changes.



Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 12) caution that the adaptation and flexibility required does not simply mean "going native". They stress that the 'multicultural mindset' does not mean giving up the home country business culture and adopting local business customs. For the authors, the 'multicultural mindset' is the ability to find the right balance in the business practices between the home and global norms, and the local customs. It is the necessary good sense to know what aspects to maintain and which to adapt.

The 'multicultural mindset' must be complemented by a strong 'commitment to learn'. Managers to succeed in China must go further than merely being open and accept the host-country culture, they need to commit and spend time and energy learning the culture, specially its

business practices and norms. Generally this type of commitment is only obtained when the managers likes the country and its people, knows that they will stay a long time in the host-country, and that their future careers depend on succeeding at this assignment.

'Listening skills' are paramount to succeed in leaning a new business culture. The first thing a manager in a foreign assignment has to do is to listen and try to understand his customers and employees. Once he understands the best way to manage people, to approach the market, to interact with customers, and how to do business in the host-country, he is ready to begin developing strategies and plans to grow the business. Listening, learning, and understanding are the key steps that all managers that want to operate successfully in China must undergo.

Level 3: Personal China-specific Qualities

An aggressive leadership style, the kind adopted by many MBA's schooled in the case method by some of the best universities, and trained in class discussions where everything is win-only and that one should "take no prisoners", will probably fail in China. Successful leadership in China is not imposing ones ideas on peers and subordinates as it is usual in the U.S.-style management approach. In China managers must adopt 'humility and patience'. Instead of a directive style they must adopt a more influencing and coaching style to get the best out of peers and employees. This has also become true over the last decade in most of the Western modern corporations that stress teamwork.

Level 3: Personal China-specific Qualities

- Humility and patience
- Strength in maintaining business principles
- Speed in perceiving and adapting to changes'
- Skill of relationship-building (guanxi)

Figure 4: Set of required personal China-specific qualities (Fernandez and Underwood, 2006, p. 14-26)

Showing respect for employees, clients, and friends in China, as well as admitting lack of knowledge in certain areas, according to the findings of Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 15-16), can be a powerful tool in establishing goodwill. They point out that there is no way that a new expatriate manager can change a company's business culture overnight in China. He would have to change the whole Chinese business culture. But if he presents himself humbly as part of the team he can with humility and patience win support of employees for his new business approach.

To be patient, calm, steady, and take the long-term view approach to getting things done is critical to getting results in China. Patience is essential in winning approval from official, in negotiating with clients and suppliers, in getting cooperation from distributors or joint venture partners, and in build up demand from consumers. Patience is also important for accepting the time and effort required to thoroughly understand the Chinese business environment.

The humility and patience in accepting and adapting to the different business culture does not mean simply accepting and adapting to all the local practices. There is also the requirement of 'strength in maintaining business principles' and key aspects of the company's corporate culture. The expatriate manager should not cross the ethical line or abandon corporate values in his effort to adapt to the local business practices. This means that he has to find the correct balance between adhering to the local culture, and maintaining the ethics and values of the corporation.

Another essential characteristic in managing businesses in China is the ability to adapt quickly to the fast changing business environment. Nowhere in the world are the changes in regulations, in competition and in consumer tastes so dramatic. For this reason the 'speed in perceiving and adapting to changes' are essential to be successful in China. The need for speed in adapting to the fast changes in one side and the need for patience is one of the paradoxes of doing business in China that expatriates have to master to be successful.

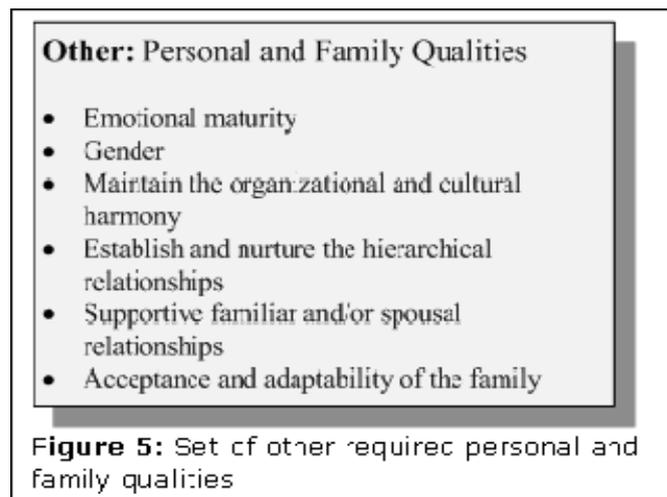
Finally the candidates for a China assignment must have the ability and patience to form and maintain strong, close, and positive relationships

with employees, business partners, suppliers, government officials, and customers. These relationships, particular to the Chinese culture, are called “guanxi”. In Mandarin, “guan” means “gate” and “xi” means “link”. The concept is that of a gateway or connection between two people created by a link of mutual obligations to each other. “Guanxi” exists between families because of blood ties, between classmates or workmates because of a shared history, or between business acquaintances after building up a relationship through assisting one another.

The fine art or ‘skill of relationship-building’ or “guanxi” is critical for expatriated managers in China. It is also one of the trickiest skills to learn for Western managers, point out Fernandes and Underwood (2006, p. 26). Building “guanxi” with business acquaintances requires a careful balance between developing the positive aspects of the relationships while maintaining the ethical code of conduct of the company.

Other personal and family qualities

The professional qualities of candidates for a China assignment, shown in Figure 5, are relatively easy to assess from analyzing their résumés’. More difficult is to assess their personal qualities. Particular attention must be paid to the personal characteristics that demonstrate the ability to adapt to different cultural norms and modes of behavior, as well as a high tolerance for ambiguity. One particular prerequisites necessary for cross-cultural adaptation is the candidates’ emotional intelligence, or ‘emotional maturity’, that encompasses: the ability to assess and manifest emotions; regulation of emotion in the self and in others; the capability to channel emotion to promote intellectual and emotional growth; and the capacity to generate emotions to assist problem solving (Avril and Magnini, 2007, p. 54-55). The candidates ‘emotional maturity’ can be accessed through the use of behavior interviews that comprise situational questions that pose hypothetical scenarios to which they are asked how they would respond, and past behavior questions that ask them to describe their actions when faced by particular circumstances at a past job.



Surprisingly and contrary to prevalent corporate beliefs, the study conducted by Guthrie and Stevens (2003, p. 240) concluded that in terms of disposition women as a group may often be better suited for expatriated assignments than men.

The study conducted by Lund and Barker (2005, p. 73) confirms that managerial effectiveness of expatriates in China is most positively influenced by the factors relating to the 'maintaining of organizational and cultural harmony', and the 'establishing and nurturing of hierarchical relationships' with Chinese individuals at all levels within the organization. This because the Chinese culture foundation is based on the Confucian legacy of virtue, harmony, and order. There were very strong attempts to eliminate this legacy during the Cultural Revolution, but with no success. The Confucian thinking has resurged and is a very important part of the Chinese life today, stressing the importance of maintaining harmony and respecting hierarchy. Confucius says: "Seeking harmony is the most valuable principle"; and "There is order when the king is king, the minister is minister, the father is father, and the son is son".

Additionally they point out that managerial effectiveness of expatriates in China is also related to them having "supportive familiar and/or spousal relationships". For this reason it is important to also consider the familiar situation of the candidates for a China assignment, particularly the spousal relationship, and the 'acceptance and adaptability of the family' to the particular international assignment and to the new culture.

Selection process

The selection of the candidates based only on their past professional history will define those best suited by their professional qualities, but will be deficient in the determination of the personal and family characteristics that demonstrate the ability to adapt to the Chinese culture. Some characteristics can be inferred by analyzing the personal and family information available on their résumés, but this assessment cannot substitute the use of the necessary behavior interviews with the candidates and their families. For this reason we strongly recommend behavior interviews with the candidate and his family to validate the conclusions from the candidates professional past history.

To illustrate the selection process, we present in Figure 6 the tabulation of the evaluation of five candidates by a multinational company that needs two managers for a China assignment. The candidates were evaluated against the critical success qualities based on the information available on their résumés and known past professional history. For confidentiality reason the name of the company and of the candidates are omitted. Each candidate was evaluated by his strength as positive (+) or weakness as negative (-) in relation to each one of the success qualities. When the information on the résumés or know past professional history of the candidates is insufficient or inconclusive to evaluate the success quality, this is indicated as 'no information' on the table of Figure 6.

The two candidates that are best suited for the China assignment based on this preliminary evaluation are Candidate 3 and Candidate 1. The reason being that besides presenting the most positive number of success qualities and the least negatives ones, they also complement each other in some of the critical success characteristics. Candidate 3 has the proven management and relationship building skills needed to succeed in China, and speaks fluent Mandarin, both qualities that Candidate 1 lacks. On the other hand, Candidate 1 has the solid technical expertise needed to manage the Chinese operation that Candidate 3 does not have. The fact that the wife of Candidate 1 is Chinese and speaks mandarin will certainly help the adjustment of the European-born Chinese wife of Candidate 3 that does not speak the language. Both candidates will probably accept a long term China assignment that is essential for them to succeed in adapting and being effective in the local culture due to their family backgrounds and interests.

Critical Success Qualities	Evaluation of the candidates for the China assignment				
	Candidate 1 Male	Candidate 2 Male	Candidate 3 Male	Candidate 4 Female	Candidate 5 Female
Professional Qualities					
Solid technical and corporate expertise	Very positive (++)	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	Very positive (++)	Negative (-)
Proven management experience	Negative (-)	Negative (-)	Very positive (++)	Negative (-)	Negative (-)
Ability to Manage difficulty	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information
China assignment be of long duration	Very positive (++)	No information	No information	No information	No information
Personal Global Qualities					
Multicultural mindset	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	Very Positive (++)
Commitment to learn	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	No information	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)
Able to detect and understand change	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information
Listening skills	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information
Personal China-specific Qualities					
Humility and patience	Positive (+)	No information	Very positive (++)	No information	No information
Strength in maintaining business principles	No information	Negative (-)	No information	Negative (-)	No information
Speed in perceiving and adapting to change	No information	No information	No information	No information	No information
Skill of relationship-building (guanxi)	Negative (-)	Negative (-)	Very positive (++)	No information	Positive (+)
Personal and Family qualities					
Emotional maturity	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Very positive (++)	Very negative (-)	No information
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female (+)	Female (+)
Maintain the organizational and cultural harmony	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Very positive (++)	No information	Positive (+)
Establish and nurture the hierarchical relationships	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	Very positive (++)	No information	Positive (+)
Supportive family and/or spousal relationship	Very positive (++)	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	Very positive (++)	Very positive (++)
Acceptance and adaptability of the family	Very positive (++)	Very positive (++)	Positive (+)	Very positive (++)	Very positive (++)
Positive and negative characteristics of the candidates	16 Positives 2 Negatives	8 Positives 6 Negatives	17 Positives 0 Negatives	8 Positives 6 Negatives	11 Positives 2 Negatives

Figure 6: Evaluation of the five candidates for China assignments using the proposed system selection process

The main reasons for not considering the other candidates are that there are reasonable doubts about the capacity of Candidate 2 and Candidate 4 to uphold the company's business principles. The doubts about Candidate 2 derive from his inappropriate conduct toward women, and those about Candidate 4 derive from her jokes about Chinese men. These problems can also indicate that they don't have the necessary emotional maturity to deal with the new culture. These two criteria are very important in view that the candidates will have to change the present company culture in China. Candidate 5 has some interesting qualities, she seems very proficient in establishing relationships in the company as can be inferred by the recommendations she received, but seems simply too inexperienced for the task based on the very limited information available.

The two candidates – Candidate 1 and Candidate 3 - selected by their professional qualities for the China assignment were then submitted to behavior interviews with their families. These interviews were focused on assessing their emotional intelligence including the psychological and personality traits described by Avril and Magnini (2007, p. 54-55). These necessary traits for the successful cross-cultural adaption of personal and their families to a China assignment are:

- **Tolerance for ambiguity:** They must have the ability to function in a situation with unclear rules and parameters, and where things do not necessarily make sense;
- **Low goal and task orientation:** They must not be obsessed with quick results because it can lead them to become frustrated;
- **Open-mindedness:** They must be receptive to novel ideas and listen to others' point of view;
- **Tolerance for differences:** They must have the ability to accept change and differences in others, and possess the ability to live in close proximity to people who may have fundamentally different habits;
- **Communicativeness:** They must be able to communicate and express themselves clearly;
- **Empathy:** They must appreciate how others feel and show intellectual or emotional identification with them;

- **Flexibility:** They must have the ability to consider alternative ways of doing things;
- **Curiosity:** They must show a sense of adventure and willingness to do things differently;
- **Warmth in relationships:** They must be social adaptable and possess the ability for socializing with new people in unfamiliar situations;
- **Motivation:** They must be self-motivators; and
- **Self-reliance:** They must show strong sense of self in a way for them to be able to deal with situations in which results are ambiguous.

Including the spouse in selection interviews is somewhat problematic from the legal perspective in the USA. For this reason many companies shoes not to do it. The not inclusion of the spouse and children of the person being selected in the process increases substantially the risk of failure of a China assignment. The research cited by Avril and Magnini (2007, p. 57) indicates that the primary determinant of expatriate failures is the inability of the spouse and children to adapt to their new surroundings.

Training selected candidates for a China assignment

Similar to national or international assignments, the job the new managers are expected to do and the standards by which they performance will be evaluated by corporate management must be determined and the necessary training provided. Besides this standard business training an additional training must be provided for international assignments that prepare the managers for cultural aspects of the business they will face in China. Adequate cross-cultural training helps the managers understand the Chinese culture, can help develop their learning-orientation to the new business environment, highlights the cultural differences and how to best cope and adapt to them. At the bare minimum candidates for China assignments must be provided with coaching in the Chinese business culture, etiquette, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and how to develop business relationships or 'guanxi'. It is also important to include the whole family in the cross-cultural training to prepare them for the needed support role of the expatriated manager in China.

The cross-cultural training before going to China has the purpose to start the process on anticipatory adjustment to the new culture and is primarily psychological. The training begins to adjust the mental mindset of the managers and their families to the Chinese culture by developing their anticipatory expectations, and so making the in-country adjustments easier. The training should focus mostly on the basic day-to-day survival in the new culture. These are the issues that the expatriated manager and his family will have to deal with the moment that they step off the plane in China.

The pre-departure training should also include some of the deeper aspects of the Chinese culture but should not attempt to cover all detail in the deepest level. It is important that expatriates and their families understand China's rich history and the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 that was responsible for its sustained growth, at an astounding 10 percent per year over the last 30 years (Degen, 2009). They need also to understand the mistrust some Chinese have against Westerners consequence of the 'Century of Humiliation' imposed by the countries exploitation by the Western colonial powers (Degen, 2009), and the newer generation of Chinese that followed the cultural devastating 'Cultural Revolution' (Degen, 2009). Without some actual experience in the culture, many expatriates will find it hard to comprehend some of its subtleness (Stroh, Linda, Black, J. Stewart, Mendenhall, Mark E., and Gregersen, Hall B., 2005, p.107).

Helping expatriates to adapt to the Chinese culture

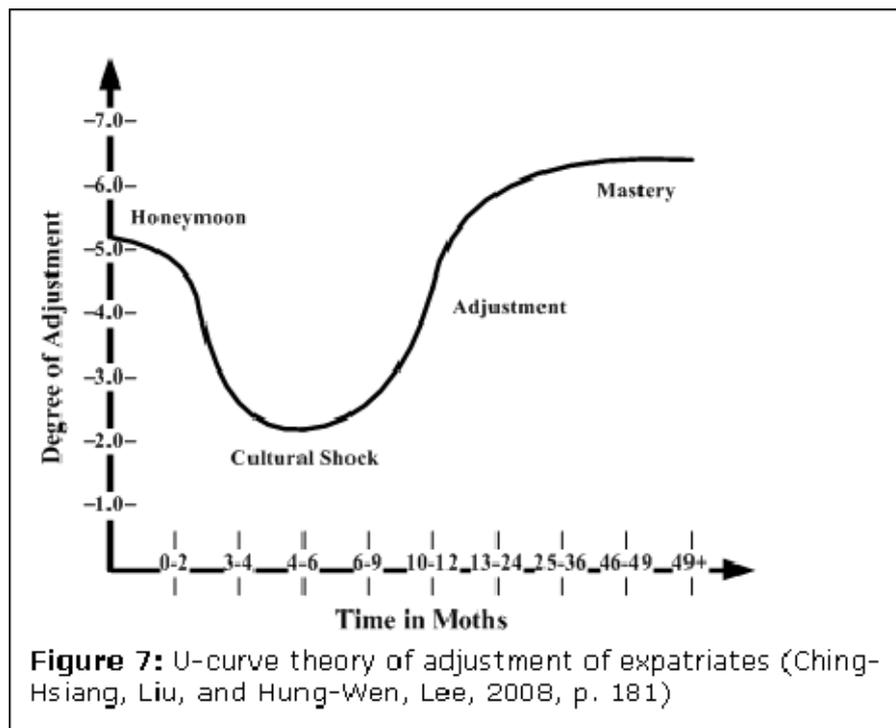
The preparatory training is necessary to help the expatriated managers and their families to start well in the Chinese culture, but truly effective, rigorous, and in-depth cultural training can only ministered in-country. Before arriving in China it is sometimes difficult for them to imagine what the trainers are trying to convey. Other advantages are that the expatriates are more highly motivated, they have a basic experience with the local culture as a foundation for learning deeper cultural values, norms, and ideas; they can immediately apply what they learn, and the daily contact

with the culture makes the training content real (Stroh, Linda, Black, J. Stewart, Mendenhall, Mark E., and Gregersen, Hall B., 2005, p.93).

The U-curve framework has been extensively used to describe the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriates and their families within a new culture (Ching-Hsiang, Liu, and Hung-Wen, Lee, 2008, p. 180-181). The curve, represented in Figure 7, describes the four stages of the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriates as follows:

- The first stage is the 'honeymoon' stage of the initial weeks after arrival at the new country. This is the stage in which the expatriate and his family are fascinated by the new culture, and everything is interesting and adventurous.
- The second stage starts when they have to cope with the realities of their daily life, and the difficulties overwhelm them. This is the stage of the 'cultural shock', characterized by frustration and hostility toward the new country and its people.
- The third stage is the 'adjustment' period, in which the expatriates and their families gradually adapt to the new country, and start accepting the new culture, its norms, and its values. This is the stage in which they start to be able to live appropriately, and stop criticizing and rejecting everything.
- Finally, in the third stage or 'mastery' stage they are able to live normally and function properly in the new culture.

The U-curve is plotted with a horizontal axis representing average time for each stage, and a vertical axis representing the degree of adjustment for the corresponding stage in terms of the comfort or satisfaction of the expatriate and his family with the new culture, attitudes, and contacts with locals, or difficulty with aspects of the new environment.



The different stages of the curve suggest a progressive understanding of the culture and the perceived quality of living in the new country. The adequate selection of the expatriates and their families for the specific culture, the pre-assignment, and the in-country training help smoothen the acculturation process, and reduce substantially the risk of a failed assignment.

To further reduce risk of assignment failure it is important that the expatriate and his family receive a strong social support from host-country nationals to help them have soft landing. This assistance has to cover the basic day-to-day matters such as housing, schools, and shopping specially for spouses, but also the introduction of the whole family to leisure, social, and cultural activities.

MOTIVATE PERSON FOR THE NEXT ASSIGNMENT

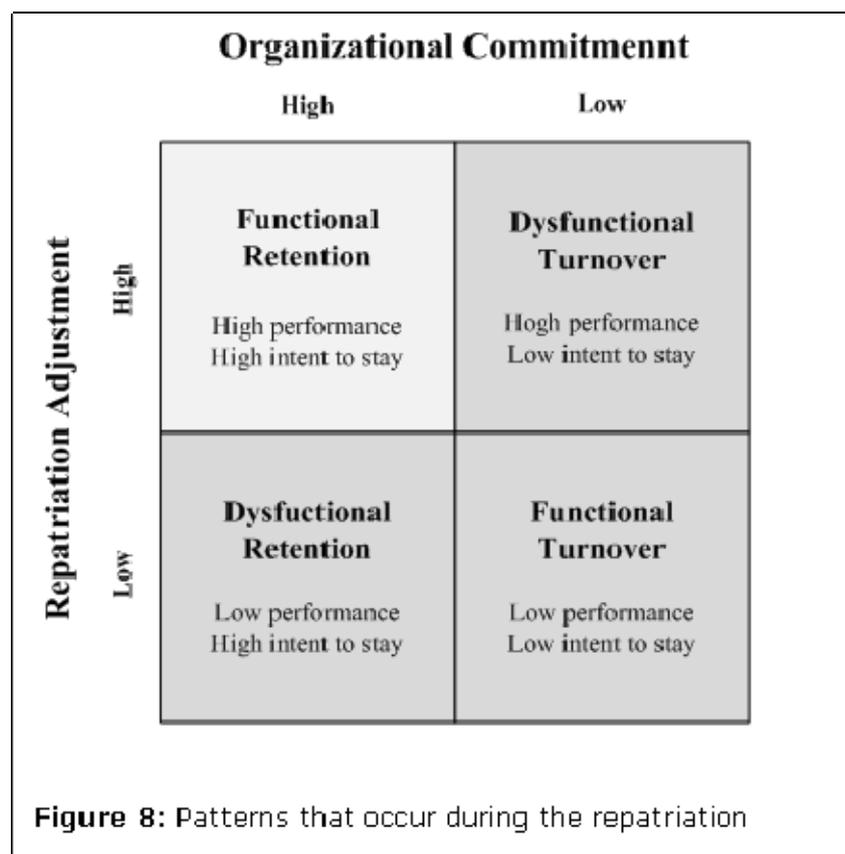
Multinational companies to carry out their worldwide strategic objectives must have the right people in place throughout the world. They must also have at their home bases people with a comprehensive understanding how their competitor operate in China, Japan, South Korea,

Taiwan, Germany or Brazil. The understanding of worldwide competition, the particulars of each country's culture, and of its markets is fundamental for multinationals to be able to formulate valid global competitive strategies for their businesses. For this reason sending highly qualified people on international assignments is an important long term investment to develop executives with the needed global perspective and experience. Besides the familiarity of corporate executives with the challenges their colleagues overseas face increases the effectiveness of critical coordination in the organization, and so the execution and control of the company's strategic objectives.

United States companies seem to have a negative handicap in the global competitive arena. Of the top thousand companies in the U.S., few have CEO's who worked abroad. This is unsettling if we take into account the research by Carpenter, Sanders and Gregersen (2001) indicates that CEOs with six or more years of international experience deliver significant more value in company performance and shareholders' value than CEOs with little or no international experience. This same research found that there were additive effects on company performance when the top five executives in the company also had experience working in another country.

Considering the importance for the performance of a multinational company to dispose of global manager, the substantial investment made to send them overseas; it is surprising how companies let these managers walk out of the door after they are repatriated from their international assignments. According to a study made by Black and Gregersen (1999) of more than 750 U.S. companies, 25 percent of managers leave their companies within a year after completing a foreign assignment. This was twice the rate for managers who have not worked abroad. This behavior is not unique to U.S. companies as confirmed by a study conducted in Germany by Stahl, Miller and Tung (2002). They found that 51 percent of the repatriated managers were willing to leave their company for another company, whereas only 25 percent of the repatriated managers said that they were unwilling to leave their company.

Even if repatriates stay in the parent company after coming home, most feel that their market knowledge, technical skills, foreign language ability, and so on are underutilized (Stroh, Black, Mendenhall, and Gregersen, 2005, p. 219). The continuous loss of their global manager to competitor to develop special retention programs for repatriates.



Black and Gregersen (1992, cited by Stroh, Black, Mendenhall, and Gregersen, 2005, p. 219) describe four general behavior patterns that occur during the repatriation process. These patterns are shown in Figure 8. Ideally a company would like that its repatriates fall into the functional retention pattern. This means, that the repatriate should be high performers and have a high commitment to stay in the company.

The retention programs for repatriates to be successful have to focus on two critical aspects in the repatriation process: First ensuring that the employees are committed to the company, and if possible increase their

commitment; second ensuring that the employees get the necessary support to help them adjust well to their repatriation. To ensure and even increase commitment the company has to create a culture that genuinely values international experience, and carefully plan the return assignment to challenge the employee to use his newly acquired expertise. At the same time create a repatriation training program similar to the one created to adapt to the foreign culture for the employee and his family, including social support.

SUMMING UP

Multinational companies have been sending employees on international assignments to China for years but only recently have they started to pay more attention to such critical aspects as: selecting the right candidates and their families, training the candidates and their families before the assignment, help them adapt to the Chinese culture, and carefully manage the next assignment for the employee and his family. This paper tries to demonstrate based on old and recent insight how a China assignment should be successfully managed.

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