

# Ten Steps to Help Expats in Their Job Search Abroad

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Whether you're looking for a new job abroad or moving between industries in a foreign country, this process is never really an easy one for an expat. In today's economy the competition for employment is intense and becomes even more difficult in a foreign country. CVs seem to disappear into the black hole of recruitment regardless of whether you're in China, Brazil or the UAE, hence contributing to the job search challenge. Take charge of the situation by applying the following steps to help you overcome obstacles faced during your career move abroad.

## 1. **Decide on what you want to do and research your targeted industry**

Define your next career move and be clear about the job you want. Are you looking to progress your current field or do you want to change careers and industries. Once this has been established commence with researching the related industry. For example, you might be an expat in Shanghai working in recruitment of call centre agents and you're now looking to become involved in international recruitment, research the top recruitment companies in Shanghai that specialize in international recruitment and establish what they are looking for in their staff. Make a list of such companies and start targeting them.

## 2. **Fear is one of the most debilitating aspects and can rob you massively of your sizzle, work to overcome this.**

Adopt an attitude of addressing your fears by drawing close the very thing you fear. For example: you might want to pursue a career in public relations but you have a fear of speaking up during company meetings or doing presentations; investigate opportunities to develop your public speaking and communication skills & work to overcome your fear by attending a public speaking seminar or becoming a member of a public speaking group such as "Toast Masters" or other such public speaking groups which is available in many countries.

## 3. **Re evaluate your Brand and Identity**

Your core values, your talents, strength and image become your brand and need to fall into alignment and resonate with who you truly are and what you can bring to the world. Using self help resources like the exercises in [What Color is Your Parachute](#) can help you identify your core skills and strengths and help you to create a brand that is authentic to you. This brand needs to be consistent across all platforms (social media, your CV, networking events, etc).

## 4. **Target & Market your CV:**

The first half of the first page of your CV needs to reflect your skill and experience that is stipulated in the job specification; include any industry related qualifications that give you the edge over your competition. Show that you hold skills of impact such as cross cultural communication skills. Your brand or elevator pitch and contact details should appear on the first page of the first half of your CV. Use a neutral email address such as Gmail or Yahoo rather than one showing your country of origin to avoid complications in the minds of recruiters. Search the host country to identify their standard on how to present your employment experience and determine if that country is using British or American English.

**5. Networking (Online & Off line) in your host country**

Networking is the art of connecting with people and cultivating strong relationships. Devise job search campaigns by accessing your database of personal and professional contacts and let them know that you are in the market for a new job in your host country. Connect with people on professional sites such as LinkedIn and social sites such as Face book. Ask each of your contacts to introduce you to two people who will be able to help or lead you in the form of contacts/ referrals, ideas, potential job opportunities, etc. Attending networking events related to your targeted industry; for example, you might want a career in the fashion industry, so you will attend fashion shows/ events, etc, this will improve your chances of connecting with people in the know. Spread the word that you are on the look out for a new job opportunity; even speak to people outside your industry.

**6. Who and how to connect with people if you're not yet in your host country?**

Use social groups such Meetup.com, or Internations (both are free to join) & other expat groups to connect with people in your future host country who can give you advice on recruitment and job placements or provide you with a list of recruitment agencies that you could connect with in preparation for your move abroad. Also connect with members for friendship and join groups or activities that are of interest to you such as a salsa dance group. Following people or groups on Linked In, Twitter, etc in the host country and contributing to forums or discussions will lead to strong connections. The art of blogging and posting is another useful tool in your job search and should not be taken lightly. Blogging on sites relevant to your field, for example if you are a financial consultant you could blog about the services you offer and other useful financial information that people might need in your host country. This will increase your visibility to future employers and people in the related industry.

**7. Overcoming the challenge of employers looking for candidates with local experience**

From my experience as an expat this has not really been a prominent problem, however one of the best ways of dealing with this is to volunteer at companies in your related industry. Not only will you be adding immense value to yourself but you will be building great credibility, when a position does become available in company X they might just employ you. If you're on a spousal visa you also have the opportunity of engaging in freelance work.

**8. COPING WITH the STRESS Factor**

Taking the Stress factor out of the job search is easier said than done. But it's important to keep your mind and body active and positive. Exercising regularly, a run in the park or doing yoga and engaging in your host country's cultural activities will work wonders for you. Keep the company of positive people who support you, regular communication with family and friends abroad (via Skype, Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp) will help maintain positive energy and do reward yourself for the baby steps taken during your job search.

**9. Recruitment Agents, Career Summits Abroad**

Registering with recruitment professionals is one sure way of sharing your job search project. Work with the recruitment agents and not against them. Attending career summits/career fairs is another good way of putting yourself out there and increasing your chances of finding a job in a foreign country.

#### **10. Work permits and visa regulations**

The spouse of an expat, in most cases is permitted to work under a spousal visa, otherwise make sure that you are not overstaying in a country or working without an employment visa (this is illegal). If changing jobs abroad, ensure that your work visa can either be transferred to the new employer or your new employer is providing you with an appointment letter and has indicated that your visa application is in process.

Expats following these steps will create a buzz and build visibility to showcase their abilities, skills and professional image and increase their chances of landing a job in any country!