



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Read. Keep an open mind. Your employer can, and should, help out, but you must take the lead in doing your homework.

Is it worth it?

Is that exhaustive, and exhausting, enough? Enough to lower your enchantment to a reasonable level?

If you approach your assignment realistically, you'll gain many benefits from your overseas work in opportunity, excitement, and the challenge of the job. Just remember, this is a job, not a jaunt. You will be judged on your performance, and the job is inherently more difficult than your usual

one. Bring to the assignment your curiosity, adaptiveness, a willingness to get involved, and, yes, humility, and you will profit immensely from it.

Charles Barry Watson, of McLean, Virginia, has been an international consultant for more than 20 years.

In search of an overseas job

If you want the challenge of working outside your native country, but don't see it happening where you work, what are your options?

Here are some suggestions from participants in an open forum sponsored by the Actuary of the Future Section at the Orlando international spring meeting:

Be a Magellan — start exploring

- Use personal contacts in companies that have overseas operations or in actuarial societies overseas.
- Attend international actuarial, economic, and financial meetings.
- Join international organizations.
- Read advertisements in overseas newspapers and international publications.
- Find foreign student exchange programs or internships.
- Express your interest in international work to your employer. You never know what plans for global expansion have not been officially announced.
- Find short-term teaching opportunities overseas if you meet the qualifications (see notice on page 16 in this issue asking for visiting lecturers).
- If you are a woman, investigate whether you will be accepted in your country of choice. Some business environments accept women well as consultants, but do not place them in upper positions in companies.

Position yourself to accept your dream job

- Learn the language of a country that has opportunities. Eastern European languages are especially valued now.
- Get the credentials needed to work there.
- Study the cultural, business, and political environment.
- Learn how to sell yourself.
- Hone your communications and problem-solving skills so you can respond quickly.
- Demonstrate maturity (even if you don't have any gray hairs). Age may be more valued overseas than in your country.

Getting ready to leave

What if you actually get an overseas assignment? If you think your company will handle everything, think

again. A recent article in the *Chicago Tribune* by Elizabeth Williamson gives some tips on how to get your financial house in order.

- Contact your bank and arrange for direct payroll deposit, and ask them about wire transfers, bill payment services, ATM withdrawals, and investment fund transfers.
- Depending on your length of stay overseas, decide whether to sell your house, leave it vacant (expect your homeowner's insurance to increase), or hire a house-sitter. Renting it may be a problem if you don't hire a leasing management firm.
- See if your liability insurance covers your car and belongings overseas.
- Put your phone on vacation service if you want to retain your present number.
- File a mail-forwarding form and notify magazines. The post office will forward first-class and express mail only.
- Decide what you want to take with you. You can ship a whole houseful of belongings by boat for about \$6,000 to \$7,000, which takes 21 to 30 days.
- Contact the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for regulations and paperwork on shipping your pets.

SOA establishes Ambassador Program

The International Section Council, with the Committee on International Relations, has established an SOA Ambassador Program. It will identify and appoint members of the Society living or working outside North America as liaisons for the actuarial profession and the SOA in North America. They will provide an important link with the SOA to meet the special needs of members practicing overseas and will be a valuable resource for other members.

More information on the Ambassador Program will be available at the October annual meeting in Chicago. Also contact Charles Barry Watson, chairperson of the International Section, at his *Directory* address, or Lois Chinnock or Chelle Brody at the SOA office for more information.