

# From Theory to Practice: Changing the Way We Talk About Intercultural Programs

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# Trends

## Industry

- Tough economic times
- Participants seemed to be getting more difficult to book
- Greater trainer frustration

## Client

- Fewer transferees
- Greater involvement

## Participants

- More stressed
- Trying to save their company money



# Learn How To...

- **Capture interest by speaking to the real needs of participants**
- **Be practical when describing the program**
- **View benefits from the transferee perspective**
- **“Advertise” the program based on what you see the participant needing**



# Agenda

- **Email scavenger hunt**
- **Ways to customize your communication**
- **Responding to reluctant participants**



# Introduction Emails- A Scavenger Hunt

- **Sample emails from trainer to potential participant**
- **Third-party vendor has already sent initial email to transferee**
- **Identify positives and negatives**
- **Consider audience suitability**
- **Work in a small group of those around you**





# Sample Introduction Email #1





# Sample Introduction Email #2





# Sample Introduction Email #3



# Introduction Emails

- **Personalize it**
- **Your first email should show:**
  - Your qualifications, a short introduction
  - That you were requested by their company
  - One or two available dates
  - The value of the program
  - A plan to follow up
- **(Match their style)**



# Phone Calls

- **Follow your introduction email within 24 hours**
- **Be prepared to listen**
- **Be ready to address their concerns or reluctance**





# How to Customize the Approach



# Address Their Unique Needs

- Are they single?
- Do they have children?
- Are they a dual-work couple?
- Do they have previous experience on assignment?
- Did spouse leave a career? Is the trailing spouse male?
- Are they VIP?
- When are they moving?



# Glaring Cultural Considerations

- **Identify behavior that will not work in the new location**
- **Choose something that references home and host location**
- **Choose a cultural behavior that is typically subconscious**



# Sample Agendas

- **What is unique to your participant?**
- **Listen between the lines for their main concerns**
- **Use the agenda as a conversation starter**



# Youth Programs- Addressing Nuances

- **Children aren't able to articulate as well as adults**
- **Family communication is key during this stressful time**
- **May be the first time these children have moved**
- **Help them gain confidence in unfamiliar situations**
- **International Parenting session**





# Reluctant Participants



# Common Responses

- **“I can’t take time away from work”**
- **“I don’t want to take the kids out of school”**
- **“I’ve already been overseas”**
- **“I want to save the company money”**
- **“We have been doing just fine”**
- **“The two countries are so similar” / “They speak the same language”**
- **Unresponsive**
- **“We had a cultural program on our last assignment”**
- **“I can Google it” / “I can talk to Mike who was there last year”**



# “I Can’t Take Time Away from Work”

- **Show flexibility**
- **Working or shortened lunch**
- **Email or Blackberry breaks**
- **Spouse and/or children only**
- **Get commitment to 1<sup>st</sup> day with 2<sup>nd</sup> day as an option**



# “I Don’t Want to Take the Kids Out of School”

- **Show flexibility**
- **Schools often give excused absence for Intercultural training**
- **Program speeds the transition for the children**
- **Build excitement as a family**
- **Speak about your own experiences with Third Culture Kids if appropriate**
- **Reference specific interests of the children as a ‘hook’**



# **“I’ve Already Been Overseas”**

- **Program is designed for experienced expatriates**
- **Each assignment is unique**
- **Regional discussions available**
- **Use specific interests as ‘hook’**
  - **Global leadership skills, virtual communication with team, children’s transition, key role of spouse, daily life**
- **Living in and traveling to a place are different**



# **“I Want to Save the Company Money”**

- **Company recognizes value of program**
- **Global companies need employees with global skills**
- **Family adjustment key factor in success of assignments**
- **Expense of training versus ROI for you, your family and company**
- **Able to leverage learning in future situations**



# **“We Have Been Doing Just Fine”**

- **Reiterate overall benefits**
- **Adjustment cycle is constant**
- **Can cover anything you'd like**
- **Correct/repair damaged relationships**



# “The Two Countries Are So Similar”

- **Share statistics: “25% of assignments between the U.K. and U.S. end early.”**
- **Sharing a language doesn’t mean they share a culture**
- **Find out what they think is similar**
- **Point out what is different**



# To Summarize

- **Personalize your approach**
- **Think about the program value from their perspective**
- **Take into consideration what is unique to them**
- **Be ready with responses to their resistance**



## Final Thought

Assume the participant  
can't wait to  
join the program!

