



A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS

Welcome to our first edition of Relocation Topics for 2008. It is unbelievable how quickly time flies: before you know it we are already booking events for December without blinking an eyelid!

This newsletter covers a variety of topics that I am sure you will enjoy:

First, for those of our readers moving or about to move, there is a special article written by Cameron McTavish about the Male Trailing Spouse, giving his personal perspective on the matter.

Secondly, Donna McCrory gives a succinct overview of the economic boom which is happening currently in Western Australia

Finally, on a lighter note, a list of cross cultural bloopers is sure to finish the read of this newsletter with a smile.

As always we welcome your feedback and comments.

Happy Reading!

Anita Fernandes

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Do you work in a **cross cultural** or **virtual** team?

If so, then talk to us about a **new program** we offer to **increase the effectiveness and productivity** of that team.

Call Anita Fernandes or your local office to discuss.

Quote of the month

"We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors. But, they all fit nicely into the same box." - Unknown

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The Male Trailing Spouse

Written By
Cameron McTavish
(pictured left with his family)

One of the first things I realized as a male in this situation was that I was an extremely rare breed. I should have clued in early on when, as hard as I tried, I was unable to find much written about the Male Trailing Spouse, a species on the rise but rarely written about. It was kind of like researching an ailment that affects 5 out of 10,000,000 people.

The second was that many people had a hard time accepting the concept of a Male Trailing Spouse. Their comments lead me to the conclusion that the vast majority of them slept through the Equality Lecture in Sociology 101. As much as men and women would like to claim that they're advocates of equal opportunity, my experience indicates that we're still a generation or two away from that goal. The ironic fact is that my wife and I expected that she would be on the receiving end of gender bias when the opposite has proven to be true.

Some of my favourite reactions from the seemingly worldly and socially savvy.

1. **"Wow"** – not very clever, but an indication that their concept of Universal Order has just been challenged.

2. **"So that makes you a house husband"** – sure to always make my ears go red.

Trailing Spouse? What an unfortunate moniker for such a key role in the overall expatriate picture. The term implies personal baggage, giving the impression of someone who's come along for the ride. It's a far cry from the reality of it all.

My wife and I enjoyed parallel careers in different industries in Canada for most of our working lives. However, like many things in life, opportunity can be indiscriminant and gender ignorant and in our case knocked on my wife's well deserved door first with little warning.

A colossal test for the male species, indeed. Say "yes" enabling your significant other to realize her true career and financial potential while giving all involved the adventure of a lifetime and exposure to a side of the world and a different way of life only accessible to most via the Discovery Channel. Or, let your male ego make the decision and say "no" keeping your lovely world status quo knowing that each and every day for the rest of your life you'll be saying "should

have", "would have", "could have" and wondering "what if".

So how hard could it be? My wife's role was well defined and our three school age boys equally so, requiring them to switch one great school for another. My role was not so defined but seemed close enough. Do absolutely everything and anything necessary to provide a smooth transition from exit to entry, packing up our old life and setting up our new life on the other side of the world complete with home, cars, furniture and a social life while keeping everyone happy, healthy and focused on work and school.

Fair enough, I'd been training for this. I'd run my own business for years: similar requirements, just different tasks, really. Break each project into digestible pieces, prioritize and calendarize and never stop until you're done. And when you are done: get your own career started again. No problem!

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The Male Trailing Spouse (cont'd)

3. **“So you carry the purse in the family”** – this makes my entire body tense up like I’m having an involuntary isometric workout.

4. **“I’m jealous”** - clearly a lack of understanding as to the work involved, the sacrifices you’ve made to make this happen and your daily challenge of enjoying this time between careers and not upsetting your wife who is putting in 14 hour days tackling problems her company is paying her big bucks to fix.

One of my first survival skills was to develop my “elevator speech”, a 15 second blurb to communicate my situation and fend off the ridiculous. My first elevator speech I called **“The Truth”** - too long, too dull and open to comment. My second was called the **“The Martyr”** - the scarifies I’ve made to make it all work for my family. The third, **“The Hero”** - what a great guy I am, helping my wife realize her career dreams. The fourth **“The Dilettante”** - Just here pursuing the leisure arts until it’s time to return to Canada. My personal favourite and most widely applied, **“The Pitch”** – moved here from Canada on my wife’s expat package, have everybody settled and happy, now it’s time to get working again, would you like to see my CV or do you know someone who would?

Another survival skill: Just say yes! Our most important survival skill as a family and one that has contributed to our ability to settle in quickly was our willingness to say yes to everything that we sometimes would have otherwise turned down in Canada. “Would you like to come to the Principals Cocktail Party?” – “Yes!” “Would you like to come to the Soccer Club Fund raiser?” – “Yes!” “Would you like to renew your wedding vows with 10 other couples in the Outback?” – “Yes!” Fortunately that one never materialized. “Would you like to come to our families annual fall canning party, we make preservatives and slaughter a live pig to make pepperoni, it’s a blast” – “Yes!” And it was! Some people you click with, some people you don’t. The key is to get yourself out there. In no time at all we met enough people to have a cocktail party for 60 people which of course resulted in even more invites.

The Trailing Spouse plays a pivotal role without the benefit of an instruction manual or any real compensation. They reinvent their family’s lives usually on another continent while balancing the excitement of the foreign assignment with the realities

of actually living in another culture and the truth is that it doesn’t always go well. There’s an interesting statistic out there that has proven to motivate me as I simply don’t want to become part of that particular statistic. Not all corporate expatriate assignments are viewed as successful by the firms that initiate them. In fact, of the expatriate assignments that do fail, 95% of those failures are a result of the assignment not working out for expatriates spouse and /or children. An interesting figure indeed when you consider how little thought and preparation firms invest in those who trail.

For my family it has all worked out beautifully. After our first year I can happily report that my wife is flourishing in her new position. Our 3 boys have upped their scholastic game, we have a wonderful home in Sydney surrounded by new friends, acquaintances and lots of visitors. Me? I’m now onto the final step - restarting my career. Knowing what I know now would I do it all over again? Absolutely! By the way, would you like to see my CV or know someone who would?

Cameron McTavish

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WA's Booming Economy

Written by Donna McCrory,
Principal, Perth

The WA economy is continuing on its strong economic growth path. WA recorded the highest growth in gross state product, over 6%, in 2005 – 2006, and it is predicted this should ease to 5% in 2007 – 2008. The boom in resource industries, gold, iron-ore, oil, gas, and nickel, fuels much of the growth. With population and commodity exports increasing there is no sign of the boom abating any time in the near future.

Unemployment is at a record low. A skills and manpower shortage is being felt in all spheres of employment. The resultant skills crisis has led to predictions there will not be enough trades people to complete major projects throughout the state. Predictions indicate an extra 20,000 employees will be needed every year for the next several years to meet this demand. At present, approximately one in five West Australian workers is employed in mining or an industry related to this sector.

WA has the highest annual wage growth rate in Australia at 5.2% (Australian average 4%). The booming economy is pushing up wages, the cost of living, and housing prices. Existing housing

prices have nearly doubled since 2003. The WA housing market has experienced significant growth, and whilst the dramatic increases in property prices witnessed 12 months ago have slowed, and prices have consolidated, housing affordability in WA is at its lowest in 22 years. The resilient nature of the Perth property market is apparent. The strong market is most often an unexpected shock to people relocating to WA on the wave of population growth fuelled by the resource boom. Affordability becomes a critical issue for them.

Companies are investing record amounts into exploration programs, and project developments. They have been recruiting internationally to fill the many positions required on major projects throughout the State. With the influx of people

relocating to WA, international and national moves, the housing market is experiencing levels of demand that overwhelm supply. Vacancies are at a record low of around 1%, with rental rates increasing significantly over each quarter. Perth weekly median rent rates have increased by 25% over the past 12 months.

Increasing rent rates are predicted to continue, due to the shortage of properties and high population growth. Interstate and international migration into WA means the demand for properties is rising, whilst home building is not keeping pace with the demand. Predictions are that the WA housing shortage could be almost 30,000 houses by 2010.

The impact is felt not only on the long term rental market, but also in the area of short term temporary accommodation.

Serviced apartments and hotels are experiencing record occupancy rates, and sourcing such accommodation can prove to be difficult.

The resource boom has meant significant gains to the government of WA, and this has allowed substantial government investment into capital works and some reductions in taxes. Business investment remains strong. Certainly an exciting, history making, time to be living in "The West"!

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Cross-Cultural Bloopers: Lost in Translation

Compiled by

Monita Mascitti-Meuter

The other day a friend of mine emailed me these cross cultural bloopers. Some of them I had heard of before, some of them just made you wonder what the marketing guys were thinking not taking a few translators on board before putting their product on the market! I thought we could all use a laugh and hopefully not make similar mistakes in the future.

•Coors put its slogan, "Turn it Loose," into Spanish, where it was read as "Suffer From Diarrhea."

•Clairol introduced the "Mist Stick," a curling iron, into Germany only to find that "mist" is slang for manure. Not too many people had use for the "manure stick".

•Scandinavian vacuum manufacturers Electrolux used the following in an American campaign: Nothing Sucks Like An Electrolux.

•The American slogan for Salem cigarettes, "Salem-Feeling Free", was translated into the Japanese market as "When smoking Salem, you feel so refreshed that your mind seems to be free and empty."

•When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the U.S., with the beautiful baby on the label. Later, they learned that in Africa,, companies routinely put pictures on the label of what's inside, since most people can't read English.

•In Italy, a campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water translated the name into "Schweppes Toilet Water".

•Pepsi's "Come Alive with the Pepsi Generation" translated into "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave," in Chinese.

•When Parker Pen marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read "it won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you". Instead, the company thought that the word "embarazar"(to impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant".

Here are some signs and notices written in English that were discovered throughout the world..

•**In a Paris hotel elevator:**

•Please leave your values at the front desk.

•**On the menu of a Swiss restaurant:**

•Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

•**In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery:**

•You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

•**Outside a Paris dress shop:**

•Dresses for street walking.

•**In a Rhodes tailor shop:**

•Order your summers suit. Because in big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.

•**In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency:**

•Take one of our horse-driven city tours - we guarantee no miscarriages.

•**Advertisement for donkey rides in Thailand:**

•Would you like to ride on your own ass?

•**In a Copenhagen airline ticket office:**

•We take your bags and send them in all directions

•**On the door of a Moscow hotel room:**

•If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it

•**In a Budapest zoo:**

•Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

*Source Unknown