

**MALE DOMINANCE
DO PEOPLE PREFER TO
WORK FOR A MAN?**

**SUCCESS BY DESIGN
SHOSHANNA LONSTEIN
GRUSS HAS A DREAM JOB**

In the global age, more companies
are offering stints abroad

Up & away

By LINDA DiPROPERZIO

LANCE Richards had been working in the human resources department at GTE (now Verizon) for nine months when he was offered what he calls the opportunity of a lifetime. The company was expanding business in Asia, and he was asked to relocate to China for two years to get the project off the ground.

Although it meant Richards and his wife would need to move to the other side

of the globe, to the city of Guangzhou, they jumped at the chance — and he's never regretted it. He still gets animated talking about seeing another part of the world, about being invited to his employees' homes and seeing Chinese life at the ground level, and about the challenges of working in a novel business environment — not to mention the weekends in Hong Kong or at beaches in Sanya that "make the Caribbean look pitiful."

"We loved every minute of

it," he says. "We learned to live in another culture that's wildly different, and got to see a lot of things we never would have seen. I'd go back in two seconds."

These days, more and more workers are being offered the same type of opportunity. For employees of companies with an overseas reach, one of the perks of the rise of the global economy is a skyrocketing number of chances to take a post abroad, whether it's for a period of weeks or years. According to the So-

ciety for Human Resource Management, 69 percent of large companies reported they will increase the number of American workers they send abroad this year — up from 48 percent that said so last year, and 21 percent in 2005.

"Every year, we send more and more people abroad," says Sara Hafele, human resources manager for Text 100, a public relations firm with 30 offices worldwide. Hafele estimates that at least 40 percent of the company's

staff has worked in more than one global marketplace, on assignments lasting anywhere from two weeks to two years.

And it's not just senior people who get the opportunity to spread their wings. The accounting firm KPMG sends about 20 new assignees from its New York City office abroad each year, with the U.K., Germany, Hong Kong/China, Japan and Australia the most popular

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WHAT'S UP WITH THAT JOB?

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

By Claudia Gibson

WHAT does a landscape architect actually do all day?

Every construction project needs design for the placement of paths, walkways, gardens, shrubs and trees. Landscape architects work elements like slopes, drainage and the building's function into a design for outdoor areas. They also work on environmental design projects, from pocket gardens to government plazas.

What kind of cash are we talking about here?

This is a well-paying profession. Entry-level salary for a landscape architect in the metropolitan area is about \$43,000, but this can easily double with several years' experience.

What do you have to do to get this job?

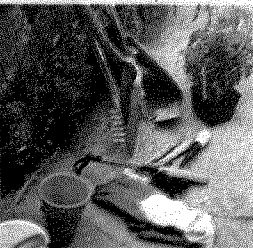
A bachelor's degree in landscape architecture is a must. In New York state, you must be licensed, which means completing an approved college program and passing an exam, plus two years of apprenticeship. The best landscape architects have a great design sense, as well as a love of nature.

OK, tell me the bad part...

It takes several years of education and experience to earn better money in this field. Many landscape architects are self-employed, with their income dependent on the local economy.

What's the upside?

This is a job that combines creative ability with technical skill. Landscape architects have the satisfaction of watching their ideas turn into beautiful, functional spaces.



There's more opportunity to work overseas — and it can boost your career



Getty Images

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destinations. The chance for a stint in a foreign country is "one of the incentive programs we have in place to attract, motivate and retain talented people," says KPMG spokesman Bill Ferguson.

A LEG UP

While the most obvious appeal of working overseas might be the chance for an adventure and a change of pace, there's another key reason to consider it — it can give your career a major boost.

"Going overseas can fast-track your career and expand your personal horizons beyond your wildest dreams," Stacie Berdan, the co-author, with C. Perry Yeatman, of "Get Ahead By Going Abroad: A Woman's Guide to Fast-Track Career Success," which comes out in September.

Gaining international experience gives you an important leg up at a time when companies need employees who can act locally while thinking globally, says Berdan. When researching her book, she found that 83 percent of those she interviewed cited their experience working and living internationally as a key reason for their rapid advancement.

"More and more companies want to succeed in the increasingly global marketplace. Knowledge and understanding of foreign cultures, regulations,

economies, consumer preferences and work habits are now critical to corporate survival," says Berdan.

Workers also learn that by taking an overseas post they can find themselves getting bumped up on the corporate ladder in a way that wouldn't have happened at home, says Berdan.

It's something she's experienced this firsthand. She held a midlevel position at the p.r. firm Burson-Marsteller when she accepted an assignment in Hong Kong, moving the day after her wedding. When she got there, not only did she find herself getting a "complete indoctrination" into a foreign culture and getting to see some "amazing, exotic places" — but she also found herself managing a staff of 100 at the age of 29.

SHOULD I STAY, OR SHOULD I GO?

WORKING abroad is great for the right person — but it isn't for everyone. To decide whether it makes sense for you, Stacie Berdan, the co-author of "Get Ahead By Going Abroad," suggests asking yourself the following questions:

Do you operate well outside of your comfort zone?

"Everything is different, from the way you shop for groceries to having to manage employees with a different cultural background, so you really have to be able to operate well under novel circumstances."

"That's not going to happen in the United States, where you have to compete with all the other salmon swimming upstream," says Berdan, who transitioned to a senior management position on her return.

Richards likewise credits his overseas stint as a "game-changer in my career." When he returned from China, he was immediately placed in a senior corporate role, with more responsibility and more money.

"I made a full organizational jump in two years — that probably wouldn't have happened if I hadn't taken the assignment," says Richards, who is now senior director of international human resources for the staffing agency Kelly Services. He credits his own

Do you thrive on diversity?

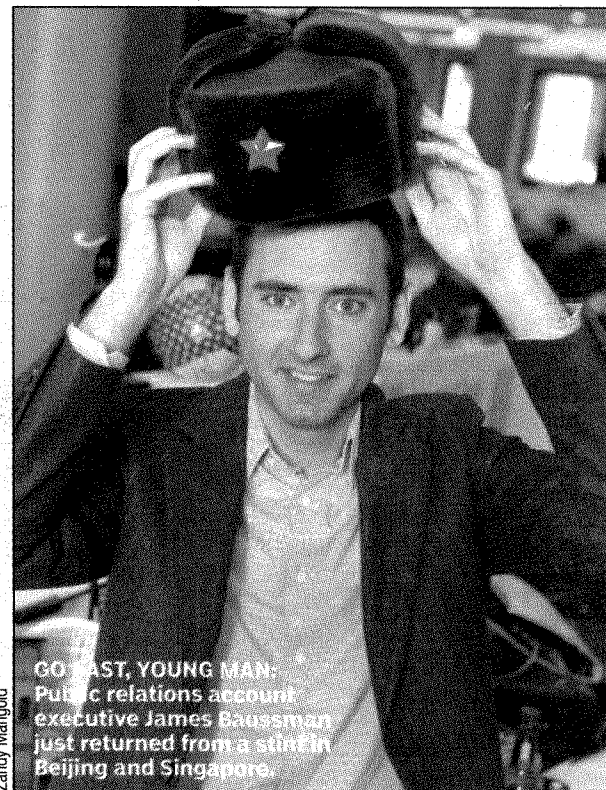
"You must not only respect diversity, but thrive under it. You have to want to be with people who are different; if your attitude is, 'I'm American, what I've got is better, it's not going to work.'"

Are you good at building relationships?

"You have to be able to get things done working as a team, because when you're operating in a foreign market you're hardly ever doing it alone. In a new and unfamiliar environment you have to rely on people to help, so if you're an I-can-get-it-done-myself type, you're likely to fail."

Do you have a sense of adventure?

"You've got to love adventure, because it's going to be hard at times, from having to learn a new subway system to sitting in a meeting reading the signs of people who are different from you."



Zandy Mangold

GO EAST, YOUNG MAN: Public relations account executive James Bausmann just returned from a stint in Beijing and Singapore.

experience working abroad as one of the major reasons he landed that job.

During their time abroad, employees get firsthand experience with business trends and local labor laws in a particular country — valuable lessons to bring back to their home office later.

"I learned not only how they work, but why they work the way they do, whether it's because of culture or politics," says Stacie Sherer, a director at Burson-Marsteller, who recently returned from a two-year assignment in Hong Kong.

"Now, when a client or a colleague has an inquiry about Asia, I'm able to tell them exactly how to get things done in the most effective way."

She's seconded by her

colleague Aleks Vujanic, who's worked in both the London and New York City offices.

"Every market is different — the office environment, how the media works, the client's expectations," she says. "The only way to understand it all is to actually experience it."

Employees are also quick to point out the importance of setting up face-to-face meetings with clients and colleagues.

"There's something to be said about meeting someone in person," says James Bausmann, a senior account executive at Text 100 who just returned from a brief stint in Singapore and Beijing.

"And it's not just about the clients — it's also getting to work side-by-side with your co-workers that you previously only spoke to on the phone or exchanged e-mails with. You get a better sense about how they work. Someone might do the same job as you, but they do it in a different way. And you're able to forge personal relationships that weren't there before."

CULTURE CLASH

Of course, while the idea of living and working in a foreign company sounds exciting, doing it is another story. For one thing, people need to understand that they're not signing up for an extended vacation. Many expatriates report working long, hard hours.

"My colleagues took me

the foreign

out a few times so I could get a sense of the culture, but the project was intense so there wasn't much time for sightseeing," recalls Kelli Pietrantonio, an account manager at Text 100 who did a short assignment in Italy last year.

And Berdan is quick to point out the dislocation that comes with an overseas assignment is not for everyone. Not only might you be dealing with a new city and new colleagues, but you'll also be dealing with cultural and business norms that can be significantly different.

"Everything is different, 24 hours a day, and it ranges from getting on the subway if you can't read the signs in Japanese to sitting in a business meeting trying to read the signs of people who are different from you," she says. "I always describe it as: It felt like my antenna was broken — I couldn't figure out cultural clues, and that applies anywhere, socially and in business."

Becoming familiar with a country's customs and etiquette before you go is a must. If you're going to Japan, for example, you should know that bowing is a more common way of greeting than shaking hands. Likewise, if you're headed for Bulgaria, you should know that if you nod your head, it's a sign of disagreement.

Smaller things also can get in the way of comfortably assimilating, especially for those who are set in their ways. Baussmann recalls that eating chicken feet and pig's

69 percent of large companies will increase the number of workers they send abroad this year

stomach at business lunches took some getting used to, while Berdan remembers having to switch from coffee to tea when she couldn't find any decent java.

"Little things like that can drive people crazy," she says.

For Richards, it was chocolate chip cookies. "You couldn't get them, and if you happen to have a thing for them, which I do, you had to buy them in Hong Kong and smuggle them back in."

To make sure people are cut out for their temporary

home, some companies, such as Text 100, require that employees take a "look-see" tour before they make a commitment.

"We want to make sure they're going to be comfortable in their new surroundings, or else they won't be able to perform," says Hafele of Text 100. The firm also mandates that those headed overseas attend cultural diversity sessions.

Once their assignment is over, there's typically also an adjustment period for

expatriates who spent a significant time abroad.

"The longer you're there, the harder it can be to come back," notes Celia Berk, managing director of human resources worldwide for Burson-Marsteller. "We have our staff members go through new-employee orientation to help ease them back into the U.S. office."

But for many employees, these difficulties are a small price to pay for the possibility of adventure and the career advancement. Baussmann's experience in Singapore was so positive that he's keeping his fingers crossed for a longer stint in the near future.

"It's just an invaluable thing to have on your resume," he says.

PLAN OF ACTION

Signed up for a term abroad? Before you head for the airport, it pays to know exactly what you're getting into.

Research your location. Some companies send employees on a "look-see" trip to check out their new surroundings before making a commitment. If that isn't an option, do as much research as you can on your own. Read guidebooks, speak to people who've lived in the country and request info from the local consulate about safety, health care, schools, etc.

Know your job. Make sure you know the exact position you'll be holding, the length of your stay and your work schedule. In Hong Kong, for example, employees work Saturdays — better not to learn that the hard way.

Read your contract. Take a hard look at exactly what your company will be providing for you during your stay. Will they cover your income taxes — which in countries like Russia, Finland and Norway can exceed 50 percent? What about emergency trips home? The time to negotiate is before you leave.

Pack wisely. If you take the plunge, you'll need to do more than bring the right clothes. You also want to include medical records, 6-12 months worth of prescriptions, and, of course, a few things that remind you of home. — L.D.



CONTINENTAL DRIFT: Last year Kelli Pietrantonio's Chelsea-based firm sent her to Italy.

Zandy Margold

[GO TO GREG]



MID-JULY marks the unofficial midway point for many summer internships, so I thought I'd check in to see how things are working out for you. Is there still a red carpet rolled out for you each day, or are you now expected to sweep and vacuum it? Has the CEO invited you into the boardroom to share your views about the company's strategic initiatives for the next five years, or are you just making copies of the agenda?

I haven't heard anything in the news lately about some new business paradigm that one of you has discovered, so frankly I'm getting a little concerned. I don't want to add to your pressure, but, you know, last year's crop of newbies was so very impressive, and essentially are the reason why you even have internship today.

By the way, the whole getting-the-company-to-revolve-around-you goal — how's that working out for you? Well you've still got a few more weeks to turn it around, but chop-chop, time's a-wasting.

Hey, just a heads-up: Watch out for that junior from NYU working in marketing — you know, the overeager "go-getter" who always has a smile on his face. He's getting a lot of attention volunteering for projects, so watch your back around him.

Oh, and the rising senior from St. Johns in finance — what's her deal? Always introducing herself to everyone, constantly asking questions, actually reading the mail instead of just tossing it into the pigeonholes — what is she thinking? And have you seen Ms. Karen Can-Do up in sales? Talk about selling out and being a conformist — she looks and acts like she actually works here!

OK, we kid because we love. But sometimes a healthy dose of tough love is the perfect elixir. Plus, I needed to get your attention. Because I want to hear from you, whether you're having the best summer of your life or you're mired in misery. If you want to keep a good thing going, or turn around a bad situation before it's too late, I can help you get the most out of the experience and leave a lasting impression. Send me stories of your best and worst experiences and tell me how you handled them, and I'll share them with other interns in this space throughout the remainder of the summer. As a bonus, the first 25 respondents will get a free resume evaluation.

Greg Giangrande is vice president and chief human resources office for a major global media company.

Got a question for Greg, or just want to give him props? E-mail gotogreg@nypost.com