

## **International House North Denmark's top 10 tips on retention of internationals**

Having international employees can bring special skills and expertise, language skills, innovation and different perspectives to your company. Sometimes, however, if the employee does not integrate in the company and the local environment the employee will go back home thereby costing your company a lot of money. Therefore, in order to make sure that the international employee is happily employed, International House North Denmark has gathered a few tips on how to retain your international employee.

### **1. Integration of family, including job for the spouse**

One of the top reasons for the failure of an assignment abroad is the family's inability to adjust, according to a 2014 study by Cartus. A significant issue affecting family integration is whether the spouse who accompanies the employee can find a job. Families often set a deadline for the spouse to find work, and if this does not happen, they leave. Therefore, it is a good idea to assist your new employee's wife/husband find work. Contact Workindenmark to hear about their spouse program [here](#) or perhaps suggest the spouse to consider entrepreneurship. Read more about entrepreneurship [here](#). If your new employee is also coming with children, it is a good idea to help them out with finding a school, kindergarten, or nursery for their children. See our website for more information [here](#).

### **2. Life outside the office**

It can be very lonely to be new in a country where you do not know anyone, so be sure to help your new employee feel welcome. Many Danish employees have set lives with a partner, friends and family; however, the same is probably not true for your new employee so invite them for a drink after work, or suggest joining a club or social group in the area. Mingling with Danes is a good way of both integrating into the local community and at the same time it helps your international employee learn Danish. See what International House North Denmark can offer in this regard [here](#) (culture and leisure), [here](#) (free time) and [here](#) (events).

### **3. Mentor**

Your company culture may be very different from what your new employee has experienced before, so we suggest providing the person with a mentor who also works for your organization. The mentor can help the new employee with questions they have, tips on company culture, building a network, etc., which will leave the employee with more time to focus on the job he/she were hired to do.

### **4. Language**

Language is the key to integration. Even if your company language is English, it is a good idea to give your employee the opportunity to learn Danish. One place they can do this is at the local language school. (See a list of state-run language schools in North Denmark [here](#).) Communication can be lost if the employee does not understand what others at the office are talking about, and it is harder to integrate in the local community if they do not speak the local language. However, it is important to

remember that if you send your international employee to language school, where classes are in the evening; it could tire and put extra pressure on your new employee. Therefore, another possibility (especially if you have a lot of international staff) is to hire someone to teach Danish onsite. This also sends a positive message to your employees that you value them and their time. Moreover, if you are thinking of hiring more international staff it might be wise to consider changing your company language to English.

#### **5. Team building**

It is good practice to welcome new members of staff with team building exercises in order to encourage a friendly and open working environment. This can be done at the company-wide level or at the department or section level. Such activities not only help the new member of staff feel part of the team but also give those who have been with the company for a while a chance to welcome their new colleague/s.

#### **6. Paperwork**

It is a fact that new international employees have to deal with a lot of paperwork, especially at the outset, much of which will be in Danish. We recommend going to [International Citizens Service](#) where you can get help with all the paperwork. Otherwise it's a good idea helping the person out with this both before and after they arrive by going over the necessary steps to obtaining residency, getting ID, opening a bank account, etc. You might even consider accompanying your employee to the various authorities to ensure that everything goes smoothly. See our website for more information [here](#).

#### **7. Diversity management**

Having international employees can lead to innovation, new perspectives, and greater efficiency as well as specific market knowledge and language skills. However, in order to harvest these benefits and take advantage of the true potential that lies in having a diverse workforce a company has to have great managers who understand how to utilize this potential. Educating your managers in diversity management is the best way to reach this goal.

#### **8. Matching expectations**

Make sure you discuss workplace expectations with your international employee so that they are well informed about working practices and norms. Here are some recommended points of discussion:

- Working hours
- Holiday
- Sick leave
- Office traditions
- What you expect of them professionally
- What they expect of you as their manager

#### **9. Buddy**

Find someone in your workplace that has similar interests as your new international employee, and see if they will be a 'buddy' to them. This would involve introducing them to social clubs, sports teams, or just taking them out for a drink. Having a 'go-to' person for outside of work questions could be the start of integrating socially and building a personal network.

#### **10. Networking**

Another idea could be to help your new employee network both professionally both with other internationals in the same situation as them and with Danes. Many internationals join together to form groups where they can talk about their common situation and furthermore networking with other professionals both Danes and internationals can perhaps help them if they have a spouse without a job.