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Working Abroad

By Jeff N Ross, Managing Director, Hospitality Graduate Recruitment, www.h-g-r.com

There are many variables to be considered when choosing an internship or a job after graduation, not least the location(s) of which you may be thinking. Working overseas is of course one such variable, and an option which can be both exciting and potentially daunting. Much evidence points to the conclusion that the benefits outweigh the 'costs' and therefore location is certainly a factor which you should consider when starting to research your options.

Hospitality Graduate Recruitment (h-g-r) helps hospitality students and alumni to find training placements and full-time positions at no cost in every continent of the world. We regularly seek feedback on the experiences that our candidates have had in both their working and personal environment during their times abroad. Here, we have tried to summarise a few common thoughts, to help you make a decision about possibly working abroad within the hospitality industry in the future.

Why go overseas?

It is important to have clear objectives in mind when thinking about working abroad and equally important to invest time in researching your options. Typical student and graduate objectives relate to learning or practicing languages, experiencing a different (working) culture, seeing a new place and meeting new people and enhancing the quality and diversity of the CV. Generally it is a desire to 'try and experience something new'.

Do put some thought into your own personal objectives, and what kind of job will enable you to fulfil those objectives. The greater you prepare in this sense, the more you are likely to get out of the whole experience. Consider if the organisation and, most importantly, the job will allow you to meet your goals. Ensure you understand the working conditions in which you will be expected to perform. This should include the key factors such as accommodation, salary and benefits and time off – all crucial to enjoying an overseas experience, and basic survival!

So here are a few ideas and comments from 2 of our graduates currently working overseas (1 Russian in China, and 1 Swede in the UK!)

Benefits of working overseas

- The chance to grow and develop in a new surrounding and hopefully to learn things about yourself that you didn't know before.
- The opportunity to learn/improve a language, and to experience a new culture.
- Possibilities available to you in your future career will be much greater, as a result of having worked overseas.
- Meeting new exciting people and having friends in all corners of the world.
- Developing a sense of independence and self-confidence through all of the above

Hardest aspects of working overseas

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- To be far away from friends and family.
 - To have arguments in a language that is not your mother tongue will often give you a disadvantage! It makes it harder for you to express your feelings and to give your point of view effectively.
 - It's obviously better if the person who is going to work abroad speaks the local language; I don't and getting around has not been easy, and communicating to the local people is a big challenge!
 - Being overseas on your own somewhat causes you to lose your "safety net" of your family and friends. Suddenly you're by yourself far away and you have to learn quite quickly to stand on your own two feet. It's both a great and a scary experience!

Some advice to others?

- Don't get frustrated if something goes in a different direction to your expectations.
- Communicate to people as much as you can - there are so many interesting people around.
- The first few weeks in a new place are always the hardest. So much that has to be sorted out, a new role to get into and things to get used to. But after about a month everything starts falling into place. So just hang in there, things will get better!

About Hospitality Graduate Recruitment (h-g-r)

Hospitality Graduate Recruitment, h-g-r, helps global hospitality employers find hotel-school graduates, undergraduates and alumni for entry level, supervisory and junior management positions. h-g-r works with over 150 global hospitality management schools and universities, producing a diverse database of fresh talent. Visit www.h-g-r.com for more information or contact Jeff Ross, Managing Director, Hospitality Graduate Recruitment, Tribschenstrasse 70, Luzern, 6005, Switzerland, Tel Direct: +41 41 370 6759, jeff@h-g-r.com

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