

Assessment of Expatriate Candidates

The Overseas Assignment Inventory (OAI), owned by Prudential Real Estate and Relocation Services, has helped organizations for more than 30 years. Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC is a registered user of the online assessment, which measures 14 attributes crucial for successful adaptation to another culture. It is provided for both the expatriate job candidate and his or her spouse or partner.

Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC complements the interpretation of the OAI with our proprietary “**Guided Self-Assessment for Expatriate Candidates**” and a **behavioral interview** to validate the candidate’s profile.

The OAI report which we provide is extensive, offering 25 pages of customized assessment and an additional 30 pages of suggestions and resources that promote the candidate's ability to succeed on an expatriate assignment. The OAI has helped hundreds of organizations, and thousands of individuals and their partners, faced with this complex decision.

Whether you need to assess the cultural adaptability of international business travelers or expatriates, identify potential executives for a global candidate pool, or develop global leadership competencies, the Overseas Assignment Inventory (OAI) is a reliable way to measure the specific attitudes and behaviors critical to intercultural competence.

The instrument is statistically valid, and provides an objective means to assess cultural adaptability for both individuals and groups.

The instrument:

- ✓ Evaluates motivation, attitudes and cultural adaptability
- ✓ Identifies strengths and development/adjustment challenges
- ✓ Identifies those areas where potential expatriates need particular support, counseling or training
- ✓ Creates a customized response toward adapting to the new cultural environment
- ✓ Creates a developmental profile

The OAI evaluates 14 distinct attributes:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Expectations | 6. Sense of Humor | 12. Interpersonal Interest |
| 2. Open-mindedness | 7. Flexibility | 13. Risk-taking |
| 3. Respect for others’ beliefs | 8. Tolerance | 14. Spouse Communication |
| 4. Trust in people | 9. Personal control | |
| 5. Patience | 10. Initiative | |
| | 11. Social adaptability | |

MOTIVATIONS

A set of possible motivations is presented in the OAI, and the respondent indicates the strength of each motivation.

EXPECTATIONS

Those who are realistic about what it will be like to live and work in another country, its associated difficulties, as well as the probable benefits, have a greater chance of success than those who have low expectations and do not look forward to the opportunity.

TRUST IN PEOPLE

Meaningful personal and professional relationships in another country will develop if expatriates can convey and encourage mutual trust among co-workers and business associates.

INTERPERSONAL INTEREST

Experience has shown repeatedly that the human element of interpersonal relationships -- in this case, intercultural people skills -- is critical to an expatriate's success and happiness overseas. Those who are sincerely interested in, accepting of, and concerned for others, have a great advantage in adjusting to another culture.

SOCIAL ADAPTABILITY

This predictor pinpoints the ability to socialize comfortably with new people in new and unfamiliar social situations and to accept and be accepted by new groups of friends and acquaintances. A loner or someone who feels comfortable only in a small, intimate group may feel lost in a new and unfamiliar setting.

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Open-minded individuals are receptive to different beliefs and ideas without feeling as if their own are being challenged or threatened. Those with the attitude that their own or their country's way is inherently superior will face difficulties in accomplishing many tasks.

RESPECT FOR OTHER BELIEFS

The capacity to be non-judgmental of other people's religious and political beliefs is extremely important in another cultural environment. Expatriates who demonstrate a willingness and ability to respect and be interested in the beliefs of other cultures are more likely to establish meaningful intercultural relationships.

TOLERANCE

Effectively adapting to another cultural environment requires an ability to interact with, or live closely to, people who may have fundamentally different habits and lifestyles from one's own. This also means withstanding living conditions and surroundings that are different from or less comfortable than one is accustomed.

FLEXIBILITY

The ability to consider new ideas and to realize that there is more than one valid way to approach and solve a problem is necessary for effective intercultural adjustment.

PATIENCE

Expatriates need to understand that a "sense of time" means different things in different cultures, or else they may be paralyzed by frustration from unexpected delays. Expatriates must remain patient when business protocol demands a seemingly roundabout decision-making process or way of doing business.

SENSE OF HUMOR

A good sense of humor is one of the most overlooked, yet important aspects of effective intercultural coping and adjustment. The ability to bring humor into difficult or confusing situations, to laugh at and learn from one's own mistakes often helps to ease tensions and facilitates communication.

INITIATIVE

Those who succeed on international assignments are self-starters, meaning that they do not sit back and expect things to happen or rely on someone else to take care of things.

RISK TAKING

Life in a new country requires exploring new things and learning new ways of doing things. The willingness to take risks, meet challenges and cope with change greatly enhances intercultural adjustment.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Expatriates who believe that they can control, shape or direct the course of their lives are likely to exert more effort to make things work abroad. Those who believe that things happen because of luck or fate often will feel helpless when confronted by new and changing life situations.

SPOUSE COMMUNICATION

When communication between couples is open and constructive, relationships often are enhanced and strengthened by the overseas experience. At the same time, however, the unique stresses associated with adjusting to a new culture can be very difficult and damaging to weak or troubled relationships.

USE OF THE OAI IN CANDIDATE SELECTION

For use in selection, the OAI is combined with the Behavioral Interview technique developed by Dr. Paul Green. An Assessment Report is prepared by Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC, based on responses to the OAI. This report is used by Keogh to conduct the behavioral interview with the employee and spouse. The interview assesses strengths and risks according to the OAI dimensions. An interview report is prepared, a selection decision is made, and feedback is given to the candidate couple.

“Guided Candidate Self-Assessment”

The OAI dimensions are complemented, in the Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC methodology, with the use of our proprietary “Guided Candidate Self-Assessment”. The situation of the couple are reviewed and discussed, including dual careers, children and schooling; dependents, disabilities and special needs

INTEGRATION WITH PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING

This application of the assessment adds a very powerful component to the training process. The importance of each dimension to expatriate success is explained, and suggestions are given for areas needing development so that they recognize and plan to use their strengths in adjusting to the country of assignment, and begin the process of developing areas needing improvement.

CAREER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT/CANDIDATE POOLS

Companies that have an international career planning and development process have a tremendous advantage in creating a pre-selected and prepared pool of candidates for international assignment.

As in the selection application, Assessment Reports are prepared, but Assessment and Development Guides are also prepared. A behavioral interview is conducted with the employee and spouse to explain and verify the scores. The Guides are then further used either individually with the guidance of a corporate international career counselor, or in the context of a counseling or training program. This type of program is conducted for groups of potential expatriates, and is designed to fit the specific circumstances of the client company.

The results of either the individual or the group processes are employees and spouses who understand the requirements of an international assignment, know their own strengths, as well as areas in need of development, and have a plan to develop these areas and be prepared when the time comes for them to embark on their assignments.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC can incorporate the use of the OAI Profile in international leadership development training. Participant’s OAI profiles can form the basis of training related to High Performance International and Multicultural Teams.

Please see <http://www.jackkeogh.com/services.htm> for more information.