

INTERNATIONAL STAFF (IS)

The larger part of our workforce is now "locally engaged". Labour markets are, however, becoming increasingly globalized. We should therefore expect that the pool from which we draw our "local" workforce will be increasingly global in orientation. We will consequently be challenged to evolve a new relationship with our professional "LES". The following provides suggestions for consideration.

For a start, we should change nomenclature. Our **professional level LES** are increasingly members of a mobile, global workforce. **We should think of them in those terms, and think of them as International Staff (IS).**

Changing the relationship in a meaningful way, however, will take more than terminology.

While Governments operate by different rules than the private sector, we can learn from the example of MNE's in managing international staffs. We hire our professional staff from the same global pool as MNE's. It is worth asking how they do it. If we don't emulate their example, we might lose some of our most effective staff for the future.

For MNE's, the notion of distinguishing employees by where they were hired is increasingly obsolete. The main distinction among staff members is, rather, the individual's degree of **integration** to the institution. Nationality is ever less a factor in making that distinction. The ideal employee is one who works effectively in a particular market, wherever that may be, but does so with a **strong sense of the corporation's objectives and culture**. Such a person can be hired anywhere and **work anywhere**. If given the opportunity to acculturate to the institution, such an employee can be deployed beyond their place of recruitment, and advance in the hierarchy in the field and at Head Office.

Acculturation: We now make sporadic (always welcomed) efforts to integrate IS into DFAIT's corporate culture. Our efforts are responsive, often stimulated by special technical need (FINEX, IMS), rather than the result of strategic commitment to integration of an international workforce.

We have to go beyond this if we are going to build a global workforce (working to common objectives, with similar procedures and shared values.)

Canadians have been extremely successful in US multinationals, due to their particular capacity (language, understanding of American business, but a non-US sensibility) to operate globally and absorb the values of their institutions. Canadians are naturals, but a growing, global, elite of people from all regions now share similar levels of education, linguistic skills, cultural and consumer propensities. MNE's will continue to tap this growing pool of talent around the world. We must continue to do the same.

All IS should be provided with a program of acculturation that could include:

- **a course/at DFAIT in HQ and Canadian government operations.**
- **regular, regionally organized "Canada" seminars to acquaint staff with Canadian history, institutions and values.**