

Testing Your Overseas Job Marketability



True or False?

I speak more than one language.

Many expatriates have been sent overseas speaking only English. But fluency in a second language certainly increases your marketability. Being familiar with a language isn't enough; you must be able to conduct business in this second language. If fluency at this stage in the game is an impossibility, there are many other things you can do to make yourself a desirable candidate for overseas work or a job that has international responsibilities.

I have more than two years of work experience in one field or industry.

If you are a recent graduate or have switched jobs a lot, it is going to be more difficult to land an overseas assignment or a job with international responsibilities. You see, the global workplace tends to favor experts over generalists -- this means you often need two to five years of related work experience to land an international post. What can you do now? Determine an area of interest and start building your resume. Also, do some research to be sure that this experience is transferable to an overseas or international industry. Talk to people in the field, and try to get involved in international projects or activities, either on the job or through professional associations. By doing so, you are not only building a network but are also taking some of the small steps necessary for that big leap overseas.

I live in a city -- like New York City, Miami or San Francisco -- where there is a fair to large amount of international activity.

If you don't live in a city with a large international sector, you might want to consider a trip to the closest US city that does have the regional connections that interest you. For example, if you're drawn to Asia, consider a West Coast city; if you want to work in Latin America, try Houston or Miami. Also, look into industry sectors; New York City is good for finance or media-related careers. Learn about events or conferences and plan a budget to attend one -- this is one effective way to start networking. Also, contact your alumni association to see who is working in your field of interest; email is great for starting your career research!

I have friends, family or acquaintances that live overseas or do work with an international dimension.

International Jobs are hard to access -- many are never advertised. After you have done some reading about the international job market, you should begin talking to people. If you don't have a network in place, you need to go about creating one. How? Join a professional association, visit cultural institutes in your area, attend or join a Chamber of Commerce or Trade Council that works with your country or region of choice, use your alumni network or any other channel that will introduce you to trends and people in your field of interest.

I have worked on international issues in my current -- or a recent past -- position.

If your experience is only domestic, you will have a tougher time getting an overseas assignment. You might want to consider this strategy: In your current position, try to increase your exposure to international issues if at all possible. If you are in a company that is global in scope, talk to your supervisor about getting involved in an international account or project. If your organization is government or nonprofit, again, do something similar. If your job is completely domestic, start doing volunteer work with an international dimension that is related to what you want to do or join a relevant professional association. Then, you might be able to transition to a domestic job with global responsibilities. After that, overseas might be your next step!

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Questions and answers taken from **Testing Your Overseas Job Marketability**
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