



Flowently
Language connects

7 Essential tips for HR managers to help international staff overcome the language barrier and therefore facilitate a better relocation

Does your company have employees from other parts of the world that you recruited to acquire the skills and qualities you need for your business?

Are you happy that they came to work for you?

Would you be even happier if they stayed?

Being able to navigate daily life in Dutch, will certainly contribute to the well-being of your staff.

1 Word of the day at the coffee machine

Learning a new language is a matter of time. Don't expect your new colleague to learn Dutch within a couple of months. High expectations only cause more stress. The coffee machine is not only for coffee, as we all know, but also a great spot for social chit-chat. Why not post 'a word or phrase of the day' there? (e.g. Lekker Bakkie!) Invite your Dutch and international staff to join this fun and social learning tool.

2 Arrange a Dutch lunch buddy

Most challenging language moments for your international staff? At lunchtime, when the Dutch colleagues jump from one subject to another, using weird sayings and making jokes. Organize a Dutch buddy for your international to have lunch together once a week. This colleague can help practice short conversations and explain what others are discussing and laughing about.





3 Provide time to study

Do you want your staff to integrate and learn Dutch? It would be most helpful if the company can provide time not only for Dutch classes but also time for studying Dutch. This will speed up the learning process, increase the student's motivation and will lead to direct results at the work floor. Only an hour per week works miracles.

4 Dutch is a tough language!

You can be super intelligent but absolutely miss any talent for learning Dutch, ouch! It is hard to imagine how challenging and frustrating it can be to learn a new language. In your own language you have the entire spectrum of words at your disposal to express yourself intelligently into detail. Learning a new language is a constant search for words – within a limited range - that come closest to what you want to express. People might feel 'I speak like a child' or 'I'm not entirely myself', even after 10 years of living in the Netherlands. Create an atmosphere of understanding as this will encourage your international employees to speak Dutch.

5 Don't worry about making mistakes

Encourage your colleague to use the words he is already familiar with. People who are not afraid of making mistakes learn faster. Why not exchange funny expressions and sayings? A good sense of humour will help a lot. And of course, an accent is charming!

6 The Golden Mean

Has your colleague been taking classes for a couple of months? Usually, understanding a language is easier than speaking it. You can do your colleague a huge favour by speaking Dutch to him and allowing him to respond in English. When you continue speaking Dutch, he will learn a lot and there is less frustration of having to answer in Dutch.



7 Celebrate every success!

Each language success of your international employees should get attention and be celebrated. Did your employee achieve level A1, A2 or even B1, pass the civic integration exam or achieve other language goals? You can use your internal channels to put your employee in the spotlights! Where is the cake? Yeah! Joepie!

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