

QUESTION: How much of a drawcard is working as a marketer overseas?



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A huge drawcard. Who wouldn't want to at least dream about it, if not get on the plane?

But before you head off think through why you are doing it – is it to experience new places, eat great food and have fun, or is it more about growing as a marketer in a different culture?

Don't get me wrong – travel for travel's sake is a fantastic thing to do, but being stuck in a dead-end job in cold, wet London to 'live the dream' won't be much fun and is next to no value to your career as a marketer.

A really talented marketer I know has been in the UK for 12 months having fun, doing some travel and having lots of new experiences. But the first job was a slog – literally. Working for the Lost Dogs Home has all sorts of benefits but bolstering your CV as a marketer isn't one of them!

She has since landed a plum job with London 2012. What a difference that will make to her career as a marketer when she eventually returns to Australia (if she does olympics 2016 may be too big a magnet).

So, when considering going overseas to work as a marketer think about why you are doing it. If it's to enhance your career, make sure you get the right job just as you would in Australia. Look for roles that build on your experience while targeting opportunities that don't exist here.

But if working overseas is really about travel do that properly – take lots of money, work only when you need to and... avoid Conitiki tours at all costs!



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Working overseas provides you with international marketing experience that is second in none. It stretches your thinking in understanding different countries' cultures, their language, and their behaviours to understand how best to sell your product – it allows you to learn new ways to market brands.

I've worked for Disney Asia Pacific, dealing with five different countries' needs, reformatting marketing campaigns and tailoring them to the local markets. Most recently I worked in London for three years with Nickelodeon, working with some of the top advertising agencies in the world. There I worked with marketing media and tools that were well in advance of what is currently available in Australia, ensuring my skill-set was one step ahead of the game in Australia.

If you have experience working overseas, you are certainly more attractive to future employers. Working overseas allows you to think outside the box, because you've seen different and unique ways of selling brands to different markets. Having international work experience on your resume shows that you're a bit of a 'go getter' and not afraid to try different things and experiences in life and really push yourself out of your comfort zone. This is a great attitude to have and is certainly looked on by employers as a strong asset.

In unfamiliar territory, people try extra hard to understand and engage with people and their ideals and underlying motivations. In the marketing world, having this opportunity to really challenge yourself will give you a greater understanding and appreciation of how marketing and communication can really influence behaviour.

Being forced out of your comfort zone, exposing yourself to new muses and learning to continually engage hard-to-reach markets is invaluable.



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I have just recently returned from three years in the UK where I worked both the agency side and a range of consumer brands and then in-house for Microsoft.

The professional drawback of working overseas for me was the desire to work in a bigger market where it was possible to bring life the projects and campaigns simply not possible with Australian budgets. I also wanted to feel closer to the location where decisions made, products were developed and trends originated.

On a personal level I wanted a base and an income that would allow me to experience and travel Europe and more easily access the delights of the northern hemisphere.

My time overseas definitely allowed me to expand my list of visited destinations, but was my professional expertise that expanded the most. The scale of campaigns in Europe is staggering and the level of buy-in and influence the UK market is afforded by global corporations refreshing.

Working overseas is not a walk in the park, and people should go into it with their eyes open. The success of so much of what we do as marketers relies on our ability to understand and connect with our target audience in a meaningful and influential manner. It isn't easy in a culture that you have grown up in, where you understand the slang, and the kitsch cultural and sporting references. It is a culture and in languages that aren't your own is always going to be infinitely harder.

Without a doubt, the three years I spent overseas were the most difficult of my career to date, but they were also the most rewarding and valuable.