



My journey as an expat

Sabrina Holthausen - June 29, 2023

Some facts about me

Nationality:

German



Age:

38



Residency:

Saint-Genis Pouilly

Professional Background:

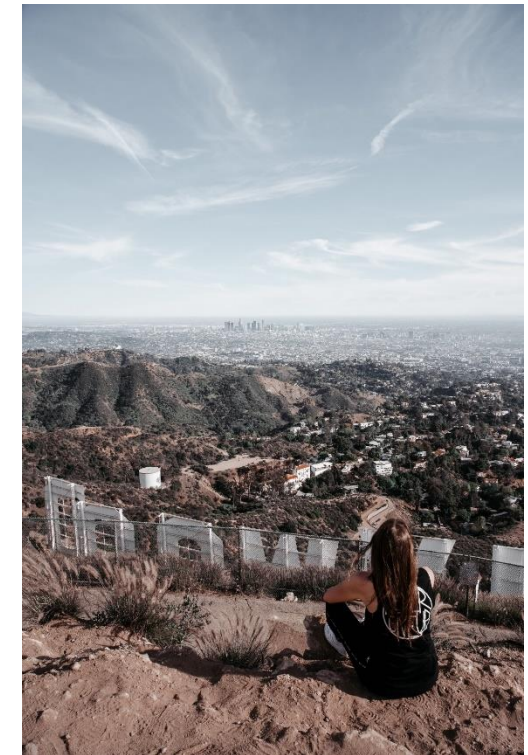
International Communications, Team Assistance,
Human Resources Development

Academic Background:

B.Sc. Business Administration & Psychology
M.A. Intercultural Management

Expat since:

March 2013, have lived in California for more than 8 years, no work permit due to visa restrictions, used the time abroad to do my bachelors and masters degree at a distance learning university + 6 months internship in DE



Challenges + Opportunities

Challenges

- Dealing with **cultural shock**
- **Language Barrier**, feeling like a stranger for the first time while being an expat
- High **competitive job market** in the Geneva area
- Issues with **work permit**
- Building up a new social network, lack of personal support
- Feeling **homesick**
- Being an expat following its partner for his job is always challenging (feeling dependent, giving up own career etc.)

Opportunities

- Develop valuable **skill set** for both, personal and professional life (intercultural competence, language skills, flexibility, adaptability, good self management, learning to flourish outside your comfort zone/not afraid to take risks etc.)
- **Broaden perspective + new outlook on life** - reflect differently on own culture and host culture, become more open minded towards different people, cultures etc.
- **Take a break**, enjoy time for yourself, travel etc., **embrace new culture** and environment
- Boost your **confidence**.....and so much more!



My road to working in a place like nowhere else on earth and what I do at CERN

What brought me to the area?

- My husband works as an Electronics Technician in the Systems Department at CERN since August 2021

What is my job at CERN?

- Junior Fellow (now Early Career Professional Programme/University Graduates with up to 2 years of experience after graduation), HR Talent Acquisition, 2-3 year placement, started October 1st 2022
- Mainly focussing on Employer Branding, Outreach & Sourcing activities but also supporting all other operational tasks with regards to Recruitment. Tasks include:
 - Taking part in different Outreach Events such as career fairs, webinars, presentations at CERN visits
 - Direct Sourcing via linkedIn
 - Collaboration with different internal and external stakeholders
 - Building up partnerships with universities to attract more students and graduates
 - Publication of job ads on jobboards
 - Validation of applications
 - Support organization of monthly welcome session



My road to working in a place like nowhere else on earth and what I do at CERN



Why did I want to apply at CERN and what do I enjoy most about working at CERN?

- **One of the most international and diverse workplaces** you could think of – You meet people from various fields of all ages and nationalities, with and without working experience
- It is **a place like nowhere else on earth** – pretty much everything we do is unique, CERN is a town within a town
- Big **variety of tasks**, mix of project based work and operational business
- Great **package of employee benefits** incl. competitive salary, 8 weeks of paid vacation, great health insurance, pension fund etc.
- Various **training opportunities** incl. language courses
- **CERN's values** align very much with mine – Commitment, Diversity, Integrity, Professionalism, Creativity
- You build up a great **network**
- Lots of fun non-work-related activities, more than 40 clubs that you can also join as a CERN spouse
- Even **Dual Careers** are possible at CERN!

For which jobs did I apply?

- **Junior Fellowship Programme (now Early Career Professional Programme/University Graduates)**
- **Post Career Break Fellowship Programme**
- Different **Staff Positions** in the field of Administrative Assistance

There are so many different opportunities at CERN - so keep checking the website (careers.cern)!



Tips and Advices

- **Networking** – on a professional level but especially seeking exchange with other expats/spouses – but don't only surround yourself with other expats - especially only the ones from your home country
- Have your **LinkedIn and application documents up to date**
- Also **consider remote jobs** at companies outside the Geneva area to start with
- **Patience** – finding/getting a job in the area takes time – Don't give up! – It took me several applications at CERN til I got accepted
- Keep yourself busy, find new hobbies
- Invest in **education**, especially **language skills**
- **Enjoy the area and make the most of your time here**
- **Stay connected** to family and friends back home and try to plan regular visits
- Don't think that because your CV is not like the norm/you have had a longer break in your career that it lowers your chances in the job market – Being an expat and living abroad qualifies you in many different areas
- Keep checking the CERN career website as career opportunities are published all the time





Thanks for your attention!
Questions?