

Santa Fe moves frontiers with its customers

Santa Fe continues to facilitate corporate globalisation in close partnership with its customers in their search for new market opportunities around the world. An award-winning example of such a partnership is Coca-Cola's successful entry into Myanmar. The comprehensive Santa Fe infrastructure and specialised service capabilities applied in Myanmar continue to help corporate customers into new emerging markets.



When the economic sanctions on Myanmar were lifted in 2012 after 70 years of military regime and isolation, many international companies looked to this market for new business opportunities. Coca-Cola was among the first US companies to announce its plans to re-enter the country, and a close partnership with Santa Fe made sure that a new organisation was effectively installed and ready to operate within very ambitious deadlines. The successful vendor partnership just achieved the APAC Expatriate Management & Mobility Award 2014.

Breaking new ground

As Coca-Cola's mobility partner, it was a unique challenge for Santa Fe to be able to support yet another strategic expansion. Ruth Lockwood, Group Director, Relocation Services at Santa Fe, explains: "Myanmar was completely new to us all. We had no prior relocation experience in the country and no sources of expertise to draw upon, so we had to start from scratch."

For every employee relocation it is crucial, that everything complies with the relevant immigration laws, country and business regulations and the company's own corporate policies. At the same time the individual assignee and his/her family need a clear impression of what to expect in terms of housing, schooling, health services and living conditions in general before relocating – and a safe, experienced and personal on-the-ground service to handle all the practical and formal challenges, when the family arrives in their new location.

Ruth Lockwood explains: "We had to quickly establish this platform and decided with the customer's support to make two in-depth research trips to the country to uncover all the necessary details, meet with local established expatriates and search for suitable partners to assist in preparing everything for an effective execution that would meet the high standards and policies of our customer."

Guides to successful relocation

The research trips were eye openers in every sense. Housing standards were very low with only few suitable solutions and pricing out of control due to the sudden new demand. The limited availability of schools and health services proved to be a major challenge – and general living conditions offered multiple other obstacles with no functioning telecommunications networks and a cash-driven economy making payments for rent etc. from outside the country virtually impossible.

Ruth Lockwood elaborates: “We were, in reality, pioneers in a market which at that point still had no official Western trade representations in place, and our main challenge was to find a way to navigate and identify solutions that could meet suitable standards. The outcome of our research work was a detailed whitepaper on relocations into Myanmar along with specific guides for living, schooling, housing, payment processes and immigration document requirements. And in a close and very constructive cooperation with our customer, we managed to complete all necessary preparations, allowing their talent project to proceed on schedule with more than 20 relocations into the country over the coming 18 months.”

With a population of more than 50 million people and a growing and still maturing economy, Myanmar offers an interesting potential for foreign investments. Today Santa Fe runs a growing operation in the country and assists a broad range of its global customers in preparing and effectively executing their mobility programmes in Myanmar.

Next stop Africa

Santa Fe continues to follow its customers into new growth markets and most recently Mongolia was added to the Santa Fe map with local representation supporting its global customers’ expansion strategies. Africa is another market experiencing an increasing interest from corporate customers, who are investigating growth opportunities across the continent. Santa Fe’s African operation based in Johannesburg in South Africa is now being further expanded to support these efforts, drawing upon the successful experiences from across the Santa Fe Group.

Santa Fe Group sweeps up international awards

Santa Fe Group’s Asia/Pacific division was awarded “Best Destination Services Provider of the year” and “Best Vendor Partnership” at the Forum for Expatriate Management’s APAC Expatriate Management & Mobility Awards 2014 this October in Singapore.

Santa Fe also became runner up in the categories “Thought Leadership”, “Relocation Management Company of the Year” and was highly commended in the “Immigration Provider of the Year” category.



Read more about the award categories, judges and winners:

<http://totallyexpat.com/emmas2014/>

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