



## 7 tips: How to help expats overcome language barriers and contribute to a successful relocation

Woohoo! A new group of expats is on its way to join your company! As HR manager, you want nothing more than for them to quickly settle in. Knowing the Dutch language helps a great deal. Once your international employees overcome the language barrier and can get by in Dutch, their new country will soon feel like home.

Teaching your employees Dutch in a fun way contributes to a smoother relocation process and helps them to get to know their new colleagues better (great for team building!). But how exactly do you go about it?

Here are 7 useful tips.

### 1. Word of the day at the coffee machine

Learning a new language takes time: don't expect your new employees to master Dutch in a couple of months. High expectations may cause stress and usually backfire. That's why we recommend teaching and using the language in simple, everyday situations. And what better place for an informal chat than the coffee machine? Use for example post-its to introduce a new word or phrase every day, such as 'Do you want some coffee? Invite everyone to join this social learning experience. That's how your international employees will learn typical Dutch sayings and proverbs in a fun way.

### 2. Organize a lunch buddy program

What tops the list of toughest language moments? It's lunchtime! Dutch colleagues jump from one topic to another using all kinds of strange expressions and jokes. How do you make this easier for your international employees? Pair them up with their own Dutch lunch buddy! They meet once a week and practice short conversations together. Lunch also provides ample time to explain all kinds of things, such as what the conversations of Dutch colleagues are about or why they are completely cracking up. Your employees will feel at home way quicker.





### 5. Encourage your international employees

People who aren't afraid to make mistakes learn faster. Encourage your international employees to use the Dutch they learned, for example by sharing funny expressions and sayings with each other. Humor connects and makes it enjoyable to learn something new! If you stimulate your employees in a fun way, you'll make it easier for them to learn a new language.

### 6. Listening in Dutch and speaking in English

It's generally easier to understand a new language than to speak it. After your international employees have learned Dutch for a few months, you'd be doing them a great favor when talking to them in Dutch while allowing them to answer in English. As long as you keep speaking Dutch, the other person will continue to learn. Even more so because they won't be frantically looking for the right words to express themselves. Eventually they will learn to reply in Dutch. One step at a time!

### 7. Celebrate every success!

Did your international employees acquire level A1, A2 or even B1? Or did they pass their integration exam? Whatever language goal your employee has achieved, go celebrate it with them! Every language achievement deserves attention. Use your internal communication channels to put your colleague into the spotlight. And don't forget the cake. Enjoy!

### Looking for a fun and interactive language course for your employees?

Learning a language starts with the basics: a language course. But endlessly cramming words doesn't make anyone happy. Want to turn language acquisition into a fun and interactive team building experience? Take a look at our group training courses for companies. Individual language training for your employees is of course also a possibility. The biggest advantage of our courses is that you, or your international employees, are in charge. Do they wish to take lessons at the office, online or at another location? We are flexible!

Do you have any questions or would you want more information?

Call us on **+3185 400 0099** or email us at [info@flowently.com](mailto:info@flowently.com). We're happy to help you!

### 3. Provide time to study

As a company, you naturally give your international employees time to take Dutch lessons. But have you considered allowing them to study during working hours? This will help them to integrate and learn faster and stay motivated - and you will immediately see the results in the workplace. And no, you certainly don't have to miss them for half the week. An hour a week to study already works wonders!

### 4. Create a safe space

Learning a new language is difficult. Even highly intelligent people may still have a lot of trouble learning Dutch. It's hard to imagine how frustrating it is to be constantly looking for the words that are closest to what you'd like to say. Newcomers learning Dutch often struggle to express themselves in detail because of limited vocabulary. Even after staying in the Netherlands for years, many expats indicate that they feel like a child when they speak Dutch or just don't feel quite like themselves. Keep this in mind and create an atmosphere of compassion and understanding at work. This helps your new employees to find the confidence to speak Dutch.

