

## Minicase: Brittany Miller: Should She Accept an International Assignment?

Brittany Miller, a 37-year-old manager with Techtonics International, had just returned to her office early on a Thursday afternoon. During a lunchtime meeting in the company's executive lunchroom, her boss had just offered her a chance to move to Shanghai, China, where she would be in charge of establishing the company's new office for the East Asia region. As she sat at her desk looking out over the Los Angeles skyline, she was filled with a mix of excitement and trepidation. Should she accept the position she was offered? Or should she pass on this opportunity and wait for something else in the future? What factors should she consider in making this important decision?

Miller had joined Techtonics shortly after completing her bachelor's degree in business, starting as an assistant sales manager. Since then, she had been promoted several times and was now the vice president in charge of North American operations for one of Techtonics's main business areas, overseeing a workforce of more than 2,100 people and sales in excess of \$500 million. Identified as one of the "rising stars" in Techtonics, and mentored by one of the senior vice presidents of the company, she seemed to have no limits to her career path.

Miller had always dreamed of living and working abroad. As a student, she studied abroad for a semester in Spain and spent a month afterward traveling around Europe with several friends. After graduation, she worked on a six-month internship with AIESEC, working for a small exporting company based in Poland. Since joining Techtonics, her international experience had primarily consisted of business trips to Canada or Mexico, attending several conferences and visiting a few selected client companies in Europe and Asia, and going

on two extended vacations: one to Thailand and another to the Caribbean. When her boss mentioned the possibility of going to China, she could barely contain her enthusiasm!

However, Miller also began to think about her family and how an international assignment might affect them. Her husband, Jerry, was an accountant in the Los Angeles office of a large accounting firm. Although he had a successful career, she thought that he might be open to a change. She also had two children: Jerry Jr., who was 8, and Susan, who was 5. How would they respond to moving to a new country? Would now be a good time for such a move, or would it be better to wait for a few years?

And what if she was to accept the offer to go to China? What issues would she need to discuss with the company regarding the implications of a move to China? Her boss said that he would like to have Miller's decision within about a week and that she would need to move to Shanghai within four to six months if she accepted the job.

As she watched the traffic begin to jam up on the freeway outside her office building, Miller thought about reaching for her cell phone and calling her good friend for advice on how to deal with the job opportunity that she had been offered.

### Questions:

1. If you were a good friend of Brittany Miller, what recommendation would you give regarding whether she should accept the international assignment that has been offered to her?
2. What issues she should focus on in making such a decision?