

Re:locate

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Culture at the heart of relocation

Everything you need
to know

Arab spring

Lessons learned

Changing times

International assignments respond

Schools out

On boarding and single-sex options

**Awards
Special**
2010/11!
Winners announced!

RELOCATION SERVICE PROVIDER OR TEAM OF THE YEAR

**INTERNATIONAL WINNER:
ICUnet.AG**

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German company ICUnet.AG wowed the judges with its in-depth knowledge and strong focus on customer relationships. Fiona Leney explores the secrets of this forward-looking organisation's success.

As Relocation Service Provider or Team of the Year is a broad category, attracting entries from large, small and specialist suppliers, six companies were shortlisted this year, and there were two awards, UK Relocation Service Provider or Team of the Year and International Relocation Service Provider or Team of the Year.

The judges described international winner ICUnet.AG as "a hugely impressive leader in the German-speaking market" and "best in class", with in-depth knowledge and a strong focus on customer relationships. They particularly praised its tailor-made concepts and services, its interculturally trained consultants, and its in-house Relocation Academy.

Headquartered in the low-profile German city of Passau, ICUnet.AG could easily be pigeonholed as the typical product of that country – quietly efficient, coolly well organised. But the company's success is actually based on a passionate attention to detail and a keen sensitivity to cultural differences.

As Carolin Fleischer, head of assignment management in Passau, says, the company invests deeply both in academic research into the likely wishes and needs of people coming from different cultures and in training programmes to enable its own consultants to meet clients' requests appropriately.

"We offer local knowledge combined with global competence," she says, citing research into housing preferences in Latin America that helped the company to find the most suitable accommodation for a group moving from Latin America and Spain to Germany.

To ensure a smooth process, not least for family members, ICUnet.AG also allocated Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking consultants to the assignees.

Flexibility, with a keenness to use new technology to deliver its services, has also enabled the company to keep pace with the changing nature of relocation.

"As our clients send their employees more and more on short-term assignments, we have adapted our service portfolio – for example, with last-minute packages, webinars and e-learning tools," she says.

ICUnet.AG has grown over its ten years, recently having merged with another German relocation business, but it is still determined, CEO Dr Fritz Audebert says, to maintain its personal and responsive character.

Having been praised by the *Re:locate* Awards judges for its "one face to the client" approach, ICUnet.AG intends to continue offering its initial one-day workshop, where both sides can get to know each other.

The single account manager or core team handling each client will also remain, but are now strengthened by an integrated IT system, which offers web-based contact and live tracking tools.

Fast forward

"As e-learning is becoming more and more important, we are proud to have an innovation also in this field – intercultural web-based training, comprising awareness training modules and country-specific know-how in one interactive online tool," says Fritz Audebert.

Expansion plans continue, with an eighth office due to open in Stuttgart later this year, and one planned for Switzerland

This is clearly a company with an eye to the future. ☺

www.icunet.ag