

This is the response I sent to Danny on the Yahoo NG  
costablancaexpats

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/costablancaexpats>

It is my experience of why so many people fail and flee back to the  
UK. I hope it doesn't relate to you!!

Steve

Dear Group,

>

> Every week on the various forums relating to Spain there is a  
> question from hopeful couples in their thirties, often with a child  
> or two asking about jobs and schools in Spain. Do any of these  
> families make a proper go of it or do they just end up hand-to-  
mouth.

>

> I ask because the more I see of Spain the more I thank my fate that  
I

> have a UK income.

>

> Danny

Now, that's what I call an interesting question. I get over 20 people  
every week asking me questions like

- 1) Will I get a job as a bowling alley technician?
- 2) Would you tell me everything you know about Spain?
- 3) Will I like Spain?
- 4) What's the best part of Spain to live in?

Many of them start with "Hi, my name's X and I'm thinking perhaps,  
maybe, possibly, at some time in the future of moving to Spain or  
maybe Malta or ....if..... I send them a list of URLs, advise  
them to join this NG and do some SERIOUS preparation. A lot of them  
have children and many have absolutely no idea whatsoever re  
education, Spanish, Spain itself, job opportunities etc etc. I  
usually also tell them the FACTS. There are very few employed (as  
opposed to self-employed) opportunities. If you do not speak Spanish  
the opportunities at getting much above the minimum wage are  
extremely limited. You only need to see the vacancies section in the  
English language papers to accept that. Nevertheless thousands come  
every year looking for a land of milk and honey. Whilst the grass  
maybe greener over here (figuratively at least!) it most definitely  
needs cutting.

I now have some 400 people who work with me / for me so I meet up  
with a lot of these type of people. You are 100% correct in your  
underlying assumption that many do not make a fist of it. I can give  
many reasons.

\*\* Firstly and most importantly they have not done enough, if any,  
homework. They have absolutely no comprehension that for example  
someone who was, say, a dental receptionist in the UK is going to  
find it almost impossible to get the same job over here.

\*\* 2), they have absolutely no comprehension of how expensive Spain  
is. I am sure I speak for many when I say that I find Spain is now  
only marginally less expensive than the UK.

\*\* 3), they make very little effort to learn any Spanish. A hobby  
horse of mine so I won't continue.

\*\* 4), they quite bluntly do not have a work appetite. Somehow they expect to work fewer hours for more money than they did in the UK.

\*\* 5), many were losers in the UK. Somehow they think if they come over here and do all the things they did wrong in the UK they will succeed. It's pure folly to think if you do the same things you failed with before that you will get a different result if you continue to do them wrongly over here.

\*\* 6) On the same track many are quitters. (Winners never quit and quitters never win.)

\*\* 7) as they have done so little preparation re 1,2 and 3 that when a problem happens they are not ready for it and struggle to overcome whatever the problem is.

Can people make a go of it? Yes, absolutely many of my guys have a lifestyle they could never have dreamt of in the UK. Some earn serious money - very serious money in some cases. Many others give up and either flee back to the UK or mess around with airport runs, villa cleaning etc etc trying to eke out a living until they win the lottery. I'll give anybody a chance - that's my style BUT at the first meeting I know pretty well who's a talker and who's a walker. I know most times who will succeed, who will survive and who will fail. Equally, many have absolutely no direction whatsoever. I am fortunate that I am not down to my last five bob. I'm not into flash cars or a fancy lifestyle. So, I often say to the people who don't seem cut out for what I have to offer, "Is there anything that you would like to do, if I were to fund a new project with you?" Unbelievably, most have absolutely no idea. So if I help them set it up, get the papers in order and even fund it they wouldn't know what they wanted!!! ¡No digo nada! On the other hand, I mentioned it to a couple the other day and the lady immediately came up with what I believe was a very credible business proposition for here in Spain. (Watch this space!!)

Sorry if the answer is a bit long winded but it is one of those "meaning of life questions" where the answer is more likely to be observations and opinions rather than "the police station is at Calle Mayor 36 and the telephone number is 9....."

Kind regards  
Steve

Message:

I agree with Bill 100%. I have over 400 people who work with me over here on various projects and I am constantly in need of quality people. By the same token I am constantly amazed at people's job expectations - would you be happy if you rang say your dentist and found that the receptionist spoke only Spanish? So why should a dental receptionist expect to work in a Spanish dental surgery? "Oh, well I could learn." ¡no digo nada!

FACTS there are almost NO permanent employee positions with contracts UNLESS you speak Spanish FLUENTLY. Usually, even then FLUENCY in another language French, Norwegian or German is also required. That is why you see so many Belgian and Dutch people working for estate agents etc. From birth they have been comfortable in 3/4 languages. FACTS - my two secretaries are German and Dutch. One speaks Dutch, German, English, Spanish and the other speaks German, Spanish, French and English. When I last interviewed for a secretary I got over 70 applications. Over 30 were from English speakers BUT only 3 had the MINIMUM number of languages clearly stated in the advert - three. My short list was a Finn, two Dutch girls, a Belgian guy (who spoke SIX languages fluently) and a Norwegian. These people were applying for a position with a contract, 30 days paid holiday etc. Everything that so many people crave for. Incidentally in the Valencian Community only 10% of all new positions advertised last year were with permanent contracts and that is the Spanish and not the ex-pat market place. Do not also forget that Spain has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe and that a lot of the best jobs in Spain are "word of mouth."

That's not to say that there is NO work. There is - this is Klondike at the moment BUT you dig your own gold. 90%+ of all the ex-pats over here are self-employed. There is as much work as you want in the building trade and in sales. I am frequently frustrated that I cannot start more projects. Why? The lack of quality staff. Corporation bus drivers with 20 years experience are NOT in demand over here BUT if he can sell or use his hands then he has a chance.

I wish you every success - incidentally this post should be in the Employment section.

Steve Hall

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results!"