

# The Talent And Global Mobility Partnership

**Traditionally, global mobility has been a transactional service, often part of the Compensation and Benefits area that focuses on process and cost. But by changing the focus of what global mobility does, the ROI debate moves from a cost equation to one of development and retention. The effective management of assignments supports the talent agenda by ensuring that the right people with the right skills are available to support the business, whilst on assignment and as part of the assignee's ongoing development.**

There is a responsibility for Global Mobility leaders and HR professionals to be proactive and use the greater experience that they have to support the Global Talent Agenda. The word 'talent' seems to have become the buzz word for everything HR, so before the link between talent and global mobility can be developed, it's important to understand what talent actually is in your organisation.

Organisations should be considering recruitment of the 'best fit' talent with the right knowledge and experience aligned to their culture and values. It's important to identify the right talent to progress through the organisation, supported by robust processes. The management of people relies on clear communication channels and development plans that are supported and reviewed on a regular basis. The Talent process can be a robust tool in ensuring that the right people go on assignment under the most appropriate policy.

We are seeing a decline in the traditional expat programme, with many organisations creating new programmes that align with the objectives and future needs of the businesses they serve.

It's corporate strategic goals that are driving changes in the programmes associated with long-term assignments. Assignments are increasing in high-growth markets that are often more challenging assignment locations. The better linking to larger talent management strategies, means that they are more targeted and critical in purpose and more thought through in terms of cost and support. It is a more mature time for our industry overall.

The human resources department still drives policy for long-term assignments, but the increasing focus on corporate immigration and tax compliance is now moving business travel policies and tracking to sit under the umbrella of Global Mobility programmes. This is a trend that makes a lot of sense. Business travellers can often unintentionally extend a visit or lose track of having the right visas. Mitigating these risks are critical for an organisation, whether it is a business traveller or an assignee.

The decline in traditional expat programmes reflects the talent agenda, but unlike previously, one size does not fit all, and depending on the needs of the business, the percentage of critical experienced hands versus those being developed to support current and future needs, will vary immensely. For example, organisations within the Natural Resources sector would tend to be more focussed on critical experienced hands instead of businesses developing into emerging markets.

Effective talent management cannot succeed without senior management support and intervention - particularly from the CEO. What's more, the HR department needs to provide the right tools and processes so that line managers can make informed and consistent decisions, which doesn't happen overnight.

It's important that everyone knows what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how it fits into the wider business. Similarly, with the Global Assignment policy, the talent process needs to be delivered clearly and consistently by HRs. Ultimately, global development plans need a global mind-set.

The challenge HR professionals will face is whether they assign an experienced professional who needs less support and will deliver immediate results, or whether they opt for the leaders of the future who need further development and more support. Development assignees need to be around long enough to see the results of their actions, and their line managers need to be upfront about the reasons behind an assignment, without leaving the assignee to assume they are highly rated and skilled.

The benefits of this approach can be huge. By delivering a talent programme, organisations will keep the people they want to keep, which solves the post assignment conundrum. Having a programme in place will ensure the business has a clear focus and that policies are assigned to the business' needs, as well as ensuring Global Mobility teams have a clearer role which forms part of the strategic HR function. In terms of the assignees, it means they will have clear objective whilst on assignment and gain earlier international exposure at a reduced cost for the organisation.



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