

# What Does Your Mobility Programme Look Like For 2023?

**Employee experience, programme optimisation, and managing a remote workforce are just some areas HR and mobility professionals will have to consider when creating a mobility strategy that meets both near- and long-term needs this year. That's according to a recent survey report published by global mobility service provider, Cartus. Entitled "What Does Your Mobility Programme Look Like for 2023?", the report received 59 responses representing a number of industries, including manufacturing, construction, tech, consumer goods, pharma, food services, logistics, retail, oil and gas, finance, life sciences, and aerospace.**

## Global Mobility Priorities

When asked what their top global mobility priorities are for the year, respondents to our survey highlighted three stand-out areas:

- Employee experience
- Programme optimisation
- Compliance.

Two of these three trends (employee experience and compliance) were top priorities listed by respondents in the same survey last year ("What Does Your Mobility Programme Look Like For 2022?"). Although programme optimisation, or finding the most effective way to deliver mobility, is not a new industry trend, it appears to be an emerging priority for companies this year.

## Employee Experience

Unsurprisingly, employee experience is the top focus, most likely due to the many challenges mobile employees experienced in 2022 with supply chain slowdowns, high costs, complex immigration requirements, a lack of affordable temporary accommodations around the globe, and mortgage interest rate spikes in places like the UK and United States.

To counter this pressure, many global mobility teams offer flexibility in their policies, whether that is by adding inclusive policy language and support, tiering policies, focusing on duty of care, or providing core

and choice policies in which the employee can choose diverse support suitable to their family's specific needs. In addition, organisations continue to distinguish between company-sponsored moves and those initiated by the employee.

## Programme Optimisation

Global mobility managers today are looking to adopt technology solutions that streamline and optimise the most effective way to deliver mobility (including remote workers and business travellers), track demographics, and reduce complexity. Overall, there appears to be a need among survey respondents to improve programme consistency and structure, programme flow, and automation.

## Compliance

The rise in the number of remote workers may be the reason compliance made this survey's top three priorities for 2023. Another factor could be the rising digitisation of compliance, which makes it easier to share information across borders, enabling different governing authorities to work together to identify non-compliant individuals.

For those with a remote workforce, we recommend having a formal policy and deciding who within the business owns the policy. This will help mitigate potential compliance complexities. Robust remote worker policies should aim to achieve a balance between ensuring an organisation adheres to local and global laws and legislation while providing employees and future talent with the flexibility they desire.

## Global Mobility Challenges

When looking at the top mobility challenges for 2023, the results from the survey reflect similar findings found in the 2022 report. Respondents cited rising global costs in a difficult macroeconomic environment, talent availability and deployment, and the evolution of mobility to fully incorporate cross-border or remote work moves.

Notably, unlike last year where respondents cited compliance as a top challenge, it was omitted this year, although it did make the 2023 top priority list. This shift may be due to the new work environment, which has meant - in addition to being a challenge - compliance has now also become a focus and priority for companies.

## Rising Global Costs In A Difficult Macroeconomic Environment

Identified as the most anticipated challenge in 2023, rising costs have meant HR and mobility professionals must seek ways to reduce cost to offset market increases. In addition, they must balance that need simultaneously with one that strives to deliver an excellent relocating experience for the assignee and their family.

Encouragingly for the long-term, programme costs are expected to decrease as timely shipments of goods return and housing and temporary accommodations become more available. For the near-term, developing a suite of global mobility policies commensurate with the employee level or the purpose of the assignment/transfer can help to contain relocation costs. Whether that requires additional policies added to your existing policies, or looking at a more flexible approach contained by a pre-approved budget, may depend on your company's culture and philosophy.

Adopting a more flexible approach to mobility may combine these two seemingly competing focuses (cost containment and employee experience). Policies may be targeted, tiered policies by level or move purpose, or core/flex policies providing relocating employees with choice and control while presenting opportunities for cost containment. A core/flex approach provides the assignees the benefits they need and cap the amount an individual can cash out from unused relocation services.

A flexible policy approach can also provide the innovative and inclusive options that need to be implemented as part of macro-organisational initiatives. Such initiatives can influence mobility policy and enhance the employee experience - e.g., allowing a friend or relative to join a single-parent assignee on the final trip to help babysit children while the assignee unpacks and settles in.

## Talent Availability And Deployment

Survey respondents cited talent availability and deployment as another key challenge this year. It relates to attracting key talent in competitive markets and then ensuring you retain talent by providing them with the relocation benefits they expect, which almost always relates to providing them with some type of choice and flexibility.

In addition to the critical role flexible policies play in delivering a positive employee experience, mobility programmes should also reflect Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) or sustainability options.

For DEI, proactively reviewing mobility policies to add inclusionary language or letting new hires know about Employee Resource Groups are great first steps to ensuring employees feel they belong. Follow-up initiatives may include addressing family-specific needs in mobility policies - e.g., wheelchair accommodations/accessibility, non-visible disabilities, and safety and security measures, which further demonstrate an employer's inclusive approach and dedication to duty of care.

From an ESG or sustainability perspective, providing some candidates with an inclusionary policy that addresses their "green" interests, for example, may convince them to join an organisation. Seeking sustainable resources and solutions from suppliers - e.g., reduced packaging and recycling, discard and donate, and providing virtual communications instead of paper copies - can go a long way with an employee or candidate considering an assignment with your company. Encouragingly, 76% of respondents have a corporate sustainability strategy covering their whole business and supply chain.

#### Evolution Of Mobility

As the corporate relocation industry evolves, global mobility teams inevitably encounter new challenges, including remote work, self-initiated moves, and compliance for cross-border moves/business travellers. Allowing employees to work remotely can expose companies to potential compliance, tax, and immigration risks, but it can also significantly benefit organisations by expanding talent pools; attracting, developing, and retaining employees; and reducing facility costs.

The global mobility function must balance and integrate flexible working and location preferences with the organisation's preferred ways of working. In addition, it is important to understand how these areas impact talent pools.

#### Policy Redesign

As the global landscape continues to evolve, so too have the needs of relocating employees and their families. Meeting the requirements of a multi-generational and increasingly varied employee base is one of the most significant challenges global organisations face today. To attract, develop, and retain the best talent and provide sufficient duty of care, businesses are looking for innovative ways to approach mobility

policies, with more than half of respondents (56%) considering a policy redesign in 2023, up 17 percentage points from last year.

Most responding companies (64%) are considering redesigning both US domestic and international mobility programmes. The top reasons for doing so reflect current priorities and challenges for 2023: flexibility, cost, and a focus on talent (e.g., employee satisfaction). Additional reasons cited by respondents included diversity, equity, and inclusion, and employee volume.

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#### Pressure On HR And Mobility Professionals

Trends previously mentioned (cost containment, DEI, competition for talent, remote workers) each come with their own set of projects, initiatives, and focuses that the global mobility function is expected to deliver. Coupled with a lack of time and resources, this could be argued to be the biggest challenge facing HR and mobility professionals today.

David Pascoe, Executive Senior Vice President, Global Talent Mobility, EMEA and APAC, Cartus, comments, "Today, relocation plays a significant role within many organisations, and that has increased pressure on HR and mobility professionals. However, the challenges to effectively manage this additional work include a lack of resources, the increasing complexity of mobility support required by assignees, and the wider needs of the business."

"If we consider the increase in distributed workforces, for example, HR and mobility professionals can often feel overwhelmed

by the volume of remote work requests they receive, not to mention the need to meet often-changing and complex immigration laws. In fact, according to Cartus' Remote Work Landscape Pulse Survey Report, 25% of respondents estimate that managing remote work requests may take up to 40 hours per month".

"Whether remote work, cost containment, or competition for talent, without a robust solution in place - such as integrated technology or partnering with a relocation services provider - key mobility priorities like these can become a significant challenge, impacting the productivity and overall success of HR and mobility teams".

With new and evolving challenges and priorities, both within mobility and from wider economic influences, the need to build an innovative and strategic mobility programme remains critical.

#### CARTUS

For more information on how Cartus can help support your mobility needs, please email [cartussolutions@cartus.com](mailto:cartussolutions@cartus.com).

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