

# What Can GM Technology Offer HR Business Partners?

**Effective talent management has always been a vital element in the growth and success of international companies. It's even more important in today's business world in which employees are connected and mobile, and where international borders are no longer the career barriers they once were.**

Today, the proportion of employees seeking out international experience is continuing to increase. To facilitate this and engage staff, companies must offer attractive and experiential international opportunities. HR and GM teams are working together more closely than ever to ensure success, and GM technology is playing a major role in this collaboration.

## Real Time Data And Analytics

HR Business Partners know and understand the business areas they support. Through consulting and collaborating with the business leadership, they have a clear picture of what the business needs when it comes to global mobility, and act as a key connector between the business and global mobility teams. The trouble is, there is often a need to gather information about a particular move, or the population as a whole very quickly, in order to help the business make fast and informed decisions. This has traditionally been an email to their GM Manager, who then needs to manually gather information on assignment costs and other programme data. Preparing a cost estimate manually, for example, can take a few days as GM teams often have to log in to the HR system for salary data, reach out to relocation vendors for fees and, once these are obtained, send the whole lot to their advisors to run the numbers for tax and social security to complete the picture.

Such requests coming in to a GM team without technology can require a significant amount of time and data manipulation to produce the outputs that HR and the business are looking for. With HR under pressure from the business to get the data, GM needs to be able to turn these types of requests around quickly to support their HR colleagues.

In today's technology landscape, people are increasingly able to access the information they need at the click of the button. This is particularly true in the consumer market and is now becoming an expectation in the business world. Many organisations utilising GM technology are finding great value from

providing access to HR for specific areas of the system. Giving HR the power to access instant, real time reports on their assignee population, and even run scenario-based cost estimates or full cost estimates for a specific individual in a matter of minutes is now becoming more common, and is enabling them to respond to business requests much faster than ever before.

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*"During recent discussions with some of our HR Leadership team, a common request was to provide our HR business partners with the ability to "work in their mind" an assignment package with cost. The option for us to create customised cost estimate templates without having to create a new assignment record is a huge gain in itself for the internal GM team, and I anticipate it to be an even bigger gain if we can roll this out via the HR portal!"* GM Manager, Engineering Services Company.

This in itself can elevate the visibility and reputation of the global mobility programme within the business, and encourage more mobility opportunities.

With GM technology containing a wide variety of data about mobile employees, vendor services and costs, it can also be used to answer many of the other frequently asked questions from HR. Analytics can provide estimates of the timeframe required to move employees between two particular

locations based on similar previous moves for example. Having this processing power on hand really does enable HR to support business decision-making quickly, whilst simultaneously increasing their visibility and engagement in the mobility process and familiarisation with the programme.

This data can also, through collaboration with HR, help GM to shape and evolve their programme and policies to continuously be able to meet the needs of the business. This is where the GM team have a significant opportunity to offer strategic guidance to the business.

*"With the ability to store all assignment information in one centralised location and easily run reports, the team is in a position to provide meaningful feedback and quickly make programme changes to support business requirements in new locations or in support of new practices and policies".* GM Manager, Oil & Gas Company.

## New Analytical Opportunities

One of the outcomes of the digitalisation of HR, is that systems, historically used for specific purposes (e.g. separate HR databases, performance management tools, compensation and benefits platforms for example) are now able to be connected via integration. This opens up a whole range of new analytical opportunities for HR and GM to collaborate on.

Aside from the standard mobility data that HR needs to support the business, GM teams are now able to utilise technology to pull in broader data sets to enable more powerful reporting and analytics and enable HR to access more strategic analytics. This often opens the door to GM Managers to become engaged advisors to not just HR, but to the business.

Let's look at some examples. Much talk goes on about ROI in global mobility. It's a tricky one to measure in some ways, but there are, through integrated technology platforms, ways of assessing assignment success. Connecting performance management platforms to GM technology can provide opportunities to assess whether an international assignment has provided high potential future leaders with the opportunity to accelerate their careers. Bringing in performance or job grade data for a few years pre-assignment, during the assignment and post-assignment can enable the impact of the international assignment on an employee's performance, rate of promotion and movement within the business to be assessed. It helps answer the question: "Is

investment in international assignments for high potential employees actually resulting in them shining on the global stage, advancing their careers in the business and moving the business forward?" Linking this type of data to a business case focused on personal and professional development can really help prove ROI from the assignment experience.

At the other end of the spectrum, some organisations have issues with retention upon repatriation from an assignment. Data flow between systems does not have to stop once an assignment ends. Feeding employment termination data from HR systems into GM technology can enable HR and mobility to spot on assignment and post-assignment retention trends and plan proactive interventions to reduce departures. There may be very low ROI if a business spends a fortune on an assignment, only for the employee to take their new skills and experience elsewhere. Technology can help HR and the business to have adequate time to plan properly for an employee's return to the right role the home location, through data analytics, employee survey results and automated HR/GM notifications 6 months prior to the assignment end date for example.

From a cost perspective, GM technology can also be used to identify potential savings in the GM programme. Analysis of benefit take-up, exceptions and other measures can help GM programmes to evolve and ensure that assignment success is achieved at an appropriate cost.

*"On-demand' access to reliable and accurate International Assignment (IA) programme data has proved a game-changer for us. With key programme data (assignment terms, volumes, cost and policy analytics) at the fingertips of the HRDs and Financial Controllers, Mobility has been able to adopt an agile and proactive position to aid the transformation and reshaping of our business and reduce IA programme spend by over 40% within the past 3 years".* Head of Global Mobility, Aerospace Organisation.

### Talent Management And Development

Gone are the days of expatriate assignments being all about the financial packages on offer. For several years now, for many organisations the focus has firmly shifted on to development opportunities for the employee.

*"International opportunities play an important role in the development agenda – Global Mobility needs to partner closely with the Talent & Leadership Development teams to design programmes and meaningful solutions in order to be successful".* Head of Global Mobility, Engineering Company.

How this happens in organisations will really depend on their industry, approach and resources available. There are many successful examples of mobility and talent development teams working together to achieve great things, such as designing rotational assignment policies to access different areas of the business globally (and cost effectively) as part of a graduate programme; or managing project employees such that they become part of a global talent pool that is centrally managed and is ready to be deployed anywhere, anytime, with minimal down time between projects. Utilising GM technology can go a long way to facilitating and supporting these initiatives. Flexible technology solutions can be tailored to support the end-to-end workflow, costing and document creation for custom policies and initiatives. Alerts and notifications to GM and HR teams proactively when the end date of a particular rotation or project is coming to an end enables them to work collaboratively ensure a smooth transition home or on to the next location.

Technology can also be used to collate information from the employees themselves through surveys and pulse checks. This not only helps to gauge employee experience during the assignment (important information for GM and HR alike) but can add a more subjective data set to help answer questions about suitability and adaptability traits and

help identify those who may be a good fit for future, and perhaps more challenging international assignment opportunities.

*"I envisage gathering a set of predictive analytics that will help us identify employees who can withstand and deliver on their role in tough locations. I want to gather information that will answer: How well do they tolerate ambiguity? How well do they deal with security challenges? Are they easily disconcerted? How well did they adjust in previous moves?".* VP Reward, Media & Technology Organisation

### In Conclusion

Monitoring ongoing costs, upcoming end dates and business unit-specific metrics enables HR to maintain an accurate overview of their assignee population, increasing engagement with the GM team and the relocation process as a whole.

HR and Talent managers expect access to on-demand tools and real-time data to facilitate true collaboration with their business leadership and GM teams. And now, with access to today's automation and digitised tools, companies have the opportunity to build and connect their global mobility ecosystems with HR and their extended stakeholder networks. Through integrated technologies and advanced data analytics, HR managers are provided with real-time information to support evidence-based decision making and agility, helping them manage global talent efficiently and effectively.



#### TIM WELLS

Tim has nearly two decades of Global Mobility experience, including managing in-house programmes for major organisations in the financial services, consumer goods and technology sectors, and servicing a range of clients as an independent consultant. In his role as VP of Technology Solutions, he works with closely with Equus clients to apply the company's technology to optimise their programmes and solve their complex Global Mobility challenges. Tim has a specific interest in utilising mobility to facilitate talent development. Visit [www.equusoft.com](http://www.equusoft.com) for further information.

### What Can GM Technology Offer HR Business Partners?



#### OPERATIONAL

- Increased visibility of GM programme data
- Instant creation of cost estimates and documentation
- Proactive notification of assignment end dates in advance
- Enhanced reporting for business leaders
- Employee surveys and pulse checks



#### STRATEGIC

- Data to identify trends in employee engagement, well-being and retention
- A measurement of ROI for high potential/leadership GM initiatives and policies
- Faster and more informed decisions based on data and analytics
- Tailored and evolving programmes to meet business needs