

# RES Forum 2015 Annual Report

The RES Forum 2015 Annual Report launches in April 2015, and brings some exciting analysis and fresh insight into the key trends in Global Mobility during 2014 and what these trends mean for the global mobility practitioner into 2015. The RES Forum, for those who don't know, is an online community for in-house International HR and Mobility professionals. The Forum facilitates regular knowledge sharing and e-surveying amongst its 700 members on all areas 'Global Mobility', and is therefore uniquely placed to understand what is keeping in-house HR mobility practitioners awake at night.

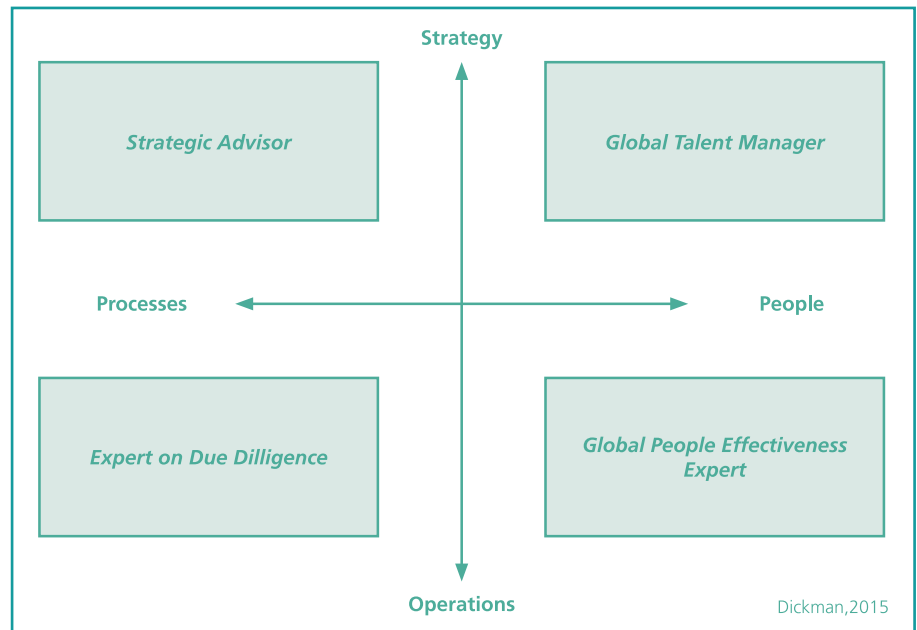
The report itself has been written by Professor Michael Dickmann of Cranfield Business School, who condenses his analysis and thoughts into a seamless body of work covering five key themes, which build effortlessly on his research from the 2014 RES Forum key trends report. These five key themes for 2015 are:

- The Global Mobility function and how it can make a strong competitive impact
- Global Mobility resourcing, development, talent management, career and repatriation issues
- Global Mobility Programme compliance and duty of care
- Reward package design for international assignees
- Global Mobility programme management and technology.

So why have we titled the 2015 RES Forum Annual report 'The Talent Management conundrum'? In a nutshell we, at the RES Forum, see international employee mobility, management of employee mobility programmes and the movement of talent itself as bit of a complex jigsaw puzzle, where the answers can seem simple, but the parts do not often seem to fit together.

On the face of it the answer is simple:

1. Master competency on the four key areas of expertise which Professor Dickmann recognised in our 2014 Report:
  - Strategic Advisor
  - Global Talent Manager
  - Expert on due diligence
  - Global people effectiveness expert.
2. Slot your function into a Ulrich HR model.
3. Invest in technology and some



assignment KPIS linked to performance measurement and ROI.

4. And before you are done, throw in some diagnostic/consulting skills just to round things off.

Et voila!, you have the perfect mobility model and function, partnering effortlessly with the business and supporting the business in moving global talent across borders. If only life were that simple.

If we consider point (1), the report clearly illustrates that while practitioners aspire to have mastery in all four competencies they are, in the same practitioners opinion, most valued and most comfortable in one area in particular, what Professor Dickmann calls 'expert in due diligence'. We at the RES Forum would argue that this due diligence expertise extends beyond diligence expertise to specialist compliance knowledge in tax, immigration and payroll.

On the other hand, when practitioners were asked what their companies most value in the mobility function, 'strategic advisor' appears to be what is valued most by management. So what is more important? Alignment with what is most valued by the business and the mobility function or creating a different type of value to the organisation through doing things beyond providing diligence expertise?

The answer most definitely sits with the latter. Why? Let me digress slightly from Professor Dickmann's analysis and take my cue from a presentation delivered by Michael S. Schell, CEO of the cultural training and

leadership development organisation RW3 in late 2014, at a RES Forum meeting in Zurich. Schell boldly predicted that in the future absolutely everything which follows a process will be automated.

This is a brave prediction, however, if we look back at the kind of jobs which used to exist 25 years ago (and which have since been automated, think secretarial, admin, call centre), it is not inconceivable to think that technology will reach a point where more and more complex procedural work can be automated. If you are struggling to get your head around that, think about the level of technology which now exists for managing employee processes, and beyond that, the technology which now exists for general human interaction.

This would, in our opinion, lend itself to the eventual de-skilling and 'value-reduction' in compliance led knowledge, based on the assumption that compliance is based on a rule and alignment with a rule or procedure. The counterweight to this argument, and Schell's key idea in the presentation, was that only jobs which have an intrinsic value to companies will be exempt from this automation. As I reflect on this message, I am drawn to the three other competences which a mobility practitioner needs in addition to due diligence expertise - Strategic Advisor, Global Talent Manager, and Global People Effectiveness Expert.

All three core competences lend themselves readily to the strategic

advisory, or value add activity, which Schell references. Professor Dickmann also argues in the 2015 RES Forum Annual report that receiving strategic global mobility advice will be one of the most important contributions the mobility function can make to senior managers. Given where the mobility function is positioned organisationally, the mobility function is also well placed to firstly have information, and secondly insight on, identifying talent opportunities, supporting talent, conducting workforce planning, shaping global career management, and refining business information and planning – in other words a global talent management and people effectiveness expert.

So how do you go about this transformation of your role from compliance manager to value-add strategic partner? As a first step the mobility function needs to look a little less inwardly and cast its eyes towards how other HR functions typically support the business in engaging talent and creating the pipeline of future leaders. High performing Talent Management functions which sit within the broader HR function, identify the competences needed to create leaders, introduce frameworks to measure those competences, and apply these assessments to potential talent and identified top management. They measure success through their leadership pipeline and the ability of new home-grown leaders to deliver business results.

Still on the subject of looking within the HR function, high performing Reward functions can evidence how Reward programmes align with shareholder interests though rewarding exceptional employee performance whilst managing costs sensibly. In high performing Reward functions, Reward spend is optimised and targeted rather than spent in a broad-brushed way.

And finally, high performing HR technology or HR operations functions provide controlled work flow and process management through optimising technology and self service capability, removing menial tasks from mobility management, introducing controls around data, and also providing measured KPIS through system tracking. Also in the era of (big)data, an effective HR system offers arguably the most powerful tool to get the mobility function moving away from its' dependency on compliance expertise and towards a place at the strategic table,

## Global Mobility & Career Management

	Organisational Action	Comments
Global Mobility & Career Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use sophisticated selection factoring in personality factors, soft competencies, performance and potential</li> <li>• Match candidate's profile to inter-cultural job demands</li> <li>• Provide realistic job, local team and country previews (and also 'look-see visits')</li> </ul>	<p><i>Understand the broader organisational</i></p> <p>Seek individuals who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Self-confidence &amp; optimism</li> <li>→ Willingness to learn about different cultures and business environments</li> <li>→ Inter-personal orientation</li> <li>→ Good communication skills</li> <li>→ Cultural sensitivity &amp; willingness to critically review own values and norms</li> <li>→ Openness</li> <li>→ Global mind set</li> <li>→ Behavioural flexibility</li> <li>→ Inquisitiveness</li> <li>→ Ability to successfully manage uncertainty</li> <li>→ Resilience</li> </ul> <p>↳ <i>Design packages that take account of diverse interests &amp; pay-offs</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the acquisition of career capital                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global business capabilities</li> <li>- Cross-cultural mastery and insights</li> <li>- Global, local and cross-border social networks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Consider expatriation to centres of excellence and ways to apply insights and use social capital in the job upon return</li> <li>→ Move beyond general career systems to individualise career management</li> </ul> <p>↳ <i>Understand individuals and their career capital/talent needs. Support these through formal/informal activities</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the global careerist for the next position in advance of return:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefing and update regarding organisational structure, goals, politics and changes in the new locations</li> <li>- Pre-return and after return dialogues to manage expectations / build realistic pre-return expectations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage networking with colleagues in destination location</li> <li>• Continue to operate a mentor / global business sponsor system until repatriate is 'settled'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Conduct an open and honest assessment of the global careerist's situation in relation to the organisation</li> <li>→ Explore long-term career opportunities</li> <li>→ Encourage the global careerist to continuously communicate with home organisation during work abroad</li> </ul> <p>↳ <i>Work openly and honestly with the returnee to explore mutually beneficial career opportunities</i></p>

namely real time assignment cost data and therefore the eventual opportunity to manage costs more effectively and in a planned way.

The final piece in the jigsaw is implementing these changes and alignment of the mobility professional's activities and behaviours to those key strategic areas. The 'organisational actions' tables at the end of each chapter of the RES Forum Annual Report give a clear direction on what areas the practitioner needs to consider and align to in order to up-skill and operate in the value-add space. Two examples of these tables are illustrated here.

Careful consideration of these areas as well as a well-structured development plan focusing on those technical and

behavioural gaps will allow the mobility practitioner to set themselves some clear goals, as well as set them on the path to more effective and value-added interaction with the business...so what are you waiting for?!

*The RES Forum annual report is launched on the afternoon of 22 April 2015, with presentations from Michael Dickmann, a round table discussion on the Talent Management/mobility conundrum and presentations from other contributors to the report - to attend this exclusive event (or to receive a copy of the full report) event please email [res.forum@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:res.forum@yahoo.co.uk).*

*If you are an in-house HR practitioner and would like to join the RES Forum community please visit our website [www.theresforum.com](http://www.theresforum.com) – it is completely free.*

## Global Performance Management

	Organisational Action	Comments
Global Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give discretion in the job</li> <li>• Clarify job expectations and responsibilities</li> <li>• Gain agreement as to job objectives between individual, home and host country</li> <li>• Provide overlap with incumbent to facilitate 'hitting the ground running'</li> <li>• Align any other conflicting expectations regarding performance standards, job, working environment etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Choose a job that the candidate will find only a slight stretch. Adjustment to a new team and new culture is already a challenge</li> <li>→ Create challenges for top leadership candidates – the stretch might be larger. This might include changing divisions, functions or more radical job content alterations</li> <li>↳ <i>Understand talent management and global leadership challenges to find the 'right' candidate in relation to position</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a globally integrated performance management system to encourage comparability</li> <li>• Find a balance between local and global objectives</li> <li>• Agree assignment-specific objectives that are meaningful and attractive to local operating units and appraisers</li> <li>• Ensure that the primary purpose of the assignment (developmental, control, coordination, skills-filling) should be reflected in the performance management and appraisal</li> <li>• Link performance management to development, career and succession planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Implement a Performance Management (PM) philosophy that is acceptable in all regions and countries that the organisation operates in</li> <li>→ Encourage local – global cooperation rather than competition for resources or preservation of balance sheet orientation</li> <li>→ Be conscious of timing, tasks and roles</li> <li>↳ <i>Design a PM system that is flexible in so far as local and higher level (European/global) criteria can be used</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the new job is challenging</li> <li>• Design the responsibilities so that global careerists can use their new capabilities and networks/destination location</li> <li>• Continue to operate a mentor / global business sponsor system until repatriate is 'settled'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Work towards a high level of responsibility (ideally not reduced when compared with earlier position)</li> <li>→ Preserve as much autonomy at work as is reasonable</li> <li>↳ <i>Foster the individual's engagement in the new role. Devise performance management that strengthens the use of new capabilities.</i></li> </ul>