

TALENT: Emerging Trends In International Work Arrangements

Global mobility continues to be a vital tool for businesses to execute on their strategy. However, as we move into the next decade, we are seeing a shift in the profile of the mobile population. With more employee-initiated moves than ever, organisations must be flexible to meet not only the talent needs of the business, but also the motivations and expectations of the talent.

With four generations in the workforce, demographic diversity has challenged Global Mobility professionals to think differently, to redefine more nimble programmes, able to flex as needed.

Drawing from the findings of Santa Fe Relocation's 2019 Global Mobility Survey, figure 1 illustrates the key current and future talent trends.

A Shift In The Organisation-Employee Relationship - The 'New Deal'

The relationship dynamics between employer and employee are changing and so too are expectations.

Reflecting on an interview as part of Santa Fe Relocation's research, with a global HR leader (their organisation conducts an annual 'pulse' survey of 7,000 employees): Expectations by generation do differ - even between Generation Z (1995 onwards) and Generation Y (1980s to 1995).

Generation Z will be internationally mobile as a recognition that this is essential to further their career and they view the employer as a consumable resource - an extension of their university experience. Indeed, it would seem the expectation amongst this employee group is to 'consume' the employer for new work experiences outside of their country of employment.

However, leveraging international work interventions at an earlier career stage is not exclusive to the organisation mentioned above. Another Executive HR leader shared with us that they have adopted a similar strategy of providing international work experiences at an early stage in their high potential 'rising stars' careers. In that organisation, technology is developing at such a rate that available talent is becoming scarcer and scarcer and the deployment of those

Figure 1 : Key Emerging Talent Trends - A summary

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| A shift in the organisation-employee relationship - the 'new deal' | The relationship between employer and employees is changing. Employees will increasingly own their own careers. |
| The need for 'thoughtful mobility' | Increasingly, organisations are moving towards creating purpose-led Global Mobility frameworks to align business and talent purpose with multigenerational and multicultural employee expectations. |
| Evolving diversity | Progress is being made in enabling women to enhance their careers through international work arrangements, as organisations seek ways to be more creative and inclusive with their talent and mobility strategies and policies. LGBT inclusion will increasingly enhance talent pools as country legislation embraces same sex civil partnerships. |
| An increasing focus on risk and compliance | International work arrangements are becoming more complex and in parallel, government agencies are becoming smarter at digitally tracking the movement of internationally mobile workers and connecting across borders. |
| A more holistic approach to Global Mobility | The 'new deal' over the coming decade will necessitate organisations adopting a more holistic approach to engaging, inspiring and enabling employees to work and thrive. |

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who have undertaken long-term assignments may create a disconnect between their expectations and the available opportunities for senior roles. Emergent technology is disrupting careers as well as business models.

The reality is that the expectations of the diverse global workforce will require new approaches to Global Mobility, where the home country becomes less relevant.

International work arrangements will continue to see more fluidity in the drivers for mobility, with more employees taking control of their careers and lifestyle, electing to work, live and thrive in locations to suit their circumstances. Now more than ever, organisations are needing to flex their approach to mobility to attract, enable and retain talent.

An increase in one-way employee-initiated relocations, was revealed in our research findings and suggests that sustainable, capable people will manage their own career 'share value' and expect their organisations to 'love them' in the process. By love them, we mean that organisations will have to work much harder, if not doing so already, at engaging their employees and especially those who undertake substantial international travel. Enabling and nurturing a strong work-life balance to sustain physical and mental well-being are already well-documented as being key people priorities over the next decade.

So, the 'new deal' for many organisations will require clarity of purpose, emotional and cultural intelligence in how best to communicate and engage with all levels in the organisation and more team-based collaboration rather than functional and business silos. The people strategy thus needs to be agile and fluid to incorporate established

and self-employed specialists. In addition, there is a need to build teams that do not require rigid infrastructures and systems. Instead, a solid framework of people practices that enable teams to innovate and collaborate.

The Need For 'Thoughtful Mobility'

There is a need for purpose-led Global Mobility frameworks to align business and talent purpose with multigenerational employee expectations. As organisations develop a consistent total reward strategy across their global footprint, it will become increasingly attractive for one-way company or employee-initiated relocations and more developmental transfers.

Clearly, the main checkpoint for Mobility teams is to ensure that the right policy is adopted and indeed a fair talent process followed by their HR and business peers. Organisations are seeing themselves as more global and are drawing from a broader talent pool to fill roles wherever they may be, allowing for more employee engagement in applying for roles, where previously mobility was employer-led.

Evolving Diversity – Increased Female Engagement In International Work Arrangements

The World Bank estimates that over 42% of the workforce is female in most countries. There is still a way to go, but there are some positive indications that the mobile population is heading towards equality. Our research findings revealed an increase of female assignees from 25% in 2018 to 32% in 2019 - showing there is progress in rebalancing the opportunity for women to engage in international work arrangements. While dual careers and children's education are likely to be significant factors in enabling more women to enhance their careers through international work arrangements, organisations are seeking ways to be more creative and inclusive with their talent and mobility strategies and policies.

An Increasing Focus On Risk And Compliance

With the burgeoning advancement of social media and technology, international work arrangements are becoming more complex and in parallel, government agencies are becoming savvier at digitally tracking the movement of internationally mobile workers and connecting across borders.

'65% of the organisations surveyed in our research reported that they do have immigration processes in place to remain compliant, with the most popular method for tracking being MS Excel software. While this may work for tracking purposes, it will require more technical input to know if a visa and work permit is required where a Business Traveller is really working in a country (based

on a series of triggers). This may lead to more than detention at an airport and if found working whilst in the host country, triggers for payroll, tax and social security, and possibly permanent establishment issues at the organisation level.

A More Holistic Approach To Global Mobility

The 'new deal' over the coming decade will necessitate organisations adopting a more holistic approach to engaging, inspiring and enabling employees to work and thrive.

To this end, as policies become more segmented and the anchor to a home location or a headquarters becomes less critical for some organisations (for example, transnationals), a more holistic approach towards total reward and benefits will require greater harmonisation across the global footprint.

Whether it be a sequential series of 'local-to-local' movements or traditional assignment types is a decision for each business to determine. Elements such as medical support and retirement arrangements will need more attention. Will these be as relevant for younger generations? Will they wish for more personal choices in how they provision their long-term wealth creation? The pension concept has been largely based on Western models of compensation and benefits.

Employees embarking on international work arrangements will increasingly demand policies that deliver structured flexibility and support through the right balance of human and digital support mechanisms. Whether it be through self-service activities via internal company and external suppliers' systems or well-managed destination and relocation programmes, the focus will be on establishing successful and enjoyable life experiences for employees, as they undertake often life-changing work and personal experiences.

As the world continues to become a 'global village', so practices will change. The point that should be noted is that Global Mobility, as we know it today, will continue to be disrupted and those who avoid considering future alternatives will be disadvantaged in the race for increasingly scarce, valuable talent.

References and extracts from:

- *Santa Fe Relocation's research report: 'Global Mobility Survey 2019 'REVISION: Mobility through the looking glass'*
Download: www.santaferelo.com/en/mobility-insights/global-mobility-survey/
- *Santa Fe Relocation's white paper: TALENT: Emerging trends in international work arrangements.*
Download: <https://www.santaferelo.com/en/mobility-insights/white-papers/talent-emerging-trends-in-international-work-arrangements/>.

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