

# Top 7 Global Trends Of 2019 Revealed

## From Technology To Employee Experience, Workforce Experts, Crown World Mobility, Report On ‘What To Expect’

The New Year offers the chance to reflect on and anticipate how global mobility is responding to worldwide events and what's impacting the industry at large. Political uncertainty, trade tensions impacting global business and nationalism emerging in a number of countries, are some of the global events affecting the way business is conducted worldwide. That being said, we continue to live and work with incredible optimism and a global commitment toward social and environmental responsibility. We're all further connected with technology, driving us to innovate ways of working, communicating and inevitable shifts in business models and workforce values.

Crown World Mobility (CWM) recently hosted its quarterly Perspectives Live webinar to provide an outlook on what's impacting the mobility industry and featured our annual list of trends and topics identified as significant shifts in the industry or innovations shaping the future of world mobility. We are firmly entrenched in a digital world, highly connected with technology, driving us to innovate ways of working, communicating, and inevitable shifts in business models and workforce values. We also live with the reality of an increasingly younger workforce. And in the few countries where this isn't the case, there is an urgent need to find alternative workforce solutions. The “youthquake” of global talent is forcing most companies to shift values, cultures and strategies.

To follow are our top 7 trends businesses can consider to stay ahead and gain a competitive edge in today's fast-paced, evolving digital landscape.

### 1. The Increasingly Important Employee Experience

Surprisingly, there are few industries that do not have the employee experience on their 2019 trends list. Driven by a growing recognition that employees' expectations are evolving, there is a greater need to offer an engaging, emotional, human-centred experience in the workplace.

This is especially true at critical, pivotal moments, such as recruiting, onboarding, career planning or exiting the organisation. Companies need to ask themselves what they can do to raise the bar with creative ways to engage and retain talent, and how are they improving the overall employee experience.

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Before the start of a move, some companies recognise the importance of an informed decision-making process. Many provide managers with selection guides to identify more qualified candidates, and self-assessments for employees and family members. They are also developing formal and informal ways to get to know the destination, financial implications of a move, quality of life in the new location and relocation services that will be made available to the employee.

There are also many onboarding ideas that offer a “soft landing” to the employee and family at the start of an assignment or relocation, including policy orientations, new location welcome packs, cross-cultural training or destination services. However, we are seeing more creative ways to supplement the traditional approaches. When developing new ways to support assignee onboarding, it is important to provide guidelines and get buy-in to ensure you

have a consistent global platform – even if local nuances are adapted for cultural fit.

Though location and other factors influence what approaches apply, a few general examples include:

- Developing a basic guide for the receiving manager and host location (new destination) team to ensure consistent and thorough onboarding. Include what needs to be ready for the employee's arrival and any hosting activities that should be scheduled to ensure the employee meets people quickly, gets up and running and is productive on the job
- Providing points of contact for the employee and accompanying partner. Be creative. For example, one company recently used Polaroids to introduce key team members in their welcome kit
- Exploring low-cost ways to help the employee/family get to know the new location and feel welcome. Set up popular local apps, download maps, use scavenger hunts similar to those designed to help travelling students get to know the historical downtown of cities, or schedule a bike or foodie tour to celebrate the employee's first 30 days, etc.

One long-standing best practice, that is also becoming more standard, is to give employees access to some level of ongoing support during the life of the assignment or after the initial move. Minimally this can consist of providing information – perhaps on the company's intranet, in a text or an email reminder – career planning, updating assignment objectives, repatriation preparation, or to capture new competencies and skills related to the experience that will become part of their annual performance review. Often a simple “how is it going?” could make a difference to the employee and solicit valuable feedback for the programme.

Additionally, best practices are to provide employees access to ongoing support during the life of the assignment or after the move. This can be through the company's intranet, mobile texts or email communication.

### 2. Technology To Supplement, Simplify And Enhance

Technology solutions come in many shapes and sizes. Across our industry every company has some level of technology supporting its business model. No matter where you work,

you find yourself a part of your organisation's digital journey. Opting out is not possible.

Employees, especially early-career millennials and emerging Gen Z's, continue to influence expectations. But, employees across almost all generations have similar expectations when it comes to wanting the convenience and simplicity of having information at their fingertips – and available on any of their devices.

Technology designed to help manage an employee's move continues to evolve. Even companies with fewer than 25 assignments per year will look to move away from paper processes for forms and policy. There are several technology solutions that are clearly making a huge difference in enhancing the employee's experience and simplifying the process.

### 3. Global Mobility In The Advisor Role

The evolution of the global mobility professional is a continual process. The increased use of flexible mobility policy, along with growing business and employee demands for choices, requires those in the function to advise and support decision-makers in new ways. Interestingly, this is a trend that reflects similar shifts across HR.

In our recent survey of more than 125 global mobility professionals, 56 percent of companies use flexible policies today and another 10 percent are planning to use the approach in the next 12 months. Core-flex is the most popular flexible policy option available. Driven by the business manager or HR, the "flex" element can also be an instrument for employee choice.

Flexibility offers companies a way to address differing business line, location and assignee needs via a consistent platform. Yet this very benefit requires that someone take the role of advisor to the decision-makers, and that role is typically filled by global mobility.

Employees looking for choices in policy are finding it in the use of lump sum and flexible allowances; particularly popular in policies targeted to early-career employees, often moving for the first time. While these employees may need fewer services, they typically need more guidance. This paradox leads directly to the desks of global mobility professionals.

Flexibility and choice of any kind add complexity and require new skills and practices. Throughout 2019, we will see global mobility teams re-writing job descriptions, upskilling team members and hiring new talent with more consultative and strategic experience.

### 4. Flexibility And Choices

This topic continues to evolve in terms of what it means and is becoming a perennial

trend. Today's consumers want choices, convenience and the opportunity to customise, and this reality is making it into all types of corporate strategy, including global mobility. Business and HR partners want options to meet their needs, whether it is the budget, region or employee population.

Similarly, corporate global mobility programmes increasingly expect flexibility and choice from their external partners: concierge services, lump sum management, global or local billing, face-to-face or virtual consultations.

### 5. Dual-Career Couples

Dual-career couples is not a new phenomenon in global mobility, nor is this the first time featured in annual trends. So why is it reappearing in 2019? Because more companies are struggling with the challenges that the dual couple demographic brings and are in search of creative solutions.

There are two ways that we see companies defining the dual-career employee. Most frequently the term applies to an employee whose spouse or partner has a career in another organisation and perhaps a different field. For some companies the employee population includes several employees who are married, and therefore, "dual career" may also mean an employee whose spouse or partner is working in the same organisation.

This topic has continued to increase in importance because it is far more common for both partners to contribute significantly to a family income. This means that when an employee is asked to go on an international assignment or transfer locations, the economic and family impact of the decision is greater than in the past.

We are seeing dual-career challenges to mobility in all industries and all regions. The dual-career factor is a significant barrier to getting the right people to accept an assignment or a move.

This is a trend that reflects a shift in relevance and is a topic gaining urgency. In the past, it was discussed because it was impacting a small number of accompanied employees and needed to be addressed as a new challenge. Today it impacts almost every employee eligible for accompanied status.

### 6. Employee Well-Being And Duty Of Care

This is the second year in a row that this topic appears on our trends to watch list. The reasons that employee well-being and duty of care appear again stem from two notable shifts in workforce dynamics. First, today's employees increasingly expect to work in an environment that enable them to establish a work-life balance. The concept of "work-life balance" is no longer limited to benefits, like flexible hours and maternity leave. It

has broadened to incorporate mental and physical well-being and having benefits that support a wide range of priorities, such as:

- Access to healthy food options
- Encouragement of physical activity
- Corporate social responsibility and community outreach activities
- Mindfulness
- Updated technology and availability of devices
- Flexible healthcare
- Personal development opportunities
- Green and updated workplace environments.

Today, companies focused on recruiting and retaining high-performing talent prioritise employee well-being. The good news is that many mobility programmes and policies already address well-being issues, but so far, they are not being communicated across our industry. 2019 would be a good year to rebrand some of the benefits that support employee and family well-being and come up with new options to promote and provide.

### 7. Making Global Careers More Accessible

This is our fifth year of tracking and supporting the industry's discussion around diversity mobility. Global companies require international experience as part of future leader development and therefore it becomes increasingly clear that when the assignee population of a company does not have diversity, the company's future leaders will be limited to those with access to international opportunities.

Inclusion and reducing barriers to global mobility are central to this concept. Fortunately, as some of our 2019 trends demonstrate, flexible policies and focusing on the employee experience and assignee well-being represent strategies that will enhance diversity.

This year we see companies assessing the gaps and taking steps to become more inclusive. Increasing the number of female assignees, supporting LGBT employees, dual-career couples, creating low-cost and agile opportunities for millennials and employees from business-critical emerging markets, and adding flexibility to policy to support nontraditional family dynamics, are all becoming commonplace.

Creating international work opportunities for employees with disabilities is the latest area being addressed in some leading-edge organisations.

#### CROWN WORLD MOBILITY

Our presence is in almost 46 countries gives our mobility team a unique perspective on the realities of managing talent worldwide.

For further information visit [www.crownworldmobility.com](http://www.crownworldmobility.com)