

Back To “WHY” Of Global Mobility

Today’s VUCA environment presents challenges and opportunities for global mobility teams to effectively partner with business leaders to achieve their goals of talent mobility. Whilst mobility leaders are inundated with requests for smart and seamless mobility operations with a focus on employee experience combined with cost optimisation, it is equally important to understand the “WHY” of global mobility.

The one size fits all approach towards talent mobility from a policy perspective is passé and business leaders are demanding a nimble and an agile approach for meeting their business needs. The environment in which the business leaders operate itself is going through a change at a pace unforeseen earlier and how mobility function responds to this challenge in a proactive manner determines the success of the function. This article proposes to share some of the demands of the business leaders and how global mobility leaders can address these requests.

1) Self-Driven vs Business Driven:

The millennials requesting for shorter-term opportunities to enhance career opportunity is on the rise. It is important for the business leaders to classify between a self-driven move or a business opportunity as these largely influence the level of support expected from the mobility team. Self-driven moves are supported by way of immigration sponsorship and an initial settling in support, whereas the latter has larger support in terms of cost of living differentials, school support etc. A similar approach of limited mobility support is also leveraged for global training programmes as organisations invest in skilling up talent for meeting client demands. For example, development of talent in digital space.

2) Managing High Potential Talent:

Global organisations invest in their top talent by way of providing challenging opportunities in different geographies. Mobility function can be a highly valued partner in suggesting locations which can enable the objectives and specifically the locations which present regulatory challenges and difficulties

from a mobility perspective. Global talent development programmes have a broader remit to execute in multiple locations at the same time, and therefore it is critical for the mobility function to confirm the plan for each employee considering nationality, duration of employment, compensation and regulations to comply.

3) Bespoke Policy Development:

The Global Mobility Policy must have a global philosophy as well the flexibility to incorporate nuances from either a regional perspective or unique to a business vertical. For example, the digital business provides for opportunities to fulfill the client request in a much shorter time and is usually a shorter-term engagement compared to a multi-year engagement in application maintenance in the context of IT industry. Furthermore, there is a substantial shortage of skills in the digital space. There is a business case for how the mobility function can respond to the challenges of this business need. For example, seamless H-1b visa transfers, Green Card sponsorship policy for hiring in the US, Permanent Residency support etc.

4) Ensuring Business Continuity:

Few geographies pose challenges in terms of non-availability of options to extend the stay through permanent residency for certain visa categories or skills classification. This situation presents a huge challenge for the business to ensure continuity of its talent on the client engagement and it impacts the commitments made to their clients. Such situation requires that the mobility function has complete and accurate data of all its employees in a country along with their last working day as per the immigration regulations. This data becomes critical to educate business leaders months ahead of time for them to plan for replacements or find alternative locations to relocate from where the employees can continue to serve the client commitments. A proactive approach to address this situation is indispensable for the mobility leaders.

5) Mergers And Acquisitions:

The current environment of talent shortage of skills like digital, analytics, consulting etc., has led to substantial increase in acquisitions which complement the business need either by adding client portfolios or addressing talent shortages. Merging smaller

organisations with large organisations which have well defined processes is an opportunity where mobility function can partner with HR leaders to integrate mobility policies in order to ensure consistency in mobility support, as well compliance led actions. Mergers and acquisitions also require that there are clear communication frameworks implemented to create awareness and manage compliance and reputation risks in the merged scenario.

6) Senior Leadership Moves:

The number of senior leaders being moved to growth regions for business expansion is on the increase. However, the current environment of cost optimisation also presents a challenge on how the mobility function balances the objective of providing a seamless experience to business leaders as well managing under the cost restrictions. Understanding mobility practices from fellow mobility leaders across the industries becomes imperative to address some of the challenges.

The above situations require that mobility leaders have a) “partnering” mindset with a full understanding of business challenges, b) implement technology tools to ensure accurate and complete data and c) drive the transformational agenda on employee experience leveraging vendor partners.



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