

# Seriously... What's The Point?

## Two Sides To Every Story

My name is Chris, I live with my partner Abbie and have a grand total of five kids in my life. Yes, that's right... FIVE (and all pre-teen!!). Life is hectic and life is busy, kids are flying around left right and centre each and every day like a never-ending, groundhog day, crazed house party (except with juice and snack boxes replacing the "adult grape juice" and pizza often required).

I also work for a company called Aviva who are a UK headquartered global insurance company. My role in the Global Mobility (GM) team is to develop its purpose, tools and structures to better serve our Global Assignee's and business units.

I share this with you as, like with all of us, there is more than one side to my story. On one hand, I'm the piggy backing Dad whose daughter finds his stomach a little too cuddly for his liking, alongside the Global Mobility professional trying to demonstrate value in the GM programme for the Growth of the company I work for. As the well said proverb goes... "There's always two sides to every story".

## Try To Understand

Do we understand the purpose of the Global Mobility teams we operate within? That there is more than one side to the story of an assignment? That the pre-conceived rhetoric and understanding often perpetuated (and dare I say encouraged) by ourselves as GM Professionals, may in fact be the very thing hindering the success of our assignments and programmes?

Over the past year, we have been developing our purpose within the GM team at Aviva, reviewing where it is anchored to, and therefore the very reason we exist within Aviva's People Function. We have collated 3,000 hours of Global Mobility demand data to assess where we spend our time, where we duplicate work, and begin to ask questions as to why our processes are the way they are and how we can do it better.

We have conducted interviews with assignees to understand their experience, collated assignee survey scores to assess our engagement, and spoken to our business units and projects to hear why they are looking to use global moves to develop Aviva as a business. We have begun to listen and consult, rather than command and control.

## What Are We Thinking?

But all of this has had to be grounded first and foremost in understanding our purpose and challenging the very thinking that got in the way in the first place. As part of this journey,

we began to see that the role of a Global Mobility function is to benefit our customers. Not our internal customers, or our employees as customers, but our actual customers. Our policyholders, investors, pension schemes, etc. The Global Mobility function's purpose was to enable Aviva, through moving the right people, to the right place at the right value, to benefit our 33 million customers.

By anchoring our work in our customers benefit (not on business unit cost or assignee experience as is traditionally the case), we can begin to balance the sides of the stories of an assignment. Assignee requests are understood against the backdrop of their needs instead of employees wanting more; business cost challenges are understood against the backdrop of driving the right customer outcomes (whilst allowing business units to determine their own investment level versus value return). The GM function is now about enabling solutions rather than policing policies.

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## Change Your Thinking To Change Your Outcome

When we challenge the thinking that drives the outcomes which frustrate our purpose and work, we begin to focus on the things that matter to a successful programme. The noisy shouts from within our own industry (which haven't been answered since the dawn of humanity I believe) regarding Return on Investment, having a seat at the table, developing exception free policies or ensuring everyone in our company is educated in mobility begin to subside.

Instead, they are replaced with active discussion and debate on what really matters to each of our individual programmes. We challenge how we generate value to our business through minimising disruption and impact on the potential return/outcome the business wishes to see. We find a way for talent development, business growth, critical need and employee beneficial moves which can co-exist within the

same framework, with differing benefits. Duty of Care becomes a genuine conversation with an assignee rather than an arbitrary measure of why a benefit must be included.

## So What's The Point?

Fundamentally, the GM Function becomes an enabler of its key stakeholders to deliver the right mobility solution to their problem, rather than find a box to stick them in uttering the words "policy says no". Our role in our various organisations is much more valuable than simply ensuring policies are adhered to. Instead, we can be the experts providing guidance and compliant solutions to enable business growth and great customer outcomes. Now that's a GM Function I'm on board with.

"There's two sides to every story"... challenge our thinking, change our outcomes, serve our customers.



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Chris is responsible for the Change Management and Function Redesign for the Global Mobility team at Aviva, a Global Insurance Provider. Chris' focus is on enabling the Function to develop away from policy management and administrative processes into an expert consultation service able to demonstrate clear business value for Aviva's 33 million customers, it's customer facing business units and it's functional group centre and market teams. Chris has worked within the Global Mobility Team at Aviva, previously as a Global Mobility Manager, since 2016 and prior to this he managed the UK Mobility team, managing Aviva's UK Visa processes. Chris lives in a village south of Norwich in Norfolk and in his spare time enjoys music and playing in his band, spending time with his family and following Liverpool Football Club. He's also partial to a glass (or two) of a good Red wine.