



## Nike and Cartus: A Core/Flex Collaboration



Core/flex policy remains a hot topic within the mobility industry. From talent acquisition and employee experience, to cost management and exception reductions, the focus on flexibility and customization within a mobility program is proving a success for a number of key Cartus clients, including Nike.

Here, we discuss how Cartus and Nike collaborated to deliver a successful core/flex policy, including the roles that each organization played and the results achieved.

### IMPLEMENTING A CORE/FLEX POLICY

When Nike first approached Cartus about implementing a flexible policy construct in 2018, their number one focus was the “employee experience.” Of course, they wanted to meet their set business objectives too, but balancing this with the needs of their diverse workforce was paramount.

The Cartus team, together with Nike and a consultant from a “Big Four” practice, began an in-depth quantitative analysis over an eight-month period. The aim was to create an appropriate points-based system—one that achieved the right balance between accurate costing and the right services for relocating employees. Nike’s international mobility program includes more than 50 countries, so it was critical to rely on historical data and to engage our global supplier network to gather country comparison information and local market data to ensure the right number of points could be assigned to each flexible benefit.

Internally, the role of the Nike Talent Mobility group was to understand and champion the new policy across the organization, including promotion amongst Nike employees who would potentially relocate using the policy. Engaging key Nike business partners and Nike leadership was also critical to success. Nike Talent Mobility needed to ensure the business partners understood the value of a core/flex program and set about organizing regular internal communications and presentations with business leaders to explain the core/flex concept—branded “Mobility Choice”—to align with broader internal Nike Total Rewards initiatives and achieve buy-in.

Through this collaborative effort, in less than a year, Cartus and Nike designed a fit-for-purpose program that offered flexibility and choice and were successful in launching this new policy construct for international permanent one-way moves and localizations.

Within six months of implementation, Cartus’ game-changing core/flex solution, Benefits Builder, was used to deliver the policy. This not only streamlined the process, but allowed Cartus to track and monitor moves at a far more granular level. Powered by MovePro360®—our exclusive single source of truth platform—Benefits Builder delivers the two most-requested capabilities in relocation today: cost management and personalization.

Savings as high as **60%...**

...with average program savings of **10-20%**

According to internal Cartus benchmarking, adopting a core/flex program can lead to significant savings.

*“The MovePro360 Benefits Builder enhancement was a real game-changer for Nike—and I think a game-changer for the mobility industry as a whole. It created an entirely new way for employees to customize their relocation benefits, and the gamified platform makes it an engaging experience for our employees. The fact that it’s a collaboration tool for the Cartus consultant and our relocating employees to work together demonstrates Cartus’ ability to marry technology with customer service to create an authentic connection. Cartus and Nike have a really strong relationship, and I think the partnership has become even stronger with the development of not only this technology, but Cartus’ agile approach to delivery. It was a really big win for Nike that Cartus was able to quickly develop a solution and respond to a critical business need in such a short amount of time.”*

—Nike, Director Global Mobility Strategy



*“It was an honor to collaborate with Nike to design and launch a best-in-class ‘mobility choice’ program. The flexible construct is one of the first corporate programs developed that provides employee choice and flexibility based on customized, individual need while providing corporate compliance and cost savings opportunities. Benefits Builder was critical in providing an automated solution to manage through the core/flex policy structure.”*

—Jodi Lindemann, VP, Global Talent Mobility at Cartus



### CORE VS. FLEX: HOW IT WORKS

Once Nike authorizes the core policy elements, Cartus manages the entire core/flex process, including allocating points, which is determined by employee level.

For Nike, the core benefits are those deemed essential to deliver a successful relocation—for example, household goods shipments, temporary accommodation, destination services, tax and immigration services. Essentially, Nike’s core benefits provide a consistent employee experience, one that helps to deliver quality mobility support. These benefits ensure:

- Relocating employees settle into the host location and new role as quickly and as seamlessly as possible
- Relocating families have access to trusted suppliers during the move
- Nike remains compliant throughout the relocation process

Accompanying these core services are the flexible benefits chosen by the relocating employee using a points-based system. The purpose of these elective benefits is to acknowledge the evolving demographics of the Nike employee base by supporting the unique needs of each relocating family. From a business perspective, it has also reduced exception requests and balances flexibility with cost management—providing structured choice without increasing the overall cost to Nike. In fact, we estimate that adopting a core/flex policy saves Nike an average of 13% in overall relocation costs.

### SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS

Despite tailoring their own relocation services, Nike relocating employees continue to receive total support from a Cartus consultant. To ensure they have the in-depth knowledge necessary to guide relocating employees through this process, our consultants participate in an in-depth training program before they start working with Nike employees. In addition to ensuring they fully understand the policy, Cartus training also equips the consultant with how to identify a relocating employee’s individualized relocating needs.

To support the consultant in their day-to-day role, we also created a Nike Talent Mobility Policy Admin Guide that is given to every Cartus employee involved in relocating Nike employees using a core/flex policy. The guide provides information on specific operating procedures and general guidelines, including:

- Nike objectives for providing a flexible policy
- An overview of core and flex benefits available
- An outline of the role the consultant plays in counseling the relocating employee on what flex benefits may be right for them, depending on needs/situation
- Typical timelines and when consultant action is required
- Details on supporting VIP employees
- Exception management process
- Typical relocating employee FAQs

Armed with this information, as well as having undergone significant training, consultants guide the relocating employee through the core/flex policy. The guidance they offer Nike relocating employees includes:

- What to expect during the process
- Reminding employees of their remaining “points balance” and what services they can benefit from by using these points
- Keeping the relocating employee on schedule, ensuring they adhere to set timescales and deadlines

**Nike employees relocating on a core/flex policy:**

*“The benefits are extremely generous and put you at ease to consider a big move to a new country.”*

*“The point system was straightforward, but my advisor was really helpful and explained it all in detail!”*

*“The benefits are great! Making moving abroad close to frictionless.”*

### Why Core/Flex?

- Enhanced employee experience
- Cost saving opportunities, specifically by reducing exceptions
- Global consistency with local relevance
- Attracting and retaining top talent
- The ability to cater to new employee demographics—e.g., millennials typically welcome benefits that extend beyond salary and appreciate being given the ability to tailor relocation services to meet their specific needs
- Closing the gap between traditional assignments and a one-size-fits-all approach
- Incentivizing moves to challenging locations



**Nike employees relocating on a core/flex policy:**

*“We’ve moved internationally before, and the flexibility offered in this policy is like nothing we have experienced before. Really great stuff.”*

*“I am super pleased with the overall experience. The move has been really easy, and I’ve been receiving all the support I’ve needed in order to set myself up for a successful transition.”*

From spousal support and pet shipments, to language lessons and education assistance, each relocating employee moving on the core/flex policy is free to customize the package based on their needs.

To ensure Nike employees make an informed decision, and recognizing that this core/flex policy is a different approach compared to traditional mobility programs, we provide them with a **Mobility Game Plan**. This written guide is a useful “go to” document that the relocating employee can review throughout their move and acts as an extra level of support—in addition to the Cartus consultant—outlining things such as:

- The overall relocation process
- Each party’s role (the Nike Talent Mobility group, Cartus, other mobility suppliers)
- The core/flex concept

Cartus’ exclusive core/flex solution, Benefits Builder, offers complete collaboration. The Cartus consultant can log-on to the online tool, alongside the Nike employee, and guide them through each flexible benefit available. Relocating employees have the option to exchange a maximum of five flex points for cash. Emphasizing Nike’s focus on delivering quality relocation support and the intent of getting someone properly settled versus a simple lump sum benefit, the cash benefit decreases in dollar amount as more points are swapped. In fact, most of the points are not eligible to be cashed out until the relocating employee has settled in the new location.

**THE RESULTS AND MOVING FORWARD**

**To date, nearly 1,000 Nike employees have relocated using a core/flex policy. On average, they have awarded Cartus between a 98% and 100% satisfaction rating.**

In terms of cost effectiveness, when comparing a traditional mobility policy with a core/flex approach, Nike has realized an estimated cost savings of US\$1.7 million (based on a couple relocating on an international permanent one-way move).

It has been so successful that Cartus and Nike plan to continue to work together to convert international assignment policies and domestic policies to the core/flex policy construct.

Cartus is in the process of further enhancing the technology solution that automates tracking for core/flex policies. The tool will help organizations capture ongoing performance metrics and understand what flex benefits are being chosen. For example, did the core/flex policy address the employee’s relocation needs? Was the points system easy to understand? How many exceptions were there during a given period? Was the core/flex policy cost effective?

At Cartus, we consider core/flex structure as the first step in the ongoing journey to allow more employee choice and flexibility while maintaining compliance and managing relocation costs. The infrastructure and program transformation made possible by adopting core/flex into an existing policy enables companies, like Nike, to develop their relocation model organically and evolve with their priorities in the future.

**FIND OUT MORE**

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Powered by MovePro360®—Cartus’ exclusive single source of truth platform—Benefits Builder delivers the two most-requested capabilities in relocation today: *cost management* and *personalization*. It offers relocating employees choice and control during their move and enables our clients to manage relocation budgets more precisely.

For more information on Benefits Builder and how it can help future-proof your company’s relocation program, [click here](#). To connect with a Cartus representative, email [cartussolutions@cartus.com](mailto:cartussolutions@cartus.com).