

World Trends: Impact on the Future of Global Mobility



We are clearly living in disruptive times! Technology expectations, politics, artificial intelligence, Brexit, millennials, data analytics, program flexibility, employee experience, and much more, are already having an impact on global mobility and will continue to have an impact in the future. How can your organization's global mobility strategy be ready for the future?

We will explore what we know about some of the main challenges facing the workplace, namely—**global talent shortages, changing employee demographics,** and the **changing focus on the employee experience**—how they are impacting business today, and what the future of global mobility might look like.

Talent shortages:

- Skill gaps widening
- Low global unemployment
- Technology education gaps

GLOBAL TALENT SHORTAGES

There is a lot of talk about the current state of talent shortages in the workplace. According to a Gartner survey, by the end of 2018 talent shortages became the number one risk in the workplace, even more so than privacy regulation and cloud computing. So, what is behind the talent shortages?

What do we know about talent shortages?

- **Skill gaps are widening:** the skills required to perform a job are shifting significantly. Proficiency in new technologies will increase demand, as will human skills such as creativity, critical thinking, complex problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and leadership.
- **Unemployment is low globally:** more and more Baby Boomers are retiring every day, younger people are entering the workforce, and extremely low unemployment are combining to leave a deficit of knowledgeable talent.
- **Digital technology is causing workforce education gaps:** artificial intelligence, robotics, and machine learning are promoting automation, boosting efficiency, and supporting new business models. However, there is a shortage of trained talent who can currently perform and teach these skills.

What is the impact on the workplace today?

The "war for talent" is here to stay and, in fact, may be greater than it ever has been...and it may continue to increase. Here's what we know now about the impact on today's workplace:

- Talent shortages are impacting every industry sector.
- CEOs are increasingly worried about future shortages and talent retention.
- According to a 2018 ManPower survey, 67% of 50,000 companies surveyed were impacted by talent shortages...that's 33,500 companies!
- Corporations are desperate for educated, solidly skilled, and well-trained employees.

According to *Conference Board*, CEOs' biggest worries in 2019 revolve around talent shortages and talent risk.

TIPS FOR MANAGING THE IMPACT OF TALENT SHORTAGES

What are some ways that you can manage the impact of talent shortages in your organization?

- **Enable employees to “hit the ground running.”** With a shortage of talent, employees need to be able to be productive right from the start, so training needs and knowledge gaps need to be addressed up front and quickly. For global mobility that might mean:
 - Using assessment tools up front to determine employee fitness for the assignment.
 - Supporting preparedness by offering language and cultural training in advance.
- **Make global mobility a part of the rewards package.** Include global mobility as part of the pay and performance package offered by your organization. Global mobility included as part of a rewards package can be offered as a non-cash incentive, and a successful global mobility experience then becomes a formal part of career planning, as well as succession planning.
- **Provide a customized relocation experience.** Offer benefits that are important to the individual’s success, including:
 - Providing not only support in the destination with home finding and general settling-in, but developing ways to ease the transition and open doors for employees and their families in their new communities.
 - Using technology like AI and predictive analytics to get a picture of which services and tools employees in certain roles or demographics have needed in the past. This will help you with providing a future customized experience.

CHANGING EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

The “one size fits all” approach has never really worked out. This is even more pronounced with multiple generations in your organization, each with unique and changing needs and requirements.

What do we know about changing employee demographics?

There are at least four different generations in the workforce today. Without generalizing too much, generations are looking for different things in the workplace:

Generations and Workplace Needs

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>BABY BOOMERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting from work focus to family focus • Flexible work schedules/hours • Ability to train in “soft skills” | <p>GEN X</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliant and independent • Ability to make a difference • Benefits with flexibility |
| <p>MILLENNIALS/GEN Y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace flexibility • Consistent feedback • Strong work/life balance | <p>GEN Z</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money and job security • Advancement opportunities • Individual contributions vs. team |

What is the impact of changing employee demographics in the workplace today?

Managing so many different groups in today's workplace can be challenging for mobility managers and HR practitioners:

- **Baby Boomers** currently hold one-third of all jobs in the U.S. market, even though 10,000 are retiring each day.
- **Gen X** is the first generation to grow up when a two family income is more common than one. According to Cartus research, this can be challenging as the number one reason for employees to turn down an assignment is family or personal circumstances (69%), followed closely by spouse/partner employment issues (55%).
- **Millennials** continue to impact the workplace, and by 2025, two out of four employees will be from this generation. Their desire for sophisticated technology solutions has, to some degree, driven the need for agility in many organizations today.
- **Gen Z** is the newest generation in the workforce and beginning their careers with their own set of expectations.

Also important to note is companies exploring how to get more women into the ranks of senior management and to take more global moves and assignments, and how organizations can support LGBTQ employees.

TIPS FOR MANAGING THE IMPACT OF CHANGING EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

How can you best manage the impact of changing employee demographics in your organization?

- **Offer high tech with high touch.** As younger generations gradually take over the workplace, providing bite-sized pieces of information about the global mobility process, like videos, can help. A sophisticated platform will be critical to the employee experience, but so is feeling valued and having someone to turn to if the need arises, and that means the human touch will still be alive and well. Offer personalization as part of the soft touch, as much or as little as a person needs.
- **Nurture soft skills.** Problem solving, flexibility, adaptability, and well-honed communications skills are necessary to be effective on an assignment or during a move. Those same skills are critical to the success of your Global Mobility team as well.
- **Ask for employee feedback.** Make sure you get feedback from employees and collaborate on ways to handle challenges and changes along the way.
- **Use mobility as a tool for collaboration, advancement, and independence.** Global mobility can address younger generations' key interests in the workplace, like collaboration and advancement.



THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

As new generations and demographics enter the workplace, there is a shifting focus towards improving the employee experience and identifying what is important to them.

What do we know about the focus on the changing employee experience?

Newer generations have different thoughts on what is important to them, including:

- **Social responsibility and positive interactions.** As with retail experiences, employees are looking to their companies to be socially responsible and provide a positive experience in the workplace.
- **Simplification in the workplace.** Because work itself is becoming more complex, everything else needs to be simplified. For instance, there are opportunities to evaluate processes and look to remove and replace inconsistencies and duplications.
- **Making their voices heard.** The importance of the customer experience and loyalty to brands has now moved into the workplace and is becoming strongly entrenched. The way to find out what employees want and expect is through listening more via surveys and general feedback. Engagement surveys predict behavior and make employees feel heard and valued.

What is the impact of the increasing focus on the consumer experience in the workplace today?

Engagement. Touching employees' emotional core can result in a deeper connection to the organization for employees. As with customer experience, this affects every interaction an employee has from recruitment onward. As the social experience of a consumer changes, the expectations of consumers are crossing over to the corporate business setting. Technology for global mobility needs to keep up and deliver a parallel experience, offering self-serve options, choice, and customization.

Technology and automation. Technology not only supports iterative tasks that reduce work pressure, but artificial intelligence will help to anticipate employee needs. This will transform the employee experience through chatbots and AI guided leadership.

Surveying employees. Provide much-needed research, through surveys, to understand what is and is not positively impacting the employee experience. Taking this feedback and aligning it with company goals will deliver a unified vision.

Organizational purpose. As with social responsibility, your organization needs to clearly define its purpose so employees understand the bigger picture, and what that picture means to them personally. When it comes to retention, perks and benefits are not enough.



TIPS FOR MANAGING THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

How can you best manage the impact of the focus on the changing employee experience in your organization?

- **Ongoing engagement/feedback.** As with the consumer experience, feedback will be key to ensuring employee engagement.
- **Link mobility and career planning.** Linking mobility, and its resulting personal and professional growth, to career planning and advancement, will naturally help to keep employees engaged.
- **Intuitive tech platform.** Providing a platform that proactively prepares employees for what to expect with a move or assignment will be key. As mentioned earlier, the platform should reflect prior experiences employees have had as a consumer.
- **Customize the experience.** Incorporating past results via AI and predictive analytics will make each journey a customized event that hits on the needs of each employee and family in a way that feels unique to them.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL MOBILITY?

The chart below illustrates the way that many organizations are conducting global mobility today, and some of the changes that we are beginning to see impact global mobility. While global mobility teams cannot always influence all of the changes that companies and HR are considering concerning talent management and their workforce, there are areas where you can offer solutions that can drastically improve both the employee experience and the achievement of company goals.

| Today | (ALMOST) Tomorrow |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Standard policies | Customized and personalized policies |
| Core/flex chosen by the business | Core/flex chosen by the employee |
| Delivered services | Self-service |
| Email communication | Chat/bot/IM |
| Prescriptive analytics | Predictive analytics |
| Long-term assignments | Shorter duration assignments |
| Traditional employees | Non-traditional employees (contract workers, gig employees, retired workers, EBTs) |

For more information on mobility, talent management, and other areas of relocation, contact us at cartussolutions@cartus.com or visit our Resource Hub on Cartus.com.