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Information from Cartus on Relocation and International Assignment Trends and Practices

The Future of Global Mobility: Looking Further Than You Can See

In a constantly evolving business environment, staying ahead of the curve and successfully predicting future trends and challenges, and planning accordingly, can no longer be seen as a 'nice to have', but is a requirement for the very survival of a business.

New countries, new markets, and new technologies. Changes in the composition of the workforce, in the nature of work itself, in the skills that will be required to drive growth, and in the ways in which information is shared, stored, and leveraged. These are all factors that we can see on the horizon which will shape the future of internationally focused companies.

Following are what we consider to be some of the key future trends that global mobility and talent management professionals will need to consider to ensure their mobility programme is fit for the future.

Companies will have to consider their level of care for employees in critical areas such as tax, legal, and immigration compliance, as well as safety and security.

Duty of Care

Duty of care is a legal term and refers to the obligation requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care. It has been adopted as a core concept of international employee mobility, addressing the responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of assignees and the company they represent. The focus on duty of care will become ever more important as companies grow internationally and have to manage more assignees, in more countries, under more varied circumstances. Companies will have to consider their level of care for employees in critical areas such as tax, legal, and immigration compliance, as well as safety and security, and even appropriate preparation prior to undertaking an international assignment.

Employee Experience

The importance of improving the employee experience is a top priority for Human Resources professionals today, born from the belief that there is a direct link between eliminating complexities from the workplace and increased productivity. This concept will grow in importance for mobility in the future, and companies will need to streamline and enhance their mobility programs with the employee experience in mind.

This will be ever more critical as the percentage of Millennials in companies' workforces increases. Research shows that this population places a great importance on how employers treat them, whilst at the same time showing lower levels of loyalty to their current employer and high willingness to change jobs if not satisfied.

Employee choice will become a critical element in mobility strategy in the future, resulting in fundamental changes in assignment durations, package types, and values.

Impact of Workforce Demographics

Research suggests that by 2020, Millennials will form 50% of the global workforce. Conversely, Baby Boomers and Generation X workers will still form a significant part of the workforce, particularly in parts of the world where birth rates have been lower. Having grown up with broadband, smartphones, and social media as the norm, Millennials are now moving into manager-level positions with a better understanding than their more senior colleagues of what are arguably key business tools.

Faced with these shifts in employee demographics, mobility professionals must recognize the different needs and preferences that co-exist as a result. Most Millennials expect instant access to information and constant feedback, they value continuous learning and development opportunities just as much as financial benefits, and expect a varied and interesting career with rapid progression.

Their "job loyalty" factor is reported to be less than the generations that went before them, so they are likely to move on quickly if their expectations are not met.

Employee choice will become a critical element in mobility strategy in the future, resulting in fundamental changes in assignment durations, package types, and values. For instance, many older assignees, approaching retirement age, might be interested in moves without the more typical heavy-policy support, in order to have the opportunity to use their skills and knowledge in a non-traditional location. To successfully engage early talent, offering international experience to new recruits straight out of university, or offering shorter international assignments earlier in their career, are likely strategies to be employed.

Skills Instability

Research by the World Economic Forum shows that in 2015, 38% of employers reported difficulties in filling jobs, while by 2020 more than a third of the desired skill sets of most occupations will be skills not considered crucial to the job today.

New technologies, such as robotics and machine learning, will continue to drive workforce innovation and the very nature of work itself. This will impact the nature of the skills required by employers, and in all probability shorten the shelf-life of employees' existing skills. The World Economic Forum predicts that several industries may find themselves in a scenario of positive employment demand for hard-to-recruit specialist occupations, with simultaneous skills instability across many existing roles.

Future workforce planning and change management already feature as a priority on the agenda of organizations' senior leadership. Global Mobility and Talent Management will need to play a key role in developing a future workforce strategy where an existing workforce is trained and re-trained continuously through its lifecycle, and key talent is sourced globally.

Use of Big Data and New Technologies

In 2016, we saw more organizations storing, processing, and extracting value from data of all forms and sizes. In global mobility, organizations have recognized the importance of having access to data to measure ROI, manage talent, and control costs. However, research shows that very few mobility professionals believe they currently have robust technologies in place to gather and harness big data.

In 2017, and the coming years, we will see a rise in systems that support large volumes of both structured and unstructured data. As a result, the market will demand platforms and systems that help end-users analyze that data more efficiently, while operating within an organization's IT systems and standards.

Quick, efficient access to relevant data will mean mobility managers are able to budget appropriately, forecast global mobility's organizational impact, and better support the wider needs of the organization, as well as track how effective their efforts have been.

The escalating use of social media and digital technologies will impact how the assignment process is managed and how information and feedback is both delivered to, and gathered from, employees and decision makers. Stronger partnerships between IT, global mobility, and talent management are likely to develop.

Emerging Markets

It is estimated that by 2020, the emerging middle class market will have a buying power of $6 trillion, and that by 2030, Asia will account for 66% of the global middle-class and for 59% of middle-class consumption. Therefore, while traditional markets are expected to gain in strength in the near term, in the long term the opportunities for growth offered by emerging markets will be key for global organizations.

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The long-term growth opportunities offered by emerging markets will be key for global organizations.

In Cartus' *2016 Global Mobility Policy & Practices* survey, companies told us that expansion into emerging markets is the third most critical driver of global mobility activity, and respondents named 72 countries as 'new' destinations for their companies, highlighting how each presents unique and new challenges for both the employee and the business.

Millennials, in particular, will require a unique approach, as research shows that while valuing international experience, they place destinations like the U.S., UK, and Australia at the top of their wish list, while locations like India and mainland China are the least attractive destinations, on par with countries such as Iran.

As expansion into new markets grows, it will become critical for mobility and talent management to develop approaches that, on the one hand satisfy the wider business strategy of growth, whilst also meeting the demands of employees sent to more challenging locations.

What Can Relocation Managers Do to Respond to Future Challenges?

Responding and adapting to the challenges above will require new approaches to mobility programme design and management. Flexible policies, user-friendly technology, and data-driven solutions will play a key role in determining whether a company will have the right talent, in the right place, at the right time, in the future.

For further information, please contact your Cartus representative or email consultingsolutions@cartus.com. You can also visit our Resource Hub on Cartus.com for the latest in global mobility trends.

Flexible policies, user-friendly technology, and data-driven solutions will play a key role in facing future global mobility challenges.

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