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September 14, 2018

Margaret Weichert
Deputy Director for Management
White House Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Subject: GEAR Center RFI

Dear Director Weichert,

I am writing on behalf of BGRS, formerly Brookfield Global Relocation Services, a long-time provider of services and strategies that enable our clients in both the corporate and government sectors to better attract, retain, and develop top performers.

In the GEAR Center RFI and in subsequent remarks on the GEAR Center's goals, you referenced a "virtuous cycle." Included in the cycle you envision are submissions from the private sector regarding best practices and approaches that have demonstrably worked. BGRS believes it has a role to play in that conversation.

As you rightly recognize in the RFI, "most Federal Government entities and programs were designed many decades ago, and many are still aligned to the missions of the 19th Century. Their designers could not have anticipated how technology or society's needs would evolve in the 21st Century."

Across multiple sectors, employers are competing to attract and subsequently retain the best and brightest. Complicating these efforts are realities including globalization, generational divides, shifting employee expectations pertaining to career structures, and a break-neck pace of technological development.

The good news is that, while the federal government may experience aspects of these challenges differently than many of its organizational counterparts in the private sector, the challenges the government faces are not unique to government, nor are they impossible to solve. Many of the problems are, however, systemic and long-established. In short, the federal government is still using a 19th century approach to 21st Century workforce and mobility challenges.

At the heart of talent mobility lies fundamental questions facing the federal government, such as whether it can attract the right candidates to fulfill a mission, whether it can retain the talented workforce it seeks to build, whether it is developing its established workforce, and, underlying all three, whether it is taking appropriate steps to employ hard data to measure its performance across these and other workforce analytics.

Like so many challenges facing the federal workforce, much of the problem stems from a failure to take a step back and look at the big picture – in this case, a failure to consider how mobility concerns tie into the entire employee lifecycle. Vitality, however, as you look toward wholesale reform and modernization, the federal government can best improve its workforce outcomes only by more fully integrating mobility considerations into a broader, more managed approach to human capital decisions.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), special incentives including relocation have proven useful in luring high-talent individuals to hard-to-fill positions, being used for nearly 120,000 federal employees in 2016. Moreover, the federal government spends nearly \$1 billion every year in relocating tens of thousands of existing employees.

It is especially concerning, then, that the General Services Administration (GSA) has written that “no published theme or philosophy currently guides the Government in promulgating relocation regulations or in conducting day-to-day operations at the Agency level.”

Attached is BGRS’ 2017 Talent Mobility Trends Survey, which includes updated findings on the current state of the private sector workforce, as well as a series of four case studies that outline organizations that have successfully transitioned to... The survey responses represent a broad swath of the private workforce, with 124 talent mobility leaders and human resources professionals who responded representing more than 12 million employees worldwide.

As the survey data and the included case studies evidence, the much-discussed need for alignment between mobility and talent management is rapidly moving from a theoretical concept to practical application. If the federal government

In the GEAR Center RFI, you also request that respondents outline the primary barriers to the implementation of innovative models. preventing change in their areas of expertise.

As we note in the included survey, there are three primary reasons organizations are not making necessary workforce changes. Again, the private sector experience seemingly mimics the federal government’s. The top barrier is a lack of executive buy-in, with senior leadership support representing the number one enabler of success in change efforts. The second is resource constraints, with many organizations increasingly asking teams to do more with less. The third is a lack of stakeholder alignment, which is a challenge that an initiative like the GEAR Center is well-suited to addressing.

In conclusion, your RFI notes that many of the ideas being touted in this space are often insubstantial. You write, “existing research often has very little connection to the practical operating considerations of how new ideas or methods could be delivered and executed” and “almost no applied research or true technology research and development address the practical realm of government operations.” You also envision eventual “live testing and piloting of new capabilities, methods and approaches” as the GEAR Center progresses.

We believe the solutions, policies, and technologies we offer go well beyond talking points and can provide tangible, demonstrable benefits. Moreover, our extensive experience working with government clients, including numerous federal agencies, means that we have a rare and proven track record in the “practical realm of government operations.” BGRS would warmly welcome the opportunity to meet with you or a representative from your office and personally discuss the powerful role we believe we can play in successfully modernizing the federal workforce.

Sincerely,

Amber Tucker, SCRP, SGMS
Senior Vice-President
BGRS

BGRS

2017

TALENT MOBILITY
TRENDS SURVEY

**CHANGING THE
CONVERSATION:**

**Transforming Mobility
for the Future**

KEY FINDINGS





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AUTHORS' NOTE:

The Time for Transforming Mobility is Now

We set this year's survey in the context of an accelerating pace of change in today's business world, where strategic companies must continually adapt to stay ahead. Talent Mobility functions are increasingly instrumental in enabling their companies to leverage their human capital across the world. Many of our clients report, and this year's survey data strongly affirms, there is increased appreciation of talent mobility as an enabler of companies' commercial success, from supporting global business expansion to growing a diverse and inclusive workforce with global competencies at all levels. As a result of the new priority of Talent Mobility, there is a strategic shift in organizations' thinking about how global talent is managed, leading to a wave of transformation sweeping through corporate Human Resources and Talent Mobility functions.

The forces of globalization continue, but against a backdrop of increased protectionism. While experts do not predict a wholesale return the protectionist practices of the past, the current environment generates unprecedented complexity for global companies to navigate. Leaders are required to focus on increasing value, maximizing their organizational capabilities and building unique competitive advantages. The need to operate at a global level and incorporate technology and adapt to the changing world of work necessitates strategic focus.

We see an increased sense of urgency to evolve Human Resources as a function, aligning their primary remit with overall business strategy; developing innovative talent strategies and helping business leaders to achieve



their objectives. Moreover, the availability of suitable talent has been widely documented as a top concern for the C-suite, so Human Resources' role in attracting, developing and retaining key talent is critical. For those who want to adapt and stay ahead, talent mobility has become a compelling proposition.

Based on the results of the 22nd edition of BGRS's annual Talent Mobility Trends Survey, this report explores how Talent Mobility is transforming, the scale and drivers of this change, and how companies manage change to drive successful outcomes. We focus on four key areas of change within talent mobility: increasing mobility's cross-functional alignment, optimizing the mobile employee experience, leveraging technology, data and analytics, and streamlining the mobility program and function overall.

Talent mobility leaders are transforming mobility with a new sense of purpose. 63% of survey respondents indicate that employee mobility is high on their organizations' senior leadership agenda.

Talent mobility leaders are also transforming mobility with a new sense of purpose. Sixty-three percent (63%) of survey respondents indicate that employee

mobility is high on their organizations' senior leadership agenda. More than one-quarter (27%) say that international working experience is a prerequisite to joining their company's senior leadership team. This increased level of visibility is ushering in openness to change.

We would like to thank the 124 talent mobility leaders and human resources professionals, representing more than 12 million employees worldwide, who participated in this year's survey and shared their experience about how mobility is changing in their organizations. We hope this report will be insightful and serve as an important source of information as you embark on or traverse your own organizational change journey.

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The Change Journey

Overall, companies have moved firmly from aspirational thinking to actively embracing and planning for the change journey. A vast majority of survey respondents (85%) either recently made, are making, or are planning to make changes to the way employee mobility is managed in their organizations. Nearly one-quarter of respondents (24%) say they recently completed changes and another quarter (26%) indicate they have specific plans to make changes in the next two years. The highest percentage (35%), report that they are currently in the midst of strategic change initiatives.

The type of changes that are reportedly underway underpin the enthusiasm for change: the majority of responding companies (58%) are carrying out larger-scale transformative change projects, with the remaining 42% of respondents making incremental and phased changes. Not surprisingly, a greater percentage (65%) of companies with larger, more complex talent mobility programs are more likely to be engaged in transformational change journeys as compared to companies with smaller programs.

CHANGE DRIVERS

EXTERNAL DRIVERS

1. The change driver is internal
2. Economic environment
3. Changing employee demographics

INTERNAL DRIVERS

1. Business strategy change
 2. Broader organizational transformation
 3. Changing reasons for mobility
-

So, what is driving changes to mobility? We asked our respondents to consider the mix of external and internal factors. While 20% report the economic environment and another 10% point to changing employee demographics as key external drivers of change, nearly half of all respondents (47%) say that the primary change driver is internal.



Respondents note the top three internal drivers for change impacting mobility are a business strategy change, transformation in other parts of the organization and changing reasons for employee mobility. When considering key future organizational benefits of these change initiatives, the top three are reported as achieving operational efficiencies, enhanced employee experience and cost optimization.

Ensuring a successful transformation initiative in today's fast-paced business environment is no small feat. As part of our exploration, we examined the factors mobility leaders consider as key catalysts of the change. Respondents report that the top three change triggers are key stakeholder buy-in, availability of the data to justify the need for change and a strong synergy with Talent Management. We are excited by the increased senior leadership support for mobility reported by our respondents as mentioned above, since key stakeholder buy-in for changes of this scale inevitably requires support from the top. As for cross-functional alignment, respondents report partnering most closely with their peers in Human Resources, Talent Management and Compensation and Benefits functions to develop their business case for change. But just as critical to the organizational alignment is securing top-down support for the significant investment.

When we probed respondents' approaches to building the business case for change, we noted a shift in strategic thinking and mobility leaders striving to demonstrate value. In addition to including hard costs, such as salary, benefits, relocation expenses, and external consultancy fees, more than half of the respondents also include soft costs in their case for change. Adding in factors such as the cost of attrition, inadequate performance, internal resourcing needs, and opportunity costs of not implementing changes significantly contributes to a more persuasive proposal.

Talent mobility leaders also recognize that their teams' skillsets will need to change. The top three skillsets needed in the new world of mobility are the ability to secure functional alignment, understanding of strategic

program design and operational excellence. The ability to achieve cost efficiencies as a required skillset came in fourth place, which is a testament to the cost optimization efforts completed in the recent, post-financial crisis years and a shift to a more strategic thinking. Surprisingly, no respondents listed the ability to successfully manage change as a key mobility team members skill. We speculate that they may either be underestimating the challenge inherent in managing large-scale change programs or are able to rely on other change management resources in their organizations.

On the other side of the spectrum, 15% of respondents tell us they have not made nor are they planning to make any strategic enhancements to the way mobility is managed in their company. The main reason for retaining the status quo is reported as no identified need for change (47%); lack of executive buy-in, lack of resources to manage the change and lack of stakeholder alignment follow closely as a tie (all at 37%). This is another indication that the importance of senior leadership and stakeholder buy-in cannot be underestimated. In fact, while 63% of companies say making changes to mobility is high on their senior leadership agenda, only 26% of those not making changes say it is.

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Data and analytics play a prominent role in building a persuasive business case for change to redefine the role of mobility, and significantly grab the attention of the C-suite and Human Resource peers. Talent mobility leaders need access to data to build a compelling story and vision, which will help educate and mobilize their leadership, colleagues and teams for what is often a complex and long journey.



Changes made/planned to mobility's alignment to other functions in the organization



*Respondents provided multiple answers.



Cross Functional and Talent Management Alignment

Companies are making changes designed to tighten alignment between Talent Mobility, Talent Management and other functions across Human Resources and the business. The top change respondents say they are making is to improve planning of career progression and repatriation timelines, which requires close collaboration between the mobility and talent functions. This positive change reinforces the importance of assignments' integration into the overall career management process, particularly if companies want to continue to attract top-tier candidates for strategic leadership assignments and retain high potentials in whose development they are investing. As the survey data and the corporate case study in this section evidence, the much-discussed need for alignment between mobility and talent management is moving from a theoretical concept to practical application. If candidates or returning assignees do not see the benefits of an international assignment materialize, companies risk lower engagement and potential attrition, jeopardizing the investment to date and foregoing long-term business value.

The survey data evidences that the much-discussed need for alignment between mobility and talent management is moving from a theoretical concept to practical application.

The second most common change respondents report making in this arena is to scale the compensation and benefits associated with an assignment to better match the purpose and business value of the assignment. Not all assignments are valued equally, and companies are taking action to differentiate their treatment. As companies work to achieve strategic alignment to these dimensions, we see this as coming to life in many ways in organizations: scaling back benefits for non-strategic assignments, building flexible program guidelines so line managers can take more control of assignment spend or creating mobility programs designed to meet talent development needs.

In third place, respondents indicate they are increasing the integration of their mobility management systems with their organization's HRIS technology. The data mobility leaders can get from a closer integration with HRIS will undoubtedly arm them with the insight they need to drive a more sophisticated utilization of mobility, and demonstrate a direct tie to supporting the achievement of business objectives.

So why are companies making changes to strengthen cross-departmental alignment? The number one reason respondents cite is to improve leadership visibility to - and involvement with - the mobility investment. Mobility is a high-potential, high-cost value proposition. Sometimes it takes seemingly very little to put mobility in the spotlight. For example, a key senior leader leaves for a competitor shortly after the end of the assignment, a first-tier candidate turns down a critical leadership assignment overseas because they are not sure the reward is worth the disruption or a high-potential employee leaves while on assignment. The potential gaps these situations can highlight can be significant. By creating better alignment and integration with other functions in the organization, especially Talent Management, talent mobility leaders can capitalize on the power of mobility and work to position the function as a strategic contributor to the overall business success.

As companies achieve or work toward functional alignment, mobility is emerging as a solution to a number of talent challenges. Certainly, changes to transform mobility's alignment with other parts of the organization will take time as alliances and organizational buy-in takes time to build. Today, over half (52%) of respondents report full alignment with Compensation and Benefits. Indicative of the strategic shift happening with the function, among companies making changes to employee mobility, 70% report being somewhat aligned with Talent Development, 59% say they are somewhat aligned to Succession Planning, while 57% say they are somewhat aligned with HRIS. Since nearly all of the companies in transformation (91%) say their cross-functional alignment is still a work in progress, we expect to see these numbers grow in the future.

MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION IN PRACTICE:

Top Down Commitment Propels Transformation

THE ORGANIZATION

Industry: Consumer Goods Retail

Headquarters: United States

Mobile Population Size: 5,200

THE CHALLENGE

The organization's expansion into new markets and continued growth in traditional markets was driving high rates of senior-level professionals serving in cross-border assignments. In some cases, these accounted for 50% of their expatriate population. However, when those expatriates returned home with their new competencies and experiences, the answer to their question of, "What's next?" was unclear. The organization's senior leadership team recognized the importance of cultivating this group of professionals. The stakes were high: the organization had heavily invested in the development of their talent by providing experience that built important global skills, yet they risked losing those professionals, and their financial investment, if they did not strategically leverage them upon return from assignment.

THE APPROACH

The organization's Human Resources function, under the leadership of a recently appointed Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), began to evaluate how to evolve the talent platform overall so that it prioritized the development and retention of individuals with global experience and skills. The CHRO knew first hand the value of global assignments as his most recent role was leading International Human Resources, a position that exposed him to the complexity of moving talent across borders and retaining those professionals. The Chief Executive Officer and the entire senior leadership team shared the sentiment and

began to espouse the value of the company's mobility program broadly – creating positive awareness and a sense of support for mobile employees. The concept of talent mobility as an important organizational mission soon emerged among all of the Human Resources disciplines.

As a result of this broadened organizational awareness, the global mobility team's remit expanded and the team was aligned to the Human Resources Global Shared Services organization. While the team's legacy focus on customer service, cost optimization and service delivery efficiency remained, they also now had accountability for supporting the strategic people and business goals. In fact, the Global Mobility team began being measured based on the placement of professionals post-assignment.

THE RESULT

The organizational mindset and cultural transformation led to a closer partnership between Global Mobility and Talent Management. The teams developed common processes, discussed the strategic purpose of assignments, communicated frequently and established clear transition plans for assignees throughout the lifecycle. The tightening of host and home country manager relationships meant that skill development, performance and transitions were well-known and orchestrated.

Not only is the mobility team empowered to work closely with Talent Management, it is a cultural and organizational expectation. The changes that were designed, at first, to support senior leadership assignments have now taken root and are being implemented across the organization.





Mobile Employee Experience

We asked the survey respondents to rank the type of strategic enhancements they are making in the area of mobile employee experience improvement. The top response was to drive overall visibility into the program by developing mobility-specific intranet pages or portals. In recognition of changing workforce demographics, companies are investing in technological platforms to deliver mobility program information in a way that new generations of workers are demanding.

The second most common change respondents note is to work with leadership to promote the importance of mobility and international work experience to employees' careers. As talent mobility programs evolve to providing long-term benefits to the company, the definition of employee experience is broadening. No longer is the concept one dimensionally focused on compensation package and satisfaction with the relocation service delivery, but now encompasses the impact on the long-term employee career. Younger employees not only desire international experience, but also expect it to have a tangible impact on their future careers.

Respondents note that the third most common change they are making to improve the mobile employee experience is to set up focus groups and enhanced surveys to measure engagement and satisfaction. In general, today's high-potential employees are mobile with purpose, carefully cultivating assignment opportunities to enhance their careers. Companies, on the other hand, are more acutely aware of the limited availability of suitable talent. They have a strong incentive to keep mobile employees engaged to maximize their return for the organization at large. Talent mobility leaders may have access to relocation service delivery supplier satisfaction scores, but creating focus groups and customized internal surveys allows them to explore the employee developmental dimension that will deliver longer-term engagement and retention.

Nearly half of survey respondents (49%) indicate that the primary reason they are making enhancements to the mobile employee experience is to improve employee satisfaction. But what, exactly, constitutes satisfaction? Is it about process, benefits and/or communication? Or is it something more intangible?

Certainly, companies creating focus groups will be able to explore this question in depth and in the context of their organizational culture. We suspect that talent mobility leaders may focus on better expectation setting and measuring subsequent holistic return on expectations. Doing so would invariably involve having more conversations about mobility's intrinsic value to employees' careers and fewer focused on the cash value of assignment provisions.

Today's high-potential employees are mobile with purpose, carefully cultivating assignment opportunities to enhance their careers.

The second most common reason respondents (18%) cite for making these types of changes is to improve communication with mobile employees. Gaps in communication throughout the process can negatively impact the mobile employee's experience, and closing those gaps will eliminate unnecessary distraction from the strategic purpose of employee mobility. However, this reason may also signal a desire by talent mobility leaders to better promote mobility in their organizations. By clearly articulating the value proposition of mobility, mobile employees themselves can become ambassadors, promoting the value they gained from the assignments throughout their career.

Finally, 8% of companies are making changes to the mobile employee experience in order to attract more candidates to open positions. Committed to growing their mobile talent pipeline, these companies realize that first-choice candidates expect their organizations to invest in their professional development as a means to keep them engaged.

Interestingly, very few companies indicated they were making changes to improve the mobile employee experience to reduce attrition rates or to improve promotion rates of mobile employees. While on the surface this seems to signal a lack of importance,

many companies may simply not have the data they need to determine if this is indeed a gap they need to close.

In fact, nearly one-third of respondents (32%) say they do not know the attrition rate for mobile employees who leave within one year of assignments, while 57% say they do not know the promotion rate for their assignees.

Overall, the types of changes employers are making to the mobile employee experience are designed to

promote mobility's visibility. This definitely signals a shift in strategic thinking and is a clear deviation from change projects involving minor policy revisions or operational efficiencies being the primary tactics to improve the employee experience. We see this as a maturing area of increasing focus as nine of out ten respondents (90%) making changes to enhance the mobile employee experience report their employee experience optimization change projects are still underway.

Changes made/planned to enhance mobile employees' experience

Develop mobility intranet pages/portals

55%

Work with leadership to promote mobility

52%

Launch employee satisfaction surveys/focus groups

51%

Increase transparency into the career benefits of mobility

46%

Improve frequency of employee communications

43%

Invest in employee-facing technology/apps

39%

Set up a mentor/sponsor program

30%

Publish more success stories

29%

No changes to enhance mobile employees' experience

10%

Other

0%

*Respondents provided multiple answers.



MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION IN PRACTICE:

Transforming Mobile Employee Experience

THE ORGANIZATION

Industry: Consumer Goods Retail

Headquarters: United States

Mobile Population Size: 1,800

THE CHALLENGE

Long-term sustainability is a hallmark of the organization's business – sustainability that spans innovation, product design, global impact and future planning. The company's 45-member Global Mobility team, split across five regions and organizationally led by Human Resources, began to think critically about their own structure and offering, in the spirit of building for long-term sustainability and overall company value.

The timing was paramount. Frequent internal change, business growth and M&A, along with an ever-changing regulatory environment, was increasing reliance on their Global Mobility function to support cross-border workforce optimization.

THE APPROACH

In order to support a growing population of assignees, which numbered in the thousands, the team embarked on restructuring their support model with a goal of streamlining communication processes and tools for their employees.

The overarching goal was to strike the right balance between personal high-touch engagement and self-service technology offerings for the mobile employees. Furthermore, improving post-assignment career management and development was strongly endorsed the senior leadership as part of this transformation initiative.

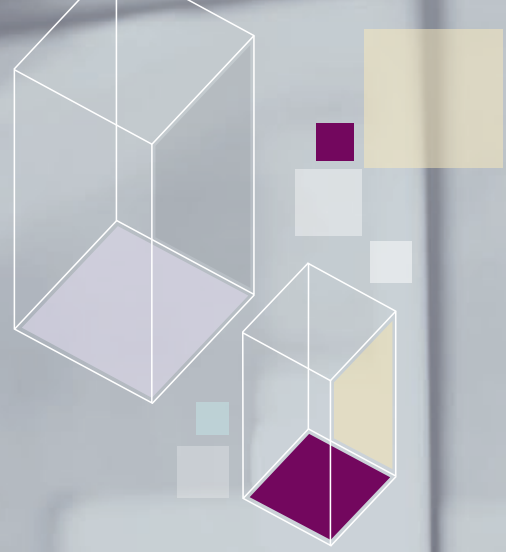
Following extensive employee service satisfaction levels assessment, the global Human Resources organization decided to redesign its service delivery model to drive all customer inquiries to a single point of contact within the Human Resources function. The main objective was to reduce the number of contact points for Human Resources inquiries with the creation of solutions teams comprised of a representative from each of the traditional Human Resources disciplines to strategically support the new service delivery model. In accordance with this change, the Global Mobility function restructured its team and aligned itself more closely with Human Resources partners to create solutions in tandem.

Further mobility specific employee surveys highlighted the need to improve employee access to mobility related information. In reaction to the voice of their customers, the Global Mobility team implemented new assignment management software enabled their relocating population to directly access information on their move processes. Independently, the team also leveraged an existing self-service compensation tool developed by their Rewards Center of Excellence to capture and convey the added elements of the mobile employees' reward packages.

THE RESULT

Embedded within the new Human Resources delivery model, the Global Mobility team's customer engagement model has been well received. And the tighter partnership with Human Resources team members, particularly around strategic talent mobility discussions and its connection to other Human Resources disciplines, led to greater transparency and service levels within the business. Overall the teams are functioning in an integrated fashion that allows for more strategic planning and business contribution.

Similarly, the organization's global assignees are satisfied with the speed and efficiency the self-service technological enhancements have provided to them. The readily accessible information provides assignees with answers to set expectations and enable better assignment planning and sets up the Global Mobility team to focus next on systems integration.





Changes made/planned to improve data access and insight

Leveraging internal analytics resources

40%

Investing in technology integration

38%

Leveraging external consultants

36%

Bringing analytical skills on the mobility team

28%

Building mobility specific data warehouses

18%

No changes to improve data access and insight

17%

Other

9%

*Respondents provided multiple answers.



Mobility Technology, Data and Analytics

As a sign of the Human Resources software landscape maturing, companies recognize technology as an enabler, and many are making changes to their mobility technology set up and access to data and analytics. This is even more the case for companies in transformation. Thirty eight percent (38%) of transforming companies report having invested in their technological capability to administer mobility programs more efficiently in the last three years and half of the respondents (50%) with change projects underway say they are planning to invest in technology enhancements in the next 12-18 months. Conversely, only 21% of companies with no change planned report recent technology investments.

The top three technology-related gaps respondents report are a lack of system integration (35%), a lack of workflow functionality to automate processes (19%) and inaccurate data (11%). The lack of systems integration has been a longstanding challenge for mobility leaders. Critical data often resides in disparate unconnected systems across multiple platforms, such as human capital management, performance management, accounting, supplier and assignment management systems. The lack of integration and the failure to capture relevant, accurate data often preclude organizations from conducting a meaningful data analysis, which would help identify areas for improvement, build the case for change and measure success. Just as significantly, smart technology investment can provide organizations with the ability to derive meaningful data to drive the strategic use of talent mobility as a multi-dimensional talent solution.

What is driving companies to make changes to their mobility technology? In short, it's again, leadership visibility. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents say that in the last three years the amount of data, analytics and benchmarks requested by their senior management regarding mobility has increased. This is eight percentage points higher than last year's survey results (59%), which represents a 13% increase. As a corollary, among companies that say they are not transforming the way mobility is managed in their organization, 63% note that the amount of data requested from their senior management has stayed the same over the last several years.

67% of respondents say that in the last three years the amount of data, analytics and benchmarks requested by their senior management regarding mobility has increased.

As talent mobility moves firmly onto the senior leadership agenda, having robust, accurate data is an imperative. Yet, 57% of respondents indicate they do not have sufficient access to data that allows them to gain the insight they need into their company's mobility program. In the short term, companies are most often leveraging existing internal resources to extract usable analytics from the data they already have (40%), while 38% of respondents say they are investing in technology integration to improve insight gained from mobility data. More than one-third (36%) say they are also relying on external consultancy to meet this need, and another significant group (28%) is focused on bringing additional analytical skills into the mobility team.

The top three most significant data gaps reported are mobile employee retention statistics, aggregated cost of their mobility programs and employee career progression data. The difficulty mobility teams face in tracking consolidated actual assignment costs has been widely documented. BGRS's most recent mobility trends survey indicated that just 51% of respondents tracked total assignment cost, so it is not surprising to see it appear in the top three responses. However, to find that the top and third most common data needs are related to mobile employee attrition and promotion rates is further proof of a shift in strategic thinking about mobility. Strategic talent mobility leaders understand they need program cost data, but that only tells half the story. Integrating career metrics with the data enables talent mobility leaders to quantify the mobility investment and, therefore, estimate its return.

MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION IN PRACTICE:

Technology as a Catalyst for Transformation Planning

THE ORGANIZATION

Industry: Media and Information Services

Headquarters: Canada

Mobile Population Size: 600

THE CHALLENGE

By 2012, the company had completed a significant merger of two organizations with very different cultures and different approaches to global mobility 3.5 years earlier. At the end of 2012, following substantial external benchmarking and input from outside consultants, the Executive Committee approved a new harmonized suite of policies, fit for purpose to take the merged company forward with consistency in the delivery of global mobility services.

The company recognized that the implementation of the policy suite was only the starting point for a comprehensive transformation of all aspects of the program to align with business strategy, adopt effective business partnering behaviors in addition to delivering operational excellence and effective risk management across all areas.

Their journey began with the hire of a new head of Global Mobility with significant experience in driving

critical change in demanding and challenging business cultures. The assessment of the new leadership included recommendations for new technology to properly support business processes and address turnaround times, new service delivery structure to address client needs and partnering approach, including clear documentation of business processes and roles and responsibilities. Subsequently, a review of team capability was necessary to align to the new requirements and professionalization of approach to deliver regular and reliable cost and demographic metrics and reporting.

THE APPROACH

The clear articulation of the case for change was critical and focused on gaining buy-in and demonstrating the tangible outputs and direct benefits of investment to relevant stakeholders. Senior leadership shared the sense of urgency and approved important upgrades to the assignment management technology, which had been identified as a key enabler of change for the team. In parallel with the other significant enhancements outlined above, the focus became identifying and investing in a new assignment management technology that would automate and streamline processes and support the team's new strategic direction. The tool would need to drive greater efficiency and accuracy in time intensive tasks like generating cost projections, calculating accruals and importantly, enabling the Global Mobility team to provide meaningful demographic reporting to Human Resources leadership and business stakeholders for the first time.

THE RESULT

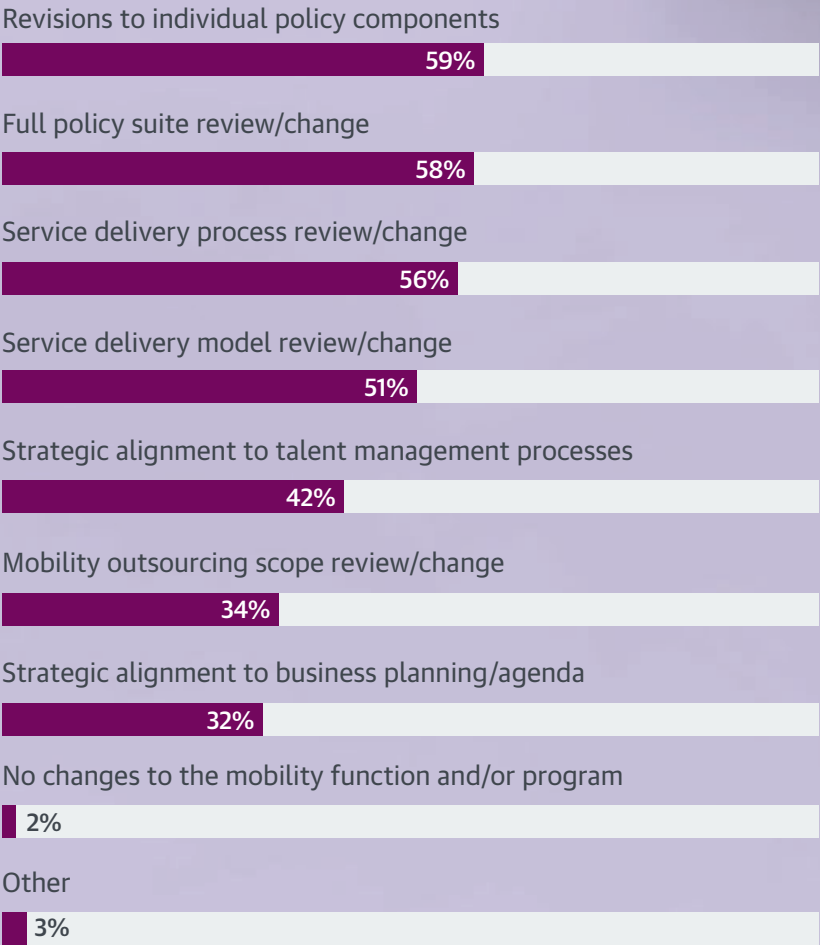
The implementation of the technology platform was successfully completed on time and within budget. The team was able to show immediate improvements in all operational aspects, which was followed shortly by the inception of the cost and demographic metrics and reporting. This reporting was a key enabler to driving the business partnering approach, stakeholder discussions and building credibility.

More recently, with the structural and operational changes implemented, the team was well positioned to deliver service excellence in respect of a series of high profile workforce planning initiatives involving a number of C-suite relocations and a significant shift in the seniority of the expatriate population.





Changes made/planned to the mobility function and/or program



*Respondents provided multiple answers.



Employee Mobility Function and Program

As part of their transformation projects, companies are also making specific enhancements to the employee mobility function and program. Survey respondents tell us that they are making most significant revisions to individual policy provisions (59%). While revising individual policy provisions does not seem to tie directly into strategic change initiatives, smart companies undergo routine policy analyses and benchmarking exercises every one-to-two years. Keeping benefits in-line and being responsive to market changes to remain competitive often means individual provisions are routinely tweaked, delivering continuous program improvement.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) also indicate they are conducting a full policy suite review, and 56% are undergoing a full-service delivery process review and change exercise. A full policy suite review is often conducted in conjunction with enabling greater alignment to business objectives and creating mobility policies that are scalable to meet a variety of needs. Just over half of respondents (51%) indicate they are also undertaking a complete review and change of their service delivery model. We typically see service delivery model changes as a result of a number of factors, such as wider Human Resources transformation efforts, but also initiatives to optimize delivery and streamline resourcing.

Making significant changes in other areas of mobility often leads talent mobility leaders to take a hard look at the operations of the function to ensure they are fit for purpose and set up to optimally deliver the most value the organization and its mobile employees. Accordingly, respondents shared a wide variety of drivers behind making changes to their mobility function and program. The top three drivers are to improve the employee experience (18%), to improve policy suite and program flexibility (17%) and to enhance mobility management processes (17%). These are followed closely by reducing mobility costs (16%) and optimizing the talent mobility function's value (15%).

These drivers are further evidence of the shift in strategic thinking we are seeing. Instead of cost reduction being the sole dominating factor to making

policy or program changes, other factors have risen in importance. The top change driver is improving employee experience, which is a more strategic undertaking in light of its broadening definition. This enables Talent Mobility to stretch its focus and better integrate into the wider employee career planning and progression management. Continual process reviews and a focus on program flexibility are necessary components as talent mobility leaders need to continually refine the program to meet the business's needs.

Changes to the function and program can be the sole focus of change projects, however, what we more often see is that changes in this area are a consequence of changes in other areas.

Changes to the function and program can be the sole focus of change projects, however, what we more often see is that changes in this area are a consequence of changes in other areas. For example, changes designed to increase Talent Mobility's alignment with Talent Management may result in enhanced candidate assessment processes and would therefore necessitate changes to service delivery model or might require hiring for different skillsets on the mobility team. Another example is companies who embark on transforming their mobility technology usually need to go through an end-to-end process review in order to effectively implement the software. A focus on mobile employee experience improvement will often include policy suite revisions and refined communication protocols.

Depending on the driver and the scope, change projects in this category can sometimes have a shorter timeline than those previously discussed. Indeed while, as in the above change areas, the majority of respondents report changes to their mobility function and program in progress, more than one-quarter (27%) report having recently successfully completed them.

MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION IN PRACTICE:

Transforming Mobility Function for Strategic Program Evolution

THE ORGANIZATION

Industry: Aerospace, Defense and Security

Headquarters: United States

Mobile Population Size: 1,600

THE CHALLENGE

In the lead up to a large-scale Human Resources transformation effort, the organization outlined opportunities for optimizing its global mobility program and contributing strategically to the larger Human Resources agenda: update systems and create integrations to reduce cumbersome administrative processes, close data gaps and enhance assignment planning. The goal was to centralize and streamline all assignment planning, bring consistency into the assignment process and create closer collaboration with the Human Resources Business Partners and Business Units, while driving more accurate reporting and a better experience for mobile employees. The transformation planning stages focused on creating a robust process, a thorough resource review and ensuring technology enhancements enabled more effective program administration.

THE APPROACH

As an important first step, the global mobility function centralized its structure, bringing the requisite expertise and experience in closer proximity and collaboration

with each other to assure the transformation's success. Together, the global mobility team documented end-to-end workflows, performed gap analysis and engaged an external consultancy to incorporate best practices. The internal processes for delivering services and benefits were no longer "fit for purpose" and were not enhancing the employee experience. The team developed a mobility vision and supporting strategies that aligned with the corporate strategy. Through a clear and shared roadmap, the team embarked on a technology change that will reduce the number of interfacing systems and allow mobility to have a robust oversight of the end-to-end mobility process across all locations, thereby laying the groundwork for deeper assignment integration into employees' career trajectories.

THE RESULT

The system enhancements allowed the global mobility team to continue identifying and addressing gaps, propose solutions and mitigate problematic situations before they occur. More contemporary and intuitive technology is enabling more real-time support to stakeholders, facilitating proactive strategic decision-making for global assignments and helping to shape a service delivery model that works for all the business units with mobile employees. In addition, the centralized global mobility team has benefitted from operational efficiencies, system functionality, better reporting, increased communication and better ability to focus on strategic future program evolution.





Change Management Practices

Talent mobility leaders travel along a complex path to validate, develop and complete their transformation journeys. We have so far explored the "what" and the "why" of companies making strategic enhancements to the way talent mobility is managed in their organization; now we will examine the "how."

Transformation projects by their nature are wide reaching, and the criticality of senior level backing to drive the changes necessary across the organization permeates the survey responses.

By more than double, respondents say the number one key enabler of success is having senior leadership support to promote change efforts. Transformation projects by their nature are wide reaching, and the criticality of senior level backing to drive the changes necessary across the organization permeates the survey responses. The second most frequently cited enabler for success is having effective organizational change management processes. Talent mobility transformation will stand the best chance of success when organizational change management resources and best practices are considered at the very beginning of change efforts, gaining early buy-in and ability to leverage internal experts. The third most frequent noted enabler is the availability of data to demonstrate the change benefits. Data is needed to make the initial business case for change, and driving the project through to completion involves touching many more parts of the organization. This exercise often further highlights the data gaps to close, the data needed to demonstrate progress of the change programs and the road ahead. Talent mobility leaders

who understand this and can leverage data to show stakeholders how they stand to benefit from the project will have a success managing change.

We asked survey respondents which change management tactics were particularly effective throughout the change process. The top three answers are involving stakeholders early in the process (33%), presenting a strong business case for change (17%) and having an effective change management process (9%). The unique, historically specialized nature of the talent mobility function necessitates widespread education among stakeholders and the organization at large before any change initiative can begin, but certainly before one can successfully conclude. Thoughtful and advance planning of the change management process will serve to educate as well as facilitate the rollout of new strategies, programs and processes.

Finally, and to underpin the complexity of transformation, even the best-planned change projects may face obstacles. When we asked respondents to look at their recent or in-progress change initiatives and tell us about any unexpected obstacles, the number one response was that timelines stretched and the projects took longer than were originally anticipated. Timing can also be a factor as the number two unexpected obstacle is organizational restructuring due to internal and external environments. On a positive note, more than one-quarter of respondents (27%) said there were no unexpected obstacles. Understanding the scope of the transformation project, its effect on the organization and planning realistic timelines to achieve desired outcomes is a critical condition of a successful process.



In Conclusion

With mobility now firmly in the sights of organizations' senior leadership, talent mobility leaders are undertaking large-scale transformation projects. This unprecedented level of visibility is accompanied by a willingness to change and mobility leaders are capitalizing on the moment to embark on efforts that will further enhance mobility's role within their organizations. There is a clear strategic shift that we see where mobility leaders are moving their functions away from being a process-oriented function toward a strategically purposeful one.

Mobility leaders are driving significant changes in their organizations and across the industry, deftly using strategic insight as they lead through their large-scale change initiatives.

As you have seen throughout the case scenarios and throughout our exploration of the four types of changes we see companies undergoing, large-scale transformation projects often involve changes in more than one area. Changes to the technology supporting mobility can spill into changes in the function and purpose of the program; changes designed to improve the mobile employee experience may lead to greater investment in supporting technologies. There are compelling synergies among the transformation projects and where companies find themselves along the change journey.

Mobility leaders are driving significant changes in their organizations and across the industry, deftly using strategic insight as they lead through their large-scale change initiatives. While balancing the needs of their mobile employees with those of the broader organization and its talent imperatives, they are decisively moving mobility into being an even greater strategic contributor to their companies' success.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The following companies participated in the 2017 Talent Mobility Trends Survey and gave their permission to be identified.

AbbVie
ABN AMRO
AECOM Australia
AkzoNobel
Alfa Laval
American Axle & Manufacturing, Inc.
Apache Corporation
ARaymond Network
Bayer
BB&T
BMW Group
Boehringer Ingelheim
Booking.com
BorgWarner
Brookfield Asset Management
Carl Zeiss AG
Caterpillar
CIBC
CNH Industrial
Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional
Danfoss A/S
DaVita, Inc.
Discovery Communications
Dow Chemical

Edwards Lifesciences
Fonterra Co-operative Group
Ford Motor Company
Fujitsu
General Motors Company
Harsco Corporations
Herc Rentals
HP Inc.
International Paper
Jabil
Jardine Matheson
John Deere
JT International
LafargeHolcim
LEGO Group
Lockheed Martin Corporation
LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Inc.
Mars Inc.
McDonald's Corporation
Mondelez International
MUFG Union Bank, N.A.
Nexen
Nordstrom

PETROBRAS
Pfizer Inc.
Philip Morris International
Phillips 66 Company
Robert Bosch
Salesforce
Siemens
Solvay
Steelcase Inc.
Stryker Corporation
TELEFÔNICA BRASIL
Teradata
The Clorox Company
Thomson Reuters
TomTom
Transamerica Life Insurance Company
Trimble Inc.
UBS
UCB SA
Unilever
UPS
Vodafone
Walmart Stores Inc.

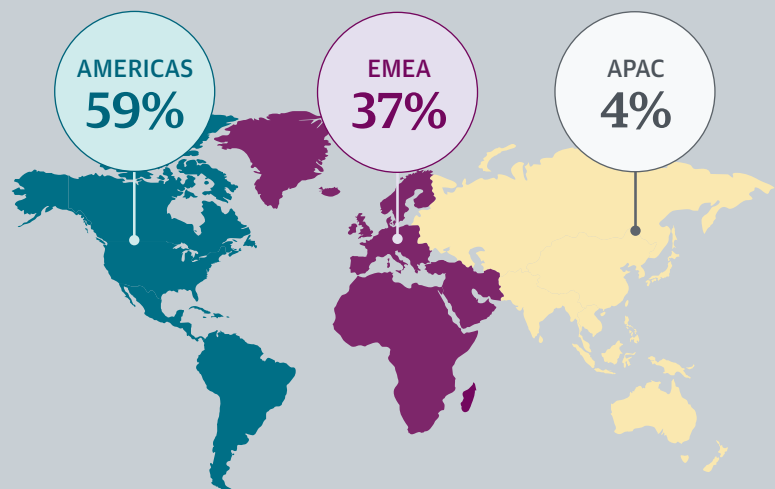


RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

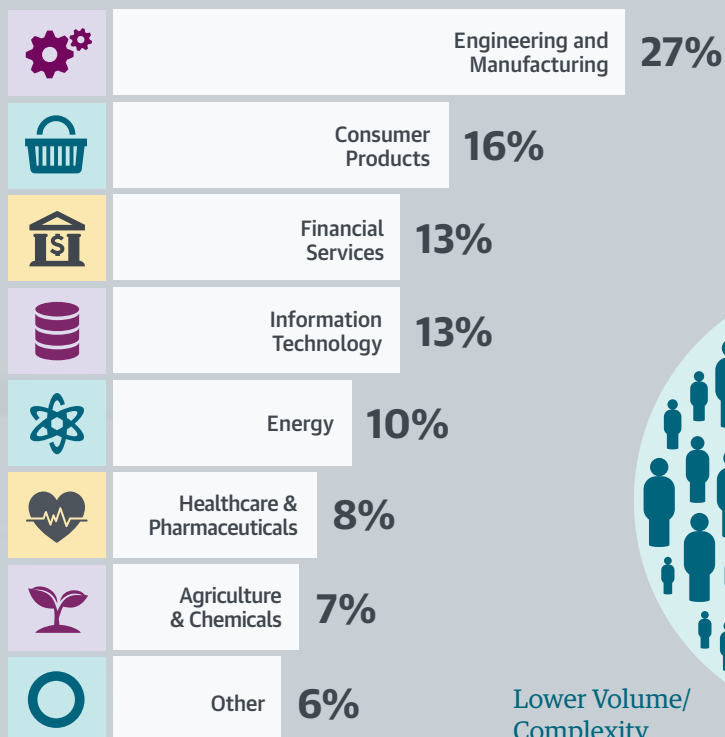
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12 million employees

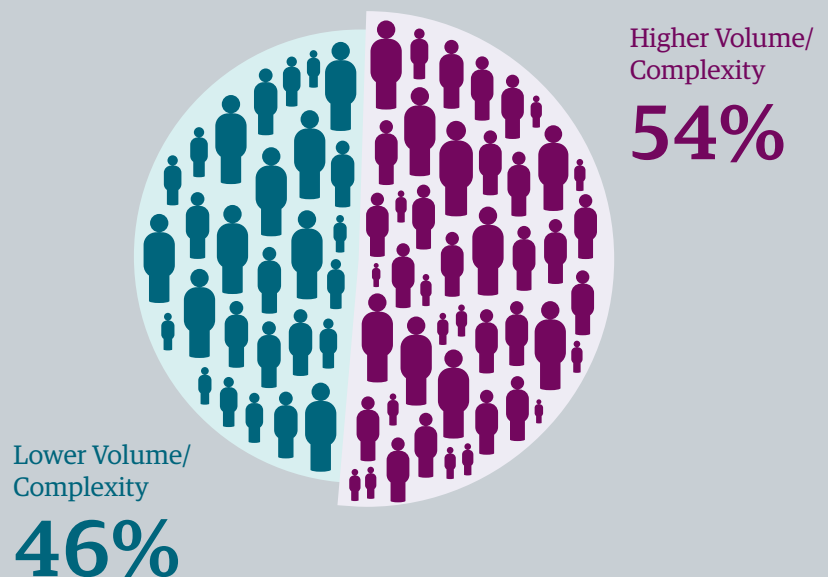
Respondents' Company Headquarters



Respondents' Industry



Respondents' Mobility Program Size





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