

The View from the Top:

Insights from Corporate Mobility Programme Leaders

> 2017 Global Heads Mobility
Strategy & Policy Summit Report

> Talent Mobility Programme owners discuss challenges and best practice in running a value-added global Mobility function.

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Hosted by insideMOBILITY®, the 2017 Global Heads Mobility Strategy & Policy Summit was held in London on 6th December and was sponsored by AIRINC and Graebel. Participants – global heads of Human Resources, Reward and Mobility – engaged in thoughtful discussions around top programme priorities and challenges.

In advance of the meeting, we polled registrants on several key topics. This report summarises those results in addition to the highlights and key takeaways from the event.



Industries Represented:

- Aerospace
- Beverages
- Energy
- Engineering
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Legal
- Mass media
- Mining
- Pharmaceutical
- Professional services
- Retail
- Technology

> Four Key Takeaways

- ① Employees view relocation assignments less and less as a hardship. Many accept and even pursue these assignments to promote their careers and for other personal reasons. That means organisations can be less concerned about alleviating financial hardship and should stop thinking of relocation benefits packages in terms of “incentives.”
- ② The Mobility profession is making great progress in providing strategic value to other stakeholders within an organisation, going well beyond the traditional transactional functions related to assignee relocation and support.
- ③ Mobility leaders are increasingly engaged in diversity-related initiatives – from providing equal access to opportunities to ensuring host country behaviours and standards do not impact any class of employees.
- ④ The world is getting smaller, but regional mores and conditions still call for differentiated programmes and policies.





> Featured Presentation– “The Enhanced Assignee Experience: Fake News?”



Kay Hall, Vice President EMEA, AIRINC

Primary message - Given the turmoil in their lives, assignees tend to think emotionally about short-term challenges and complications. Communication with them must be simple, fact-based and assignee-specific, otherwise they'll choose to believe the worst: “fake news.”

Additional key points from this interactive discussion:

- Be sensitive to the fact that most cost-containment strategies are not in the interest of the employee
- There's institutional value in a positive assignee experience – for example, the happy assignee is more likely to internally promote the programme
- Survey assignees before, during and after the experience to uncover the details that matter most to them. You'll likely find “low-hanging fruit” – opportunities to modify policies in ways that can enhance the programme and increase participant satisfaction ... at relatively little cost.

AIRINC

AIRINC is a leading authority on international Mobility data. Kay shared some of the firm's recent research about the fastest growing Mobility policies. The top five, in order, are:

1	2	3	4	5
One-Way Transfer	Short-Term Assignment	Business Traveller	Locally Hired Non-National	Commuter





> Primary Takeaways from Peer-to-Peer Roundtable Sessions

We built the agenda around two extensive time blocks dedicated to facilitated roundtable sessions and these discussions focused on challenges most on the minds of the industry leaders. The key points from these discussions are summarised in the following pages.



Cost Containment

“Cost reductions” ranked second among the top challenges in Mobility according to the pre-event survey. Participants cited a variety of cost control challenges that could be summed up in the phrase: “You can’t control what you can’t measure or anticipate.” This extends into specific concerns related to:

- Obtaining timely cost data
- Obtaining comprehensive cost data
- Minimising the impact of programme exceptions

Several attendees described successful initiatives they had used to address those challenges:

- Requiring business unit approval (and budget expenditures) for all exceptions
- Instituting technology solutions that capture all areas of cost and enable real-time tracking and reporting
- Including “flexible/agile” budget line items to accommodate exceptions and unforeseen situations
- Managing and limiting exceptions (see [Global Consistency](#) – Is it a Realistic Goal?)

From the Registrant Survey

Top Challenges your Mobility Programme faces in the next 12-24 months (respondents could choose three)

22%

Operational
efficiencies

16%

Cost
reductions

16%

Policy
enhancements

14%

Transferee/Assignee
experience and
satisfaction

12%

Greater integration
with talent
management

10%

Enhancing
programme’s
internal brand

7%

RFP process
and decisions

3%

Rapid programme
growth



Aligning for Success – Internal Integration

Attendees also shared several ways they “enable the business” and offer institutional value:

- Help capture “total cost” data related to transfers
- Educate management and business units about broad areas of risk – e.g., related to talent investment, repatriation challenges and geographic/socio-cultural concerns
- Advise on specific Mobility compliance issues such as immigration and tax
- Uncover compliance missteps by asking the right questions of department leaders, business travellers and assignees
- Advise on Talent development policies and how they should be applied in individual cases
- Assist the Human Resource team with communication and unique messaging related to relocations
- Proactively partner with business leaders on Mobility strategy and execution, going beyond the ‘gatekeeper’ role of policy enforcement and exception management

▶ For additional insight into how to better align with internal stakeholders and transform your programme into a key differentiator for your company, please download [The Definitive Guide to Strategic Mobility](#).



Global Consistency – Is it a Realistic Goal?

What's the ideal point on the continuum between global consistency and personalised programmes/policies? After all, global consistency yields economies, but at the expense of user experience; personalisation enhances user experience, but at the expense of programme economics.

Participants pointed out that the right spot along this scale for any organisation reflects:

- Available budget
- Organisational culture – e.g., “people first” and diversity
- Level of talent specialisation

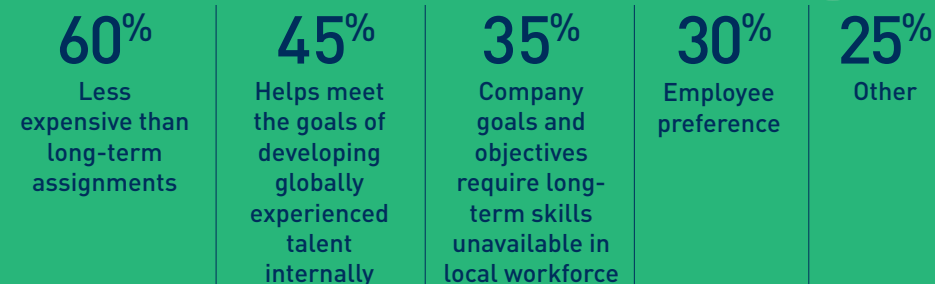
Attendees attempt to address this balancing exercise using models such as:

- Regionalisation – the most common approach
- Tiering policies by grade level or seniority
- Flexible budgeting with a line item for exceptions
- Granularly-defined, transparent programmes that account for differing circumstances that can be applied rigidly and consistently

Some of the attendees are shifting away from a regional policy structure because of multiple ongoing challenges. This select group is in process of reversing their previous efforts and implementing a more cohesive global policy.

From the Registrant Survey

What are the primary reasons you do international transfers?



From the Registrant Survey

Has implementing an international transfer policy helped your company meet its talent and workforce planning goals?



Communication Between Assignees

Employees talk and compare notes – that's a given. Many attendees expressed a level of frustration about how mobile employees compare benefit packages and exception allowances. But they quickly acknowledged the valuable mutual support generated by this kind of interaction with current, past and even potential assignees. Here are some of the positive experiences and lessons the attendees reported in this area:

- Using social media to celebrate assignment completions and repatriations is a positive retention strategy
- Assignees who post highlights of their lifestyle and locations on social media help eliminate geographic-based biases within the organisation
- Assignee alumni networks foster mentorship relationships
- An "Assignment Network Association" database connects employees working in the same region and improves the experience
- Encourage assignees to share their experience and learnings with their team and broader departments in a formal meeting

Supplier Services

As Mobility leaders shift their focus somewhat toward Talent Management and other corporate advisory functions, they're increasingly relying on suppliers to manage the details related to assignee services. Duty of care is still their priority, though, and they have high standards and expectations for their suppliers and relocation management companies.

From the Registrant Survey

What is the most valuable thing your suppliers bring to your programme?

- Benchmarking, external perspective
- Compliance
- Customer service
- Efficiency
- Expertise, market insight
- Helping us to maintain compliance
- Global reach, knowledge of host country
- Professionalism
- Proactivity



From the Registrant Survey

Share one detail you wish your suppliers could do better when supporting your relocating talent

- Better planning, understanding business strategy
- Personal approach
- Faster invoicing and completion of invoicing
- Communication, updates on progress
- Consistency
- Benchmarking/Best practice and trends
- New ideas benchmarked against the market
- Proactivity, ownership
- Practical advice when dealing with complex compliance scenarios



Localisation and Cross-Border Transfers

At each of the [regional insideMOBILITY Summit meetings in 2017](#), a significant majority of Mobility leaders and managers confirmed they are embracing localisation, permanent international transfer or cross-border transfer models. AIRINC confirmed this trend in their presentation during the event. The pre-meeting survey results on this topic were consistent with what we heard in other regional meetings regarding the factors driving this programme option.

► Mobility professionals recently shared their perspectives and experiences related to cross-border transfers. Download the full report: [Cross-Border Transfers: Analyzing Best Practices and Trends](#)

From the Registrant Survey

Why does your company localise assignees?



25%
Operational
cost cutting

20%
Minimise
perceived
inequities
between
expatriates
working with
local staffs

15%
Localisation
requested
by assignees
desiring to
stay in the
host country

15%
Demonstrate
long-term
commitment
to a particular
host country
or region

25%
Other*

*Other:

- Need for continued presence of talent
- Long-term career plan involves the host country
- Our company no longer localises, we repatriate

From the Registrant Survey

What is the biggest objection from assignees who are considering localising?



45%
Loss of
expatriate
status with its
benefits and
allowances

15%
Impact on
retirement
benefits

5%
Tax
concerns

5%
Healthcare
concerns

5%
Dependent
education
concerns

25%
Other

Diversity Priorities

Mobility programme leaders are leading the charge on diversity and inclusion matters. Equal opportunities for women and the cultural challenges certain employees may face in specific regions of the world are top of mind. They are utilising Mobility as a tool to drive diversity and inclusion by engaging diverse groups to improve retention and development. Here's what we heard from the attendees:

- Organisations need to evaluate every aspect of their relocation and assignment packages to ensure they do not discourage/prevent certain employees from participating
- Diversity considerations should not trigger exceptions; dedicated packages should be in place for these situations
- Contact LGBT advocacy groups for input when developing policies and solutions where there may be host country discrimination concerns

From the Registrant Survey

How would you rank your Mobility policies from 1-10 (10 being the most positive) in terms of how they help your organisation attract and retain top talent?



5%

Rank of 10

5%

Rank of 9

35%

Rank of 8

20%

Rank of 7

20%

Rank of 6

15%

Rank of 5

Mobility Data – Programme Analytics & Measuring Return on Investment (ROI)

Actionable Mobility data is hard to come by. After all, how does one quantify “duty of care” or predict the value of a globally-groomed department head or CEO? Still, Mobility professionals are striving to quantify more and more programme elements. The pre-meeting survey results on this topic are very consistent with what we’ve heard in other forums and as we collaborate with our clients. Data-driven Mobility analysis and decision-making is a work in progress.

From the Registrant Survey

How important is the development of Mobility Analytics to your organisation in the next 12 months?



45%

Important, but there are other priorities in the next year

30%

Very important

25%

Not something we are focused on

From the Registrant Survey

How well does your programme calculate ROI for moves and share the data with key stakeholders?



50%

We’re thinking about it but have no formal process to calculate ROI

35%

ROI is like the Loch Ness Monster – everyone’s heard of it, but no one’s really seen it!

15%

We’re advanced – we provide ROI metrics regularly

> 2018 Goals

Finally, we asked what these global Mobility programme leaders would like to accomplish in the coming year. Here are some of their responses ... and a year from now we'll be eager to hear how they fared!

What Leaders Would Like to Accomplish in the Coming Year



Improve
employee
satisfaction
rates



An end-to-end
assignment
process



Full
implementation
of technology
platform



A cost-driven,
standardised
programme



Upgrade
providers



Full
integration of
supplier data



A more
thorough
compliance
focus



Access
to more
demographic
data



Re-evaluate
programme
elements
and tasks to
incorporate
business needs



Pay more
attention to
senior-level
employee
transfers



Here's to the
world ahead.®

InsideMOBILITY events are sponsored by Graebel and designed to help Talent, Mobility, Reward and HR professionals become better at their jobs. In these forums, people in the industry from around the region meet with their peers, share ideas and insights and connect with industry experts.

Become an Industry Insider and join us for an insideMOBILITY event in 2018 near you! Contact [Simon Mason](#), SVP Business Development to be added to the invite list.

Download the full reports from the 2017 regional insideMOBILITY Summit meetings around the globe:
[Balancing and Progressing Talent Mobility](#) • [Advancing the Art of Mobility](#) • [Driving Excellence in Talent Mobility](#)