

TALENT MOBILITY IS EVOLVING: Are You Prepared for the Future Mobile Employee?

- State of Mobility 2021
Survey and Report

Understanding the Dynamics of the Mobile Employee of the Future

After the COVID-19 pandemic upended our world, many industries are forever changed – for better or for worse – by the impacts of the virus. Global mobility is no different.



So, as we inch toward a post-pandemic world and all the adjustments that requires, we asked ourselves:

- What does the mobile employee of the future look like?
- How has the pandemic changed workers' perspectives on relocating for a job or assignment?
- What is global mobility's role as companies strategize for the next few years?

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

To answer the above questions and more, we partnered with Wakefield Research to survey:

1,000 Knowledge Workers Worldwide



4 Generations

Ages 18-75: Gen Z, Millennial, Gen X and Baby Boomers



Diverse Respondents

Variety of races, cultures, genders and faiths and orientations



5 Industries

Manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, tech, financial and energy industries



9 Markets

Including Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the U.K., the U.S., Singapore and Switzerland. The survey provided insights on how people in the Americas, EMEA and APAC view mobility and shifts in priorities due to the pandemic.



So, what did we discover through the research?

This report explores those insights and how they can help your talent mobility program create exceptional experiences for the mobile employees of the future.



Simply put, the pandemic hasn't stopped workers from wanting to take work relocation assignments.

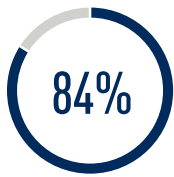


Corporate Relocation Remains in Demand



Mobile workers undeterred:

We found 80% of workers would relocate for work during the pandemic, including just under a third (31%) who would relocate internationally.



Those numbers jump even higher when assessing post-pandemic relocation, with 84% saying they'd relocate when COVID-19 is no longer prevalent throughout the world, including 46% who would relocate internationally.

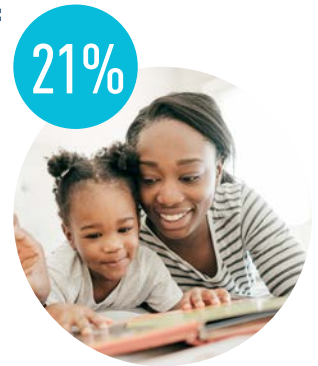


Pandemic spurs relocations:

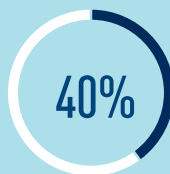
Nearly 3 in 5 workers said COVID-19 has made them more likely to relocate in general.

Millennial parents are more cautious about relocating their families:

Only 21% of Millennial parents are willing to relocate internationally during the pandemic, compared to 35% of parents overall, likely because many Millennial parents have young families to consider.



Boomers want to lead the way in global mobility: Of the four generations in our research, Baby Boomers were most likely to relocate internationally during the pandemic.



BABY BOOMERS



GEN X



GEN Z



MILLENNIALS

What does this mean?



Show your value to leadership:

Historically, it's been difficult for some global mobility teams to get a seat at the leadership table. The pandemic created more awareness within companies of the importance of talent mobility. Leverage that attention to highlight the value of global mobility and its many business benefits for company leaders.

Careful planning equals big rewards:

On a more tactical level, these findings indicate now is not the time to slow down when it comes to talent mobility program strategy and planning. Countries and borders will continue to open – and your mobile employees are eager and ready to relocate. That said, they'll need support to get the most out of these rewarding opportunities. You should connect with key stakeholders to take inventory of upcoming relocations and who might be a fit for the assignment, to continue planning policies, benefits, timelines and budgets.

Workers want long-term relocations: Of the 31% who said they'd relocate internationally during the pandemic, more than 2 in 5 (45%) would be willing to stay abroad for more than three years – and another 10% would do so indefinitely.

45%



Relocation destinations impact benefit needs:

With 81% of respondents naming a European city as their top-three desired destination, compared to 61% saying a city in Asia-Pacific and only 51% noting a North American city, it's clear certain relocations, based on their destination, will be more desirable. Global mobility managers should evaluate the incentives and benefits for each relocation based on the destination region to ensure the right assignments are filled and mobile employees are happy with their relocation support.

20%

LONDON



EUROPE

81%

20%

NEW YORK



NORTH AMERICA

51%

17%

TOKYO



APAC

61%

Meet in Europe? Eighty-one percent of workers chose a European destination as a top-three desired city to relocate to, with London being the most popular (20% cited the city in their top-three preferred cities), followed by Paris (16%) and Rome (10%). However, the Americas and APAC are well represented in dream cities, with New York City (20%) and Tokyo (17%) ranking in respondents' top-three destinations.



These days, it's more important than ever to meet the needs of families as part of a corporate relocation.



Relocation Services for the Family

81%

Coupled workers seek a change of scenery: Workers who are married or in a relationship are more willing to relocate for work during the pandemic, with 81% of coupled workers willing to move; only 64% of singles are willing.

89%

Families on the move: In the past, having children often meant staying put. Not today. Almost nine in 10 workers with kids (89%) would be willing to physically relocate for work during the pandemic – significantly more than the 65% of their child-free counterparts who said the same. Overall, expect family relocations to rise, as nearly half of respondents (46%) said they'd only be willing to relocate for less than six months without their family or partner.

36%

Family adjustment concerns: Over one-third of respondents (36%) said they'd want to relocate without their family or partner for more than three years, largely due to concerns with how family members will adjust to the relocation. Seventy-two percent of parents noted family assistance, such as quality and availability of schools for children, as their biggest concerns in relocating to another country for work.

Supporting family relocations: Families expect company support for relocating.

62%

of parents believe family assistance is a must-have for international relocations, particularly:

43%

finding a place to live



42%

paying for monthly household expenses



41%

covering travel and moving costs



What does this mean?

Including the family is a game changer:

If you haven't recently, now would be a good time to re-evaluate your family relocation policies and services, to ensure you have the right support for those mobile employees. Global relocation is a great tool for recruiting and retaining top talent, but if your family relocation support isn't market-competitive, it could be an easy decision for employees to turn down an assignment or take their talent to a company that offers better family assistance. A good place to start? Double check your policies to see if they include services like school search and/or placement, home leave, and spousal support.

Employees are balancing the benefits and concerns of international relocations – and the relocation services they'd need to make it happen.



The Joys and Concerns of International Relocation

87%

Career advancement opportunities:

Workers see international relocation as a smart career move, with 87% believing it's a great opportunity to advance their career.

91%

More than 9 in 10 workers (91%) say companies are more likely than ever to hire job candidates with international experience. And they're not wrong – 95% of executives surveyed confirmed companies are indeed more likely to hire candidates with international experience.

95%

Global Mobility concerns: On the flip side, the majority of workers (93%) do have some concerns about international relocations – primarily health and safety risks (39%), lack of friends or family for social support (39%) and language or cultural barriers (38%).

Incentivizing adventure and career growth:

Although workers want to relocate, they aren't doing it for free. Ninety-two percent said they'd need financial incentives to move, including a pay raise or promotion (48%), housing allowance (45%) and reimbursement for moving expenses (39%).

Intangible incentives also attract workers:

While most workers are primarily motivated by job gains (81%), more than money is motivating workers to relocate internationally. Workers are also driven by having a better lifestyle for their family (49%), experiencing a different culture (45%) and going to a safer location in terms of COVID-related risks (40%).

81%

Motivated
by job
gains



49% Better lifestyle
for self or family



40% Safer location
in terms of
COVID-related
risks



45% Experience a
different culture

What does this mean?



Tune your EQ: Workers are highly interested in international relocation experiences but need company support – both logistically and emotionally. In fact, over half (55%) of workers would prefer their employer handle all the logistics for them. Is your company – and more importantly, your talent mobility program – equipped to support them? Do you have their best interests in mind from an EQ (emotional intelligence) standpoint?

These respondents are telling us exactly what they want and what their concerns are. Now it's time to adjust global mobility strategies and policies to match.

For example, what health and safety policies have you implemented to help international mobile employees feel secure? Are you offering language or cultural training?

Let these insights guide your global mobility program adjustments, so you're creating exceptional experiences tailored to what mobile employees want.



Policy structures are evolving, and many empower flexibility and choice. As you evaluate and reimagine your policies, keep in mind:

Lump Sum: Typically, Lump Sum plans don't include benefits with a safety net, but it's clear this is a priority for employees, making companies offering basic Lump Sum plans less competitive. Balance controlling program costs with offering in-demand high-priority benefits to address specific concerns. Guidance from your in-house global mobility team or a relocation management specialist could help ensure your employees feel supported.

Inclusive Policies: Your benefit offerings significantly impact your ability to attract and retain diverse candidates and ensure their ongoing success. A low persistence rate for assignments is extremely costly, so make your policies inclusive from the start. This also creates a more productive workplace and thriving global connections, benefitting more than just your bottom line.

Flexible Policies: Flexible policies like Core-Flex have become the modern approach to balancing employee autonomy and program costs and are common amongst mobile employees. You should pay close attention to how you can update and adjust your Core-Flex policies to incorporate insights from this research.



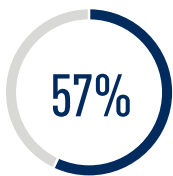
The pandemic work-from-anywhere paradigm has revealed new relocation possibilities, even with borders closed.



The Rise and Plateau of Virtual Assignments



Making do with virtual: For now, 88% of workers would accept a virtual assignment for work.



Back to the office: Post-pandemic, workers would prefer to see the world through more than just a screen; nearly three in five workers (57%) would prefer relocating in-person rather than virtually.

What does this mean?



In-person relocations aren't going away – they are evolving: While it's important to offer virtual assignments now to address the realities of our world, and they'll certainly be around post-pandemic, your emphasis and focus should be on building your talent mobility program to offer exceptional in-person relocation assignments.



Key Takeaways to Turn into Action

Based on the research results, these are the four key ingredients for a modern approach to talent mobility:

- 1 Build your global mobility program to offer exceptional in-person assignments that recruit and retain top talent, but also find a balance between strong in-person and virtual assignments, as both will be common in post-pandemic relocations.
- 2 Adjust strategies and policies to match updated company-supported benefits and mobile employee drivers and concerns.
- 3 Create inclusive, flexible policies that address unique candidate needs.
- 4 Acknowledge the emotional impacts of relocation by supporting family relocations. You can strengthen policies and make the relocation more appealing if the mobile employees' partners or families are included.

Let's Get Started

By evaluating your current policies and strategies against these key takeaways, you're building stronger mobility programs that serve as strategic recruiting and retaining tactics and create a more diverse workplace.

Reach out to Graebel, and we'll show you how.
[Contact us today!](#)



Here's to the world ahead*

Our team of experts can help plan for your mobile employees' future so you can:

➤ **Analyze**

how our insights can
improve your talent
mobility program

➤ **Build**

a comprehensive
mobility strategy
and road map

➤ **Balance**

costs to meet
your program
objectives

➤ **Focus**

on creating
exceptional
employee
experiences

Contact us and we'll show you how

Survey Methodology

The Graebel Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,000 knowledge workers, employed fulltime, ages 18-75 across 9 markets: U.S., Canada, UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Singapore, India, China Tier 1 Cities, between February 22nd and March 1st, 2021, using an email invitation and an online survey. The data has been weighted to be nationally representative by religion and sexual orientation.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.