Global Mobility Transformation Unlocked:

A Strategic Case for Optimization and Efficiency

Can a high performing team prove its value in the face of cost-cutting? This is how Graebel supported one global mobility team to do just that – with data.

This case study explores how a data-driven review validated global mobility's strategic value and revealed that the real opportunity did not lie in outsourcing, but in three key areas: preserving internal management over critical, compliance-driven functions; leveraging the services of its supplier ecosystem; and adopting smart technology.

Project overview

When cost pressures mount, even high-performing teams may be asked to justify their structure. This was the case for the global mobility function at a Fortune 100 global insurance company with more than 45,000 employees across 27 countries. During a broader HR optimization effort, an external management consulting firm was tasked with identifying cost-saving opportunities across the company's HR functions, including the global mobility team. Despite the team's established performance and strategic involvement, the consultants proposed a 50% staff reduction.

But a deeper, data-driven evaluation told a different story. Graebel was engaged to objectively assess the team's structure, responsibilities, and workflows, determining whether the proposal would deliver meaningful performance improvements or instead add administrative complexity with minimal return.

Methodology and strategic insights

To evaluate the management consulting firm's proposition and the global mobility team's operating model, the project focused on the following four key areas:

	Approach	Key Findings
Time Study	Tracked detailed time allocations across various roles and responsibilities.	Only two team members were fully dedicated to mobility, with others focused on areas like immigration or remote work.
Benchmark	Compared mobility practices with 30 global peers across industries.	The team matched or exceeded peers in strategic advisory, operational efficiency and satisfaction.
Process Evaluation	Reviewed current operations against proposed outsourced workflows.	Replacing established eco-system for key functions like invoicing and payroll could disrupt workflows, increase complexity, and dilute existing compliance safeguards.
Supplier Optimization	Analyzed history and performance of supplier relationships.	Over $800,000 in cost savings already achieved through streamlined vendor use and selective outsourcing.

Strategic Business Impact

- Affirmed the value of maintaining internal oversight for compliance-intensive processes
- Exposed the minimal real efficiency gains in the proposed outsourcing approach
- Validated the team's alignment with their industry peers and established best practices
- Documented $800,000 in savings through optimized supplier partnerships
- Preserved agility, compliance, and a positive employee experience

Conclusion: Optimized for impact. Poised for progress.

The evaluation confirmed that the global mobility team is not only highly efficient but also serves as a strategic asset to the organization. Rather than further reducing global mobility resources or transferring ownership of key processes, leadership chose to reinforce the existing model. This decision preserves agility, ensures compliance, and supports a positive employee experience — while still paving the way for future efficiency gains through smarter supplier collaboration and targeted technology investments.

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