THE NEXT FRONTIER OF HR EXCELLENCE
Talent Mobility for the 21st Century Organization
Survey Participants

The survey was taken in August 2015

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 80

LEVEL

- 4% Analyst
- 11% Consultant
- 25% Manager
- 14% Senior Manager
- 34% Director/Head of
- 6% Vice President
- 6% Other

ROLES

- 30% Domestic Mobility/Relocation
- 91% Global Mobility
- 13% Talent Acquisition
- 20% International HR
- 24% Compensation & Benefits
- 8% Other HR function

COMPANY SIZE

- 3% <50 employees
- 3% 51 – 250 employees
- 3% 251 – 1,000 employees
- 11% 1,000 – 5,000 employees
- 16% 5,001 – 10,000 employees
- 14% 10,0001 – 25,000 employees
- 50% 25,001+ employees
Thank you for taking the time to read the findings from MOVE Guides’ and the RES Forum’s joint talent mobility and technology survey in our comprehensive industry paper, “Talent Mobility for the 21st Century Organization.”

Companies today face three major macroeconomic trends – the globalization of business and revenue, labor and skills shortages in local markets and changes in the way employees work. Success in the 21st Century requires a new perspective on managing, developing and retaining global talent.

Defined as a company that consistently outperforms its business and talent objectives for multiple years, we have identified five pillars of the successful 21st Century Organization. These five pillars – global reach, learning culture, employee engagement, technology enablement and financial efficiency – equip companies and their workforce with the skills, systems and data to succeed amid a changing macroeconomic landscape.

Talent mobility is at the very heart of the 21st Century Organization – and at the very heart of each of the five pillars of the 21st Century Organization. More than ever before, companies must have revenue and talent pools that transcend geographic borders. Successfully and efficiently attracting and deploying talent on a global scale is now a key competitive advantage.

Increasing demand for talent mobility and international relocation puts new pressure on HR and finance teams. Companies must implement a world-class talent mobility program that delivers successful outcomes for all stakeholders involved – from employees to finance to the boardroom.

Simultaneously, we are living in the golden age of HR technology, where cloud platforms enable access to centralized information, collaboration with global stakeholders, automation of administrative tasks and links between different systems like never before. Yet this trend has only started to transform talent mobility. Even though 25% of respondents said talent mobility was the most time consuming and complex of HR functions, our survey shows that just 28% of respondents use cloud technology to manage their global mobility program. Talent mobility is "the last mile of HR technology".

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of talent mobility for the 21st Century Organization, as this paper outlines, companies have a long way to go in creating an effective and technology-enabled talent mobility strategy and program. Surprisingly, 0% of respondents said their talent mobility program exceeds expectations, and only 18% said their talent mobility program meets expectations.

We hope that our research shines light on what it means to be a successful 21st Century Organization and how the latest talent mobility and technology trends are helping companies align their talent and business objectives.

Sincerely,

Brynne and David
Defining the 21st Century Organization

Global Reach
Accesses talent and skills around the world; facilitates team diversity; builds networks internally and externally across borders; successfully enters new markets; generates revenue globally.

Learning Culture
Offers learning and development opportunities across different office locations; facilitates ‘tours of duty’ between projects, business areas and geographies; builds cross-cultural learning among different groups of employees.

Employee Engagement
Engages employees with recurring projects and challenges; seeks constant feedback from staff; makes employees’ work as easy as possible with good systems and structures; fosters autonomy in teams and work.

Technology Enablement
Integrates cloud technology platforms for ease of work; leverages cross-functional data sets to drive business decisions; empowers collaboration among diverse stakeholders; hails good user experiences and mobile devices.

Financial Efficiency
Leverages data to make company investment decisions and identify cost savings; designs teams and technology systems to reduce administrative burdens; ensures the right talent in the right place to meet business objectives.
Top talent objectives shaping the global workplace

The war for talent continues and companies are scrambling to remain ahead, as they build a best in class workforce. As companies face continued labor and skills shortage in their local markets, the ability to attract and retain top talent has become a key competitive advantage for the 21st Century Organization.

According to this survey, 49% of companies believe sourcing staff from a global talent pool is important to company success, but only 12% of companies feel they do it effectively. Faced with skills gaps in many local markets, companies must effectively match their talent demands with talent supplies around countries and continents. To do so requires an effective talent mobility strategy – both to attract and relocate staff.

“Talent, not capital, will be the key factor linking innovation, competitiveness and growth in the 21st century.”

– World Economic Forum

How important are the following top talent trends to your organization and how effective is your organization at managing the following top talent trends?

- Engagement and company culture: 68% importance, 13% effectiveness
- Inclusion and diversity: 56% importance, 21% effectiveness
- Developing a leadership pipeline: 55% importance, 8% effectiveness
- Sourcing from a global talent pool: 49% importance, 12% effectiveness

Approximately 55% of respondents believe it is important to develop a leadership pipeline at their organization, but only 8% of respondents believe they are highly effective at managing that objective. Providing high potential staff with continuous learning through talent mobility is a key investment for companies. Employees with ‘tours of duty’ in other offices or regions build skill sets, networks and perspective for future leadership roles.

Finally, less than 6% of responding organizations stated that they are highly effective at managing the process of developing appropriate career opportunities abroad for their employees. Matching the right talent with the right career opportunities – at the right time, location and cost – is a fundamental component of talent acquisition, talent management and career development.

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Technology redefining the way we work today

The 21st Century Organization has been transformed by technology. Cloud technology provides access to centralized information, collaboration among global stakeholders, automation of administrative tasks and links between systems on computers, tablets and mobile phones, all with a simple and intuitive user interface.

Cloud technology has fundamentally changed the way that employees work in all departments. Employees can now access files and data from anywhere, making physical presence in an office less important than ever before. Global teams can collaborate on projects and processes and integrated systems share information cross functionally, helping companies make business decisions and identify cost savings.

For talent mobility, this means easier program management and collaboration among HR, global mobility, finance teams and employees.

According to survey respondents, 55% believe an intuitive user interface is important to their organization, yet 14% said that their organization was effective in providing this. Similarly, 53% of companies felt data analytics was an important technology trend, but only 6% are using data analytics opportunities effectively.

Our survey also shows that while respondents can successful identity the top technology trends, they do not yet use the modern technology that is necessary for business success. Easy to use cloud technology is integral to the way that employees work today – whether in HR, finance, engineering, sales, marketing or other business areas.

If less than 6% of companies believe that they are highly effective at data analytics, how are they measuring success across the company? Or if only 14% of companies provide their employees with intuitive technology, are we inhibiting, not enhancing, productivity?
Better aligning of talent mobility with core HR and business objectives

The ability to attract, deploy and retain talent at a global scale is critical to the success of the 21st Century Organization. Executing this strategy is one of the largest challenges for companies today and one where talent mobility has a new and important role to play.

The globalization of business and revenue means that companies have an increasing need for employees to complete assignments in different locations, share skills among the workforce and build networks globally. An effective talent mobility program supports these objectives and helps to create a leadership pipeline of ‘globally competent’ leaders.

At the same time, demand for global opportunities and ‘tours of duty’ in other offices, geographies or business areas is rapidly increasing from employees. As the average employee tenure at companies continues to decline, effectively providing new opportunities to staff has become a critical retention tool.

“Businesses don’t create value; people do.”
– Harvard Business Review

As the chart below shows, many companies are falling short of effectively meeting goals. Just 10% of respondents felt their talent mobility program is effective building a leadership pipeline and only 7% of respondents said they were effective at talent retention.

Now is the time to reinvest in an effective talent mobility program to support company objectives.

As businesses increasingly expand beyond borders and look into emerging markets for growth opportunities, an engaged and productive workforce is a number one priority driving success in the 21st Century Organization and winning the global war on talent.

For all companies, how effective is your organization’s talent mobility program(s) at achieving the following talent objectives?

- Expanding professional networks: 23%
- Creating a diverse workforce: 23%
- Developing skill sets: 18%
- Attracting top talent: 11%
- Building a leadership pipeline: 10%
- Talent retention: 7%

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Talent mobility as the last mile of HR technology

In the past five years, companies have shifted from using on-premise technology systems to manage their workforce, to implementing easy-to-use cloud platforms for human capital management, benefits administration and recruiting, among other core HR processes. These platforms bring efficiency, flexibility and collaboration to HR teams like never before.

Amid the surge in HR technology platforms, there is one major gap – talent mobility. This is the “last mile of HR technology.”

Our survey shows that almost 72% of companies don’t use cloud technology for talent mobility management and 43% don’t have any technology solution for their program, still using excel and email to manage the complex processes, communications and reporting of talent mobility. Without cloud technology, information is fragmented, teams are laden with administrative burdens and employees are underserved during critical professional and personal transitions. Cost efficiencies are virtually impossible to identify or capture.

For both respondents that are using some form of technology and not using any technology, 94% of respondents said that technology would in some way help them meet business and talent objectives.

Implementing cloud technology is a major strategic priority for HR, global mobility and finance teams. Our research found that more than 41% of respondents plan to implement some form of technology within the next 12 months.

The 21st Century Organization has global reach, technology enablement and financial efficiency. Implementing cloud technology systems for talent mobility supports these pillars of success.
Globalization and skills shortages make talent mobility more important than ever. Yet HR and talent mobility departments continue to struggle with complex processes, compliance risks, high costs and frustrated employees. To add growing pressures, according to PwC, 89% of companies expect to dramatically increase their levels of mobile talent in the next two years.

Our research found that 25% of respondents believed that talent mobility was the most time-consuming and complex HR function. When comparing how respondents rated how time-consuming and complex the other HR functions were, talent mobility was greater than learning and development, recruitment, reward and performance management, combined. But this is no surprise considering that talent mobility is one of the most expensive, time-consuming and cross-functional areas of HR.

0% of respondents said that their talent mobility program exceeds expectations and only 18% said that their talent mobility program meets all expectations.

“The time and energy to ensure that you spot and assess the right talent, identify the right role for the right time and manage their on-going career to ensure retention of talent, particularly between home and host country, is complex.”

– Survey Respondent

Three biggest challenges with your current talent mobility program include:

- 64% High costs
- 62% Compliance risks
- 51% Too many points of contact

Three biggest inhibitors for not using technology for talent mobility:

- 31% Cost
- 26% Lack of support from senior management
- 21% Difficulty relating to implementation

Cloud platforms are enabling HR and mobility teams to better meet business objectives with significant cost savings, so that resources can be reinvested into strategic initiatives. Of those companies that use technology, 76% agreed that they are much more able to manage compliance risks and 69% agreed that they have a much better handle on cost control for programs.
Delivering better talent mobility programs with key benefit from cloud platforms

Align talent mobility to talent management and employee engagement

Attracting, deploying and retaining talent on a global scale is critical to the success of the 21st Century Organization and their strategic objectives. Cloud platforms help companies manage the program at scale, make talent decisions and provide employees with better experiences before, during and after moves. This fills labour and skills gaps in local markets, builds key skills in the workforce, develops a pipeline of global leaders and retains employees with a learning culture.

Streamline program management and focus on higher alpha work

Talent mobility programs are laden with administrative tasks like completing excel sheets, manually entering information and transposing data between systems. Cloud platforms streamline this administration with intuitive user experiences, so that teams can focus on talent management alignment or higher alpha work. Of respondents, 76% agreed that administrative tasks have been greatly reduced through cloud platforms.

Centralized information for better decision making

Centralized information and ‘a single mobility view’ enable better decision making across all company departments. Talent mobility data is often spread across systems, emails and excel sheets, making strategic talent management decisions near impossible. The majority of respondents (86%) agreed that cloud technology enables greater access to real-time data and analytics.

Global collaboration across stakeholders

Effective talent mobility programs require collaboration across geographies and departments – recruiting, HR business partners, finance departments and relocating employees. Communication, information sharing and document review is difficult to manage. Approximately half of respondents (51%) said too many points of contact is the biggest challenge with their mobility program. Cloud platforms provide a ‘single mobility view’ to all stakeholders.

Access to financial data to identify cost savings and ensure compliance

Financial efficiency is a top priority for all company executives, but you can’t manage what you can’t see. Talent mobility is historically one of the most costly, opaque and risky areas of P&L spend, with data spread across systems, invoices and vendors. More than 60% of survey respondents said high costs and compliance risks were part of the top three challenges for mobility programs. Cloud platforms centralize financial, tax and compliance data in a ‘single mobility view’ so that you can identify cost savings opportunities.
Thank you

for taking the time to read “Talent Mobility for the 21st Century Organization” and diving into the talent and technology trends that are redefining the global workplace.

We believe that talent mobility is at a turning point. Companies can no longer delay the necessary investments in technology, processes and people to deliver a successful talent mobility program and meet their business objectives. The 21st Century Organization faces unique macroeconomic trends and its success is dependent on effectively building their five pillars – global reach, learning culture, employee engagement, technology enablement and financial efficiency.

That is why we believe that next big step for talent mobility is bringing a ‘single mobility view’ to all global stakeholders – from employees to HR department to finance managers to external vendors. With this centralized information, global collaboration and consistent employee experience, companies can then identify talent management trends and cost savings opportunities.

Many survey respondents noted that they have no idea how their talent mobility program is achieving talent objectives because they don’t have centralized information and data analytics to measure successful talent mobility. Specifically, one respondent stated in the survey, “We do not have enough data to comment accurately.”

By collating all the data necessary to optimize your mobility programme you also have the information available to undertake another strategic task missing from talent mobility – measuring return on investment. Measuring return on investment is often a task that falls to the back of HR’s list – because it’s unclear what to measure; it’s too difficult to get the data; and basic mobility administration is too burdensome. With cloud platforms and a ‘single mobility view’ mobility teams can start to analyse return on investment, align with talent management and most importantly, focus on delivering a great relocation experience for each and every employee.

This will fundamentally transform the 21st Century Organization, ensuring it can attract, deploy and retain talent on a global scale, as well as meet its strategic business objectives.
David Enser is an International HR professional with extensive experience in end-to-end mobility program management. His particular areas of expertise include HR transition and HR outsourcing models, assignment tax compliance, global vendor management and the development and implementation of global mobility, general HR and employment policies. He has worked in HR and mobility roles for and with Nokia, IBM, Procter & Gamble, Wella AG and Paragon Consulting.

He is currently Head of Mobility for a major German-based international sporting goods manufacturer. He has lived and worked in France, Germany, Hong Kong and Japan.

Brynne Herbert is the Founder and CEO of MOVE Guides. Brynne founded MOVE Guides in 2011 during her MBA, after experiencing the challenges of her own relocations as an investment banker across the world. MOVE Guides has grown from an idea to an award winning startup working with the world’s largest companies.

Brynne is a registered Global Mobility Specialist (GMS) with the Worldwide Employee Relocation Council (ERC) and a regular speaker at global mobility industry conferences. She has lived in the US, EMEA and APAC and speaks four languages. Brynne holds an MBA from London Business School and a B.A. in History from Yale University.

About RES Forum
The RES Forum was created in 2006 as an independent community for International HR & Mobility professionals and is now the largest and most active network, specializing in global mobility survey data, modelling and analytics. More than 675 members from 337 of the world’s leading companies in 41 countries, all mobility professionals, have joined the RES Forum and are active participants in sharing knowledge in an increasingly growing online community.

About MOVE Guides
MOVE Guides is the platform for talent mobility. MOVE Guides partners with HR and finance departments to manage and deliver full global mobility programs for new hires, relocations, projects and expatriate assignments across more than 200 locations. Using MOVE Guides, companies improve employee experience and reduce total costs by up to 10% versus a traditional relocation management company. MOVE Guides has offices in San Francisco, London, New York and Hong Kong, with a global network of more than 1,000 vendor partners.