

Why global mobility deserves a senior leadership focus

By [Generali Employee Benefits](#)

Mobile employees are key to companies' international growth, either by acting as the spearhead to setting up operations in new countries, or by helping transfer skills and innovation.

From supporting global business expansion to growing a diverse and inclusive workforce with global competencies at all levels, talent mobility has a crucial role to play. 63% of global mobility specialist respondents to [BGRS' 2017 Talent Mobility Trends Survey](#) said employee mobility was now high on their organisation's senior leadership agenda.

This might come as no surprise considering the number of expatriate and globally mobile employees is set to surpass one million by 2021, thanks largely to growth in new smaller and medium-sized multinationals, according to a study by market research company Finnacord, a division of Aon Inpoint, entitled [Global Multinationals and Corporate Transferees: A Worldwide Review](#).

The success or failure of these companies will largely rest on the competitiveness and sustainability of their talent mobility programmes, so it pays for senior leadership to lend their support.

As a starting point, we provide an overview of who globally mobile employees are these days, plus a step by step guide to best strategies to attract and retain mobile workforce.

The changing face of globally mobile employees

According to BGRS, international assignments are seen as a significant draw and are often considered a pathway to career enhancement for current employees.

For this reason, international companies are now increasingly aligning mobility to their talent agenda in a bid to take a more strategic and effective approach to attracting, developing and retaining key talent.

There is also a gradual yet noticeable shift in the demographic profile of globally mobile employees. The traditional profile of the white, middle-aged, married male is still very much in play, but it's increasingly making way for Millennials.

Soon to represent the largest segment of the workforce, Millennials come with a unique set of expectations that will have a bearing on attraction, engagement and retention for companies. BGRS reports that Millennials are often drawn to opportunities that include an international experience.

A small number of companies included in BGRS' 2016 report highlighted the role of global mobility as a strategic driver of their talent agenda. They're sending more Millennials on international assignment to help ensure a pipeline of future leaders with global management experience.

This helps contain assignment costs too. For example, premiums for insurance-based products will generally be lower for younger individuals, plus it's less likely that they will be taking a family with them: another cost containment aspect – from both an overall programme perspective but also because assignment failure is less likely when a family isn't being moved to another country with the employee.

Best global mobility strategies step by step

Companies that understand how mobile employees can be a key asset, are fine-tuning their strategies to coordinate activities and select the most suitable approach. Here's how:

Building the foundations:

- **Your unique workforce:** A good starting point is carrying out an analysis based on a detailed employee population census. This will allow companies to assess where they are located, their status and expectations, and to integrate this information into their overall strategy.
- **The environment:** Conducting a geographic and industry benchmark will shed light on the employee

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benefits market, identify best practice, and assess how an individual company performs against competitors.

- **Flexibility:** Based on previous analysis, it is possible to identify solutions based on a company's specific needs by selecting benefits to match the needs of different groups of employees in the same plan.

Global design:

- **Governance:** Define the balance between flexibility and cost control and central coordination to enhance company operations.
- **Measurement:** Set up centralised monitoring, measurement and reporting systems to assess effectiveness and return on investment in mobility plans.
- **Support and assistance:** Assess the need for centralised support in managing different regulatory systems, across countries or even within the same country across industry sectors or regions.
- **Business Travel Accident (BTA) cover:** Globally mobile employees are exposed to several risks when travelling for their international assignments. Therefore, medical and travel insurance services like emergency medical expenses and transportation, repatriation, loss of luggage - just to name some - should be included in their benefits package.
- **Pooling:** Integrating the organisation's expatriate benefits into a global portfolio will allow for reduces costs and enhances profitability of benefits solutions.

Employee value proposition:

- A multinational plan will ensure portability of coverage, thereby eliminating any constraints when relocating, and enhancing protection of the employees who may, for instance, be ensured access to facilities and care not available in their host or home country.
- Part of the return on costs is based on the workforce's understanding of their benefits, which can be measured based on engagement and retention.
- Finally, it pays for organisations to detail each employee's benefits in an individual statement, thus providing competitive advantage with clear messages to explain to employees the value of the benefits provided.

If you are interested in know more, we invite you to read our special [newsletter on Global Mobility](#) or to contact us at marketing@geb.com