

**Deloitte.**

## Strategic Moves

A new direction for global mobility



A global survey on today's workforce mobility challenges

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# Foreword

Companies need to be both strategic and nimble in order to survive and prosper in an increasingly competitive New World, buffeted by fluctuating fortunes in mature markets and rapid but inconsistent growth in emerging markets. The war for talent remains a key barrier to growth and organisations need to plan to develop their top talent giving them relevant global experience, but at the same time they need to be able to move quickly to get the right people, in the right place, when opportunities arise. Companies that adopt a strategic approach to global mobility are more likely to take advantage of the opportunities for growth because their expertise and leadership is focused in the right geographies, products and sectors.

In this, our first *Strategic Moves* survey, we have asked companies to rate their approach to global mobility and to comment on the importance of mobility to their strategic business and talent objectives. We have also sought to explore whether their mobility function is aligned to their business and which critical issues it should address.

Deloitte surveyed over 140 organisations across the globe from a broad array of industries in order to understand the challenges they faced in managing global mobility. Participants represented major regions, evenly balanced across Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America and South America, as well as an even split between responses from HR and those from business lines. More than a quarter of companies that took part have an annual turnover of over \$10bn, with an aggregate of at least 30,000 global assignments.

Following collation of the survey results, initial themes were developed and these findings were validated with input from major multinational organisations through in-depth discussions. This process enabled us to verify themes and to develop the background arguments in more detail. We have also used our experience working with multinational organisations to inform the commentary.

In the report we have set out the findings from the survey and interviews in more detail, illustrating the strategic priorities, the talent issues and the effectiveness of global mobility. Within these we have sought to address some of the challenges, complexities and responses which we would expect companies to encounter.



# Executive summary

At a high level the survey makes it clear that the global mobility of human capital will become increasingly important over the next three to five years due to the complexity of doing business on a global scale and the increasing importance of emerging markets. HR leaders and senior business executives agree that, more than ever, global mobility needs to become further integrated into core HR processes and act as a strategic partner to the business – complementing the company's strategic business objectives and its talent agenda.

Three key themes common across all survey participants emerged:

## 1) The importance of a global mobility strategy

The findings show that global mobility is an increasingly important strategic enabler which should align to core business objectives. Three quarters of participating companies anticipate that the total number of globally mobile employees will increase or increase significantly over the next three to five years and over 80% of organisations anticipate that global mobility will become more important or significantly important over the same period.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) feel it is important or critically important to align their organisation's global mobility strategy with their business strategy, with nearly half of all organisations surveyed agreeing that their top strategic business issue is *emerging geographical markets*. These figures are complemented by the Deloitte CFO Survey: 2011 Q3 Results which highlight that growth continues to dominate the agenda of CFOs around the world, with the majority sighting overseas expansion as a key business priority. In reality however, there is a significant disconnect with only 2% of participants believing that mobility is currently aligned to these objectives.

The increasing importance of global mobility programmes emphasises the need to establish a formal global mobility strategy. Moving global mobility to this next level will require careful planning, focused investments, and the development of new advanced capabilities. Global mobility is a significant investment – one that can easily top \$25-30million per 100 assignees. At these costs, businesses need to know that they are focusing their efforts on critical priorities and getting a return on their investment.

## 2) The need to integrate mobility and talent

Developing new leaders and providing them with experience to grow new markets is crucial, however the current lack of integration with talent programmes and strategies means that many organisations will not be able to fill their talent pipelines with the global leaders required for future growth. The survey results show that 60% of respondents feel global mobility is important or critically important to meeting their talent agenda. A further 37% feel that it is becoming more important. This illustrates that there is a growing recognition that getting the right people in the right place at the right time is important to the business both in immediate terms, and in relation to talent development. Global leadership and pipeline was selected by a third of respondents as the global mobility issue most critical to their organisations' successes. However, surprisingly only 11% feel this issue is fully supported by their current mobility programme.

Supporting organisational business needs means supporting the overall talent and mobility agenda of the organisation. This requires understanding the broad business and talent objectives and assisting in the integration of international experience in global competency development so they can have the right people, in the right jobs, in the right locations.

### 3) Enhancing the value of global mobility

The survey findings reflect our understanding of the challenges facing chief executives and HR leaders. Global mobility functions have grown reactively, with responsibilities often split by Talent, Operations, HR Shared Service Centres and disparate pockets of mobility expertise with no overall strategic direction or realisation that global mobility can enable many of an organisation's business objectives. Approximately 40% of survey participants believe their global mobility programme needs significant or radical improvement. A further 36% feel that their programme is adequate, with room for improvement. In total therefore, three quarters of the organisations that participated in this survey rated their mobility function as no better than adequate.

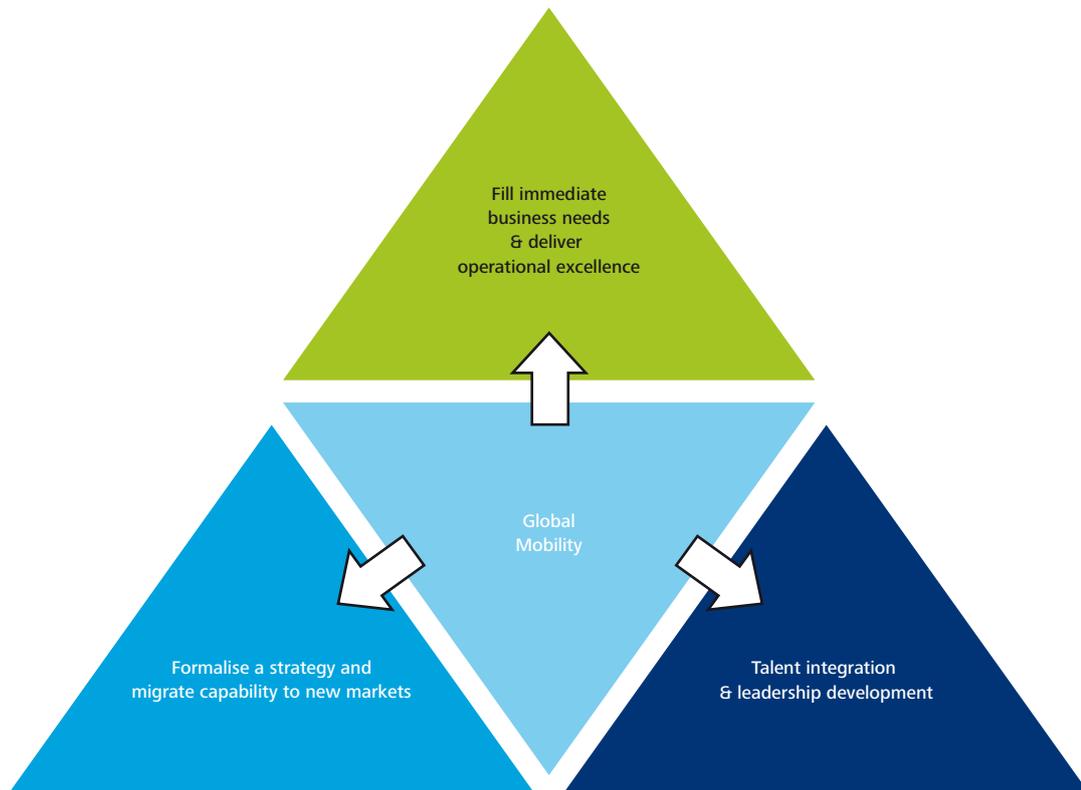
Greater significance can be placed on the fact that nearly half of the business executives (outside HR) consider their mobility to be underperforming and not fulfilling the business and talent requirements compared to only 33% of HR respondents. This is the clearest indication that there is a significant disconnect between the perception of those within HR and those within the business in terms of whether global mobility is fit for purpose.

#### Closing the gap

The transition from global mobility being viewed as a transactional cost centre to a value-add strategic partner is a difficult one. Less than 10% of participants feel that their organisation currently perceives global mobility as a fully strategic function. The findings reflect our understanding of the challenges facing chief executives and HR leaders. The development of strategic expertise within global mobility functions will be an important way for companies to address the challenges ahead. This will enable companies to ensure that their mobility strategy aligns with their business and talent objectives, and will also enable global mobility to deliver a more cost-effective and targeted service.

#### Global mobility alignment

In our view, world-class mobility programmes should focus on all three of these themes simultaneously (and flex with talent and business needs) to realign mobility with their organisation's wider business and talent objectives:





### Key findings from the survey

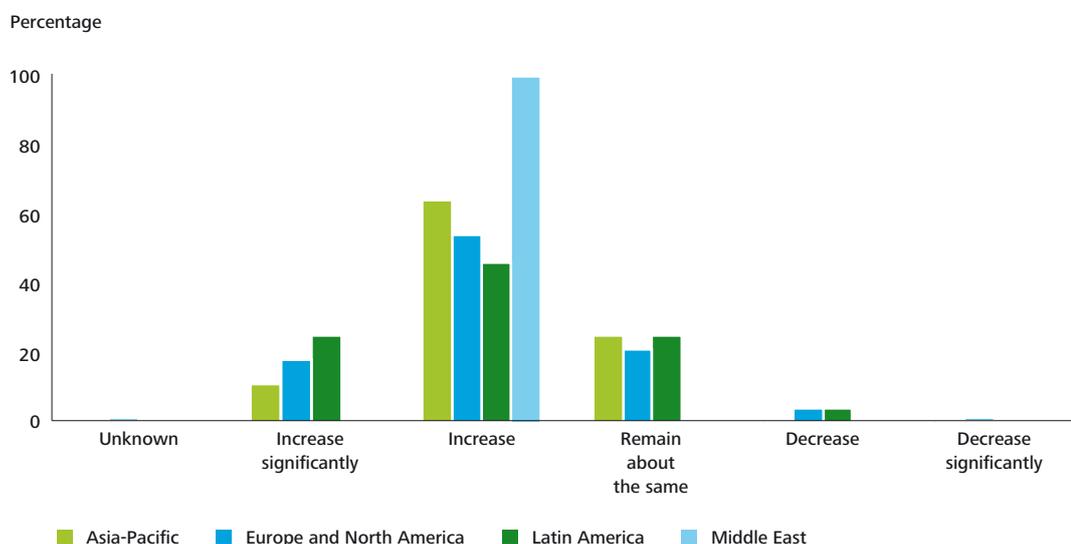
- Nearly 50% of all organisations surveyed agree that their top strategic business issue is *'emerging geographical markets'*.
- Behind emerging geographies, *'globalisation'* is listed as one of the top three strategic business issues by 20% of participants, and *'competition'* follows close behind.
- Three quarters of participating companies anticipate that the total number of globally mobile employees will increase or increase significantly over the next three to five years.
- Nearly 80% of organisations anticipate that global mobility will become more important or significantly more important over the same period.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) feel that it is important or critically important to align their organisation's global mobility strategy with its business and talent objectives. Only a handful of participants (2%) however feel that there is complete alignment at present.
- The percentage of global assignments initiated for strategic or leadership reasons is increasing.
- 31% of respondents rate global leadership development and pipeline as the global mobility issue most critical to their organisation's success. Only 11% think this issue is fully supported by their current mobility programme.
- Only 34% of respondents believe that senior executives understand the role of global mobility in their organisation. In addition, only 37% of respondents believe that senior executives highly value or value the role of global mobility in their organisation.
- Approximately 40% of survey participants feel that their global mobility programme needs significant or radical improvement. A further 36% feel that their programme is adequate, with room for improvement. In total therefore, three quarters of organisations that participated in this survey rated their mobility function as no better than adequate.
- Nearly 50% of the business executives (outside HR) feel that mobility is underperforming and not fulfilling the business and talent requirements compared to only a third of HR respondents.
- Less than 10% of participants feel that their organisation currently perceives global mobility as a fully strategic function.

# Chapter 1: The strategic priorities

## Importance of mobility

Our research confirms that global mobility is a strategic business priority. Three quarters of participating companies anticipate that the total number of globally mobile employees will increase or increase significantly over the next three to five years. Alongside the increase in basic volumes comes an escalation in the importance of mobility to the organisation. Nearly 80% of organisations anticipate that global mobility will become more important or significantly more important over the same period.

**Figure 1. How do you anticipate the total number of global assignments (or mobile employment such as permanent transfers, local hires, global nomads) in your organisation will change in the next three to five years?**



The increasing importance of the mobility function is a reflection of the role that assignments, transfers and moves have in helping companies meet their strategic objectives. This includes permanent transfers, local hires and global nomads, as well as more traditional long and short-term assignees. The results also highlight that the greatest expectation and reliance of mobile talent comes from the largest multinationals, with turnover of more than \$10bn.

There is also an increasingly strategic focus on the moves themselves. Business pressures such as rapid growth in the emerging markets, globalisation and competition have forced companies to re-assess their use of mobility as a tool simply for stop-gap resourcing towards a more thought-out approach. The immediate role that top talent are taking in developing new business is reflected in the fact that companies anticipate changes in the proportion of moves that are strategic in nature. We asked companies to estimate the proportion of their global assignments falling in to four categories: Experience, employee initiated, knowledge transfer or strategic talent/leadership development. Our results indicate that the majority of companies currently use global mobility as a means to support a resource gap or transfer knowledge and this trend will decrease over the next 3-5 years.

At the same time however, our results also indicate that around 26% of current moves are initiated specifically for strategic talent or leadership development but there is also an expectation that this will increase over the next three to five years. This highlights that multinationals already recognise the importance of strategic global deployment, even if they have not yet implemented new models.

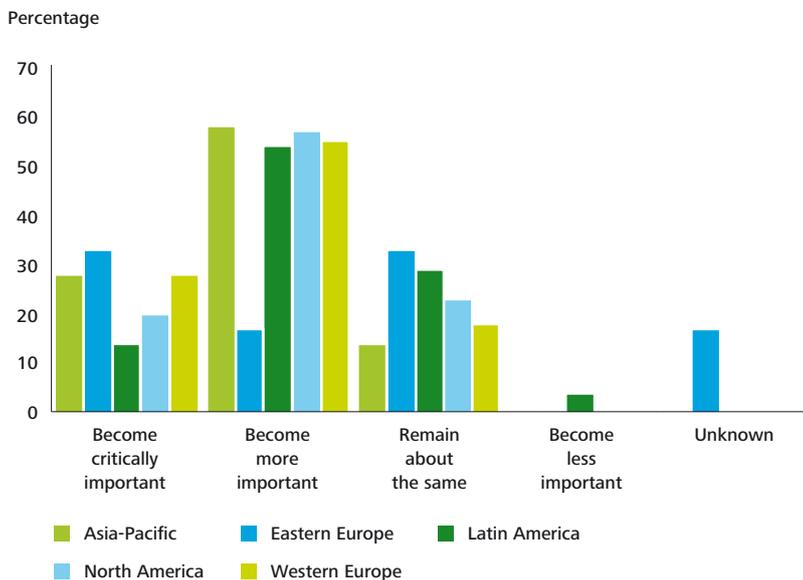
**Figure 2. Of your organisation’s global assignments, what % are anticipated to be initiated for strategic or leadership development in the next three to five years? (by annual turnover)**



Within the responses there is a secondary alignment to turnover. Larger multinationals are more strategic in their use of mobile employees and assignments than smaller companies. Those with turnover of more than \$10bn have the highest proportion of strategic moves. Moreover, there is a broad correlation between turnover and proportion of strategic moves, with reducing turnover equating to a reducing strategic focus. From this we can see that the most successful companies are those that prioritise strategic deployment of resources.

From a global mobility standpoint this is a significant finding, however it is important to recognise that knowledge transfer, basic resourcing and movement of expertise between markets will always be a key component of mobility, despite the fact that companies are focused on the top talent at present. In fact, these kinds of moves still represent the largest proportion of mobile employees now and in the next 3-5 years as previously stated. Organisations operating in highly specialised technical areas are increasingly reliant on mobile expertise. This is more cost-effective than employing technical specialists in all geographies, and also allows consistent ways of working and culture to be embedded across the organisation.

**Figure 3. How will the importance of global mobility change in the next three-five years? (by region)**



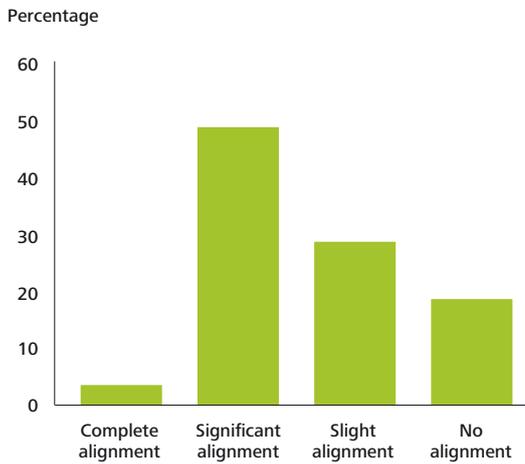
Recognition of the importance of knowledge transfer and expertise also ensures that companies have a holistic approach to mobility. The top talent and the development assignments may be of a higher profile and make use of international workforce planning, global employment companies or similar structures but it is also possible to approach knowledge transfer and expertise in a more strategic manner. Some global companies are moving to a model of international workforce planning for all assignment types, matching requirements to experience on a global basis.

**Alignment of mobility to the business**

We asked respondents how important it is to align their global mobility strategy with the organisation’s business objectives and the overwhelming majority (88%) felt it was important or critically important to do so.

Conversely, there is a huge disconnect as only 2% of business and HR executives reported that global mobility is currently completely aligned to their organisation’s strategic business objectives.

**Figure 4. To what extent is global mobility currently aligned to your organisation's strategic business objectives?**



There is also a noticeable split based on the background of the respondents, with those from a non HR background twice as likely as those from HR to feel that there is no alignment at all. This points to a gap between HR and the business when it comes to the question of aligning global mobility to the business objectives.

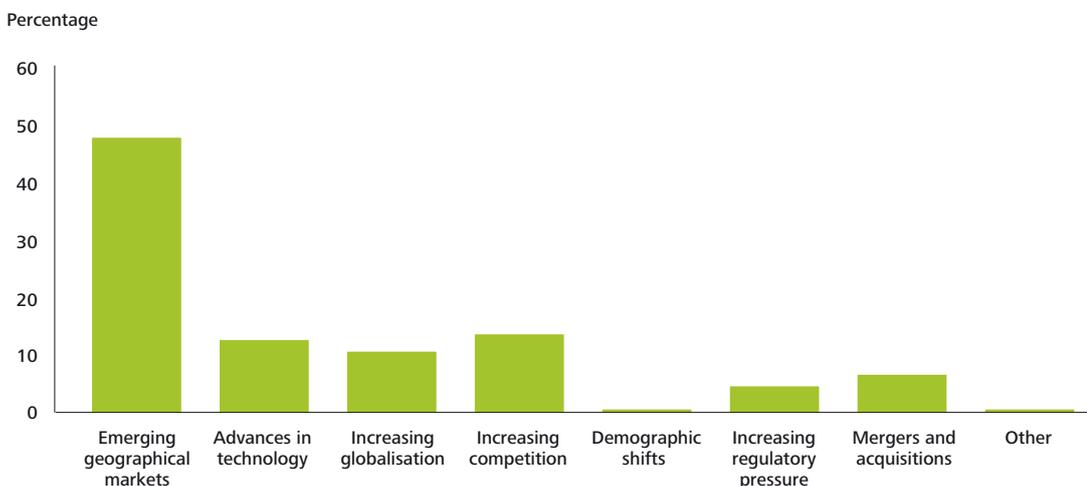
**Emerging geographies**

Faced with a list of seven alternative issues, nearly 50% of all organisations surveyed agreed that their top strategic business issue is 'emerging geographical markets'. Maximising the opportunity in emerging markets can only be done with the right talent, expertise and ways of doing business. International deployment of resources is a key concern for multinational organisations and the rise of emerging economies and new markets has led to a change in the way organisations need to manage their resources globally.

Faced with a list of seven alternative issues, nearly 50% of all organisations surveyed agreed that their top strategic business issue is 'emerging geographical markets'.

Many organisations have not had time to develop local talent in these markets so they need to be able to move people from mature markets at the same time as building up their talent locally. This presents a challenge because it can be difficult to facilitate movement, especially in the face of no guarantees of a right to return in the home country. The difficulties arise in identifying, incentivising and moving the right people without spiralling additional cost.

**Figure 5. What is the most important strategic business issues in terms of their importance to your organisation's management today?**



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“Moving south and east is fundamental to our growth ambitions, and as a mobility function it is increasingly important that our policy supports the business in moving talent to and from our new key locations.”

Ian Cloke, VP HR Global Mobility, Unilever PLC

Behind emerging geographies, ‘globalisation’ and ‘competition’ were also stated as top strategic business issues. In order to thrive in the increasingly competitive global marketplace businesses need to ensure that future leaders have experience outside their home market and develop a global mindset. This means that as well as moving today’s top talent in to emerging markets to drive new business, companies are trying to provide tomorrow’s leaders with the right global experience, wherever they might come from.

The nearest alternative issue was advances in technology which only gathered ten percent. This overwhelming result has reinforced our understanding that movement of people, skills, knowledge and culture to emerging markets is driving a more strategic approach to global mobility.

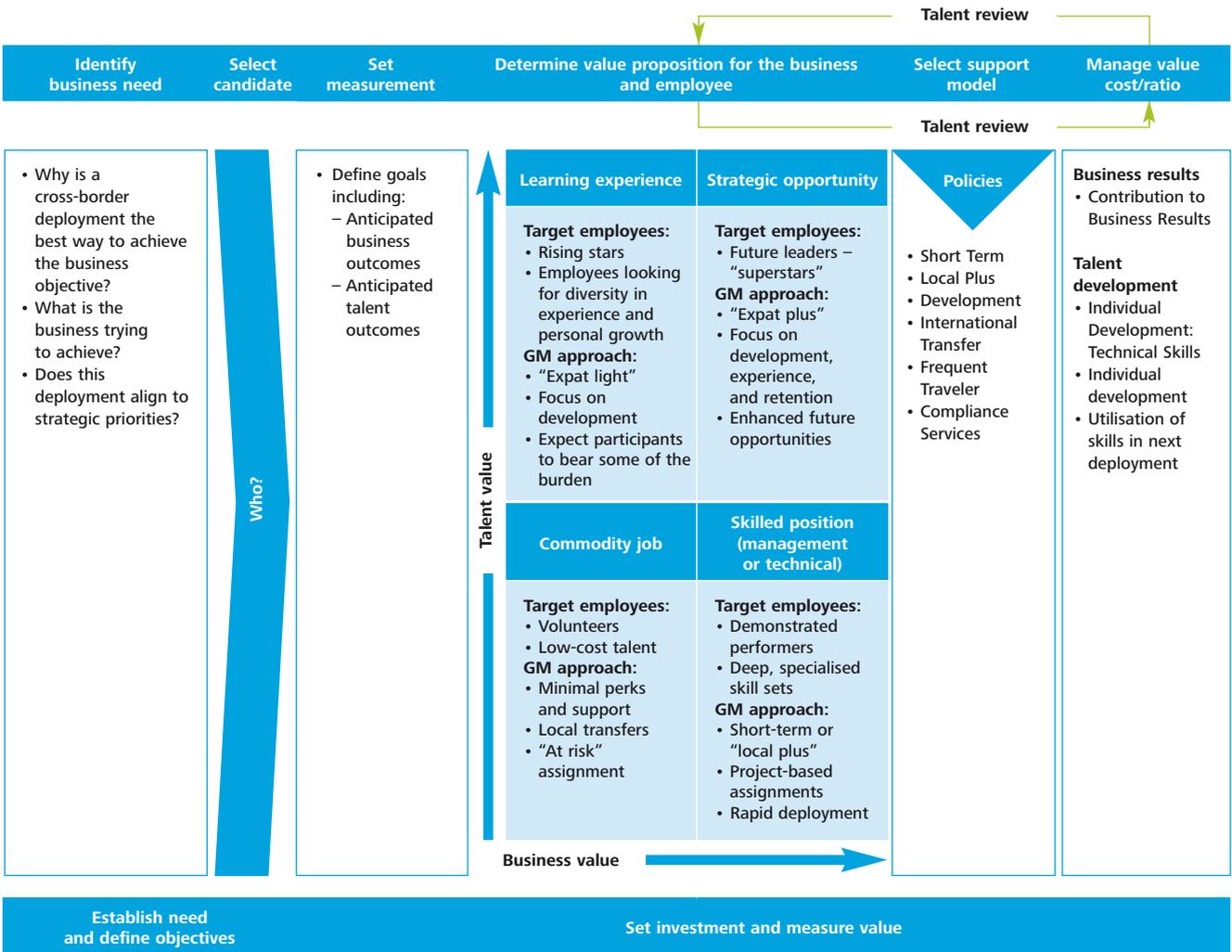
### Deloitte’s point of view: The importance of a global mobility strategy

The increasing importance of the global mobility function within organisations reinforces the need to establish a clear global mobility strategy. If managed well, it can create far more value for a business. In our experience, effective global mobility requires a formal strategy that focuses on a company’s long term business needs and global talent priorities rather than simply reacting to individual opportunities as they arise.

Although many organisations spend substantial sums on international assignments, these investments are often made on an ad-hoc basis to fill short-term needs rather than with a view to the enterprise’s strategic business and talent priorities. A global mobility and workforce strategy that establishes objectives and guidelines for the company’s global mobility efforts can help leaders make informed decisions about how to focus their investments and reap the desired returns, both in the short and the long-term. In our view, an effective global mobility and workforce strategy should:

- Identify which business objectives should be supported by global mobility (for example, development of capabilities in strategic growth markets, or accelerated development of management bench strength).
- Identify the talent objectives supported by global mobility (who should go on international assignments, why, how are they selected?).
- Identify roles and career paths for which international assignments are important to development.
- Identify job families and employee types that should be prioritised for mobility.
- Identify preferred source and destination countries for global deployments.
- Define a multi-year plan and budget for mobility (at both the organisational and divisional levels).
- Define measures of success for the global mobility programme (e.g. anticipated talent outcomes, contribution to business results).

**Global mobility and workforce strategy**



An effective global mobility and workforce strategy fosters a portfolio view of the cost and impact of mobility on the business, and offers a clear business rationale for specific mobility investments. In addition, it provides the basis for a principles-based framework that can help business leaders make smart decisions that align with the organisation’s larger business and talent needs. For example, a company might use its global mobility and workforce strategy to develop a decision guide to help business leaders determine which positions are best filled through the global mobility programme, and which employees are best suited for particular assignments.

Furthermore, an understanding of the core business drivers will ensure that the policy and processes are tailored appropriately. For instance, if expansion in the emerging markets is a core business strategy, global mobility can facilitate the movement of talent. The global mobility policy may be designed to include additional compensation or allowances to motivate assignees to go on assignment to these geographies, or in high growth countries remain with the organisation. Likewise, a central budget/alternative cost-sharing approach may be used to encourage host locations to utilise international assignees (rather than pick up the inflated expatriate costs themselves).

# Chapter 2: Talent and global mobility

There is a clear connection between the people issues faced by organisations and its strategic business issues. Our survey found many organisations are clearly anticipating a growing emphasis on talent and mobility strategies aimed at more effectively recruiting, connecting, and managing a global workforce. Facing a more global marketplace, companies are now placing a high priority in searching for talent in global and emerging markets so they can have the right people, in the right jobs, in the right locations.

Many executives recognise that the once emerging markets of the pre-recession days have become the catalyst for future growth, placing tremendous demands on talent managers to get new people in new jobs at new locations.

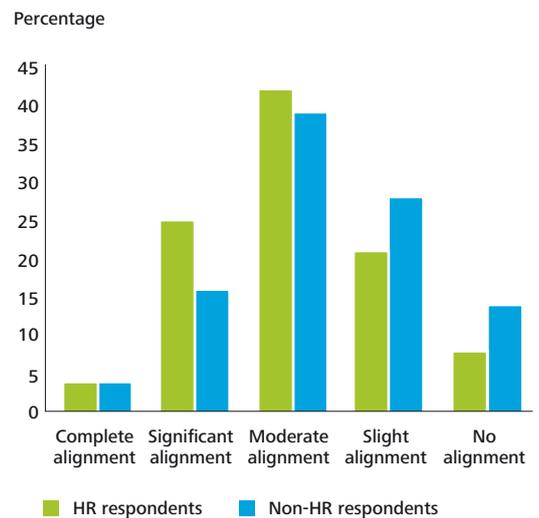
As a result, organisations have realised that they must have a sharper focus on global mobility and talent management; they have recognised the need to recruit hard-to-find skill sets; and programmes to create career paths and challenging opportunities to retain key employees.

## Talent alignment

In view of these challenges, the survey asked respondents to gauge how well their global talent programme is aligned to the strategic business objectives. Less than 33% feel that their talent programme is more than moderately aligned, and this is particularly the case for companies with turnover of less than \$1bn. Concerns over lack of alignment extend to the relationship between the talent agenda and global mobility, where only 21% feel that there is more than moderate alignment. Nearly 40% believe that there is slight alignment at best. Given the increasing importance of strategic moves required to fulfil business objectives this gap will clearly have to close in future.

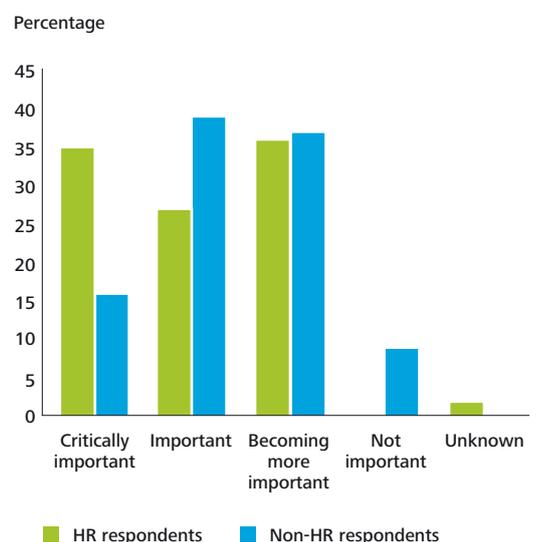


**Figure 6. To what extent is your global talent programme currently aligned to your organisation's strategic business objectives? (by job function)**



Whilst there is a clear disconnect between talent and mobility and the strategic business objectives, organisations recognise the importance of global mobility in fulfilling talent objectives. 60% of respondents feel that global mobility is important or critically important to meeting the talent agenda. A further 37% feel that it is becoming more important. This illustrates that there is a growing recognition that getting the right people, in the right place, at the right time is important to the business both in immediate terms, and in relation to talent development.

**Figure 7. How important is global mobility to your organisation's talent agenda? (by function)**



In practice, businesses may have the elements and desire necessary to create the linkage, but no guiding framework or mechanism to bring the parts together to work for the whole. Building these linkages requires treating the entire mobility and talent process – from strategy to solutions – as one system. No single element can flourish on its own. It’s the interaction between them that gives the system its vitality and robustness. This takes work, however once the parts of the system start to work together, the mobility and talent development process becomes focused, self-sustaining and often more efficient. As a result, the employees that the organisation needs now and in the future will begin to emerge.

### Leadership development

The second clear theme from our survey centred on leadership development, retention and performance. In these areas mobility has a key role in global organisations. Future leaders of global companies will need to have experience across multiple jurisdictions and therefore going on assignment or transferring to a second location has become an obligatory requirement of many talent pipelines. Likewise, assignments, rotations and transfers are being used by organisations to facilitate better levels of retention and motivation. Finally, utilising employees from around the globe is an excellent way of developing a high performance culture, and is used by many companies as a way of establishing a global mindset.

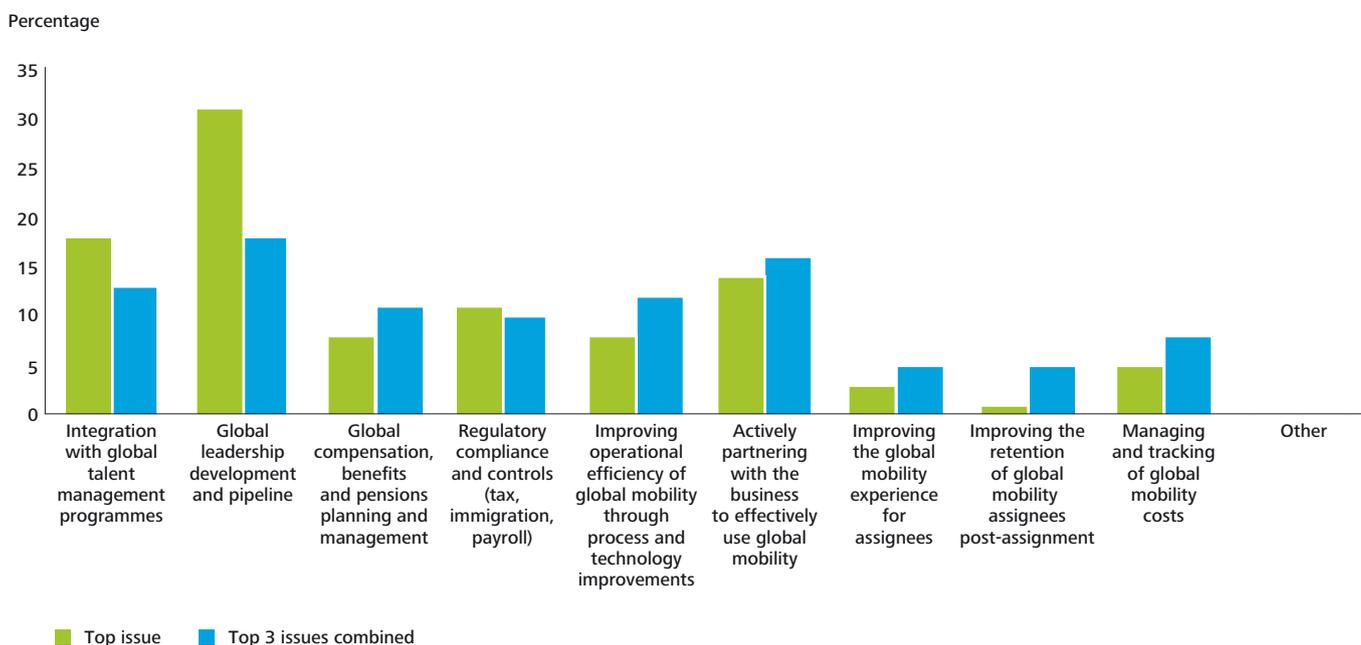
A third of respondents view global leadership and pipeline as the global mobility issue most critical to their organisation’s success. However surprisingly only 11% feel this issue is fully supported by their current mobility programme. This finding also supports our hypothesis outlined earlier that mobility is increasingly seen as a strategic part of international HR management. As a result, mobility should address both business-driven needs and talent-driven opportunities to identify top candidates and find the right jobs to develop their competencies. A talent-based mobility framework requires thoughtful mobility policies that support different combinations of job types and people profiles. Such an approach can help organisations make wiser investments in mobility.

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“As a global business, you are missing a big trick if you are not selling and delivering on the promise to develop careers.”

**Tim Harman**, Group Head of Talent Management, Leadership, Development & Learning, Zurich Financial Services

**Figure 8. Which global mobility issues are the most critical to your organisation’s success?**



## Deloitte's point of view: Realigning global mobility to talent

To effectively address today's mobility and talent challenges, organisations must realign global mobility so that it balances the needs of the three talent constituencies: employees, lines of business, and the organisation as a whole. One key to better serving employees is to identify those with high potential who can benefit from development and mobility, and then fit jobs to them. To support the lines of business, global mobility must understand business growth objectives and opportunities, assist in the development of staffing strategies, and implement policies and programmes to help the business extract maximum value from mobility investments. To do this, global mobility must understand what the organisation's strategic geographic markets will be in the years ahead, be ready and able to help deploy people into those markets, and provide consultation on associated HR issues. In short, supporting organisational business needs means supporting the overall talent and mobility agenda of the organisation. This requires understanding the broad business and talent objectives and assisting in the integration of international experience in global competency development so they can have the right people, in the right jobs, in the right locations.

From a leadership development perspective, people learn primarily through experience. But seldom do organisations have the systems, tools and culture needed to create the kinds of stretch assignments and other developmental experiences that facilitate real growth. Networking, formal learning and technology-assisted development are all critical – but they must be designed around those experiences if they are to achieve their full power. Leading organisations are re-evaluating their mobility and talent programmes to consider some of the following questions:

- How can we rethink our current mobility policies so that they are capitalising on experiential development opportunities?
- Do our mobility policies encourage and systematise “smart moves” that meet current business and future development needs?
- Do we manage our assignees by giving them ‘good’ feedback during and after assignments and planning their next roles?
- How will we operationalise the new system?

## Enhanced Development Support for Assignees

Value to company	Talent development support component	Policy options*			
Maximise the career value of the assignment	Greater focus on development aspects of opportunity at initiation			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Executive visibility to assignments in formal Succession Planning				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Enhanced leadership visibility in Div/Funct. Talent Review			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Assignment mentor(s) (host country/region)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Develop global mindset with targeted learning and experiences	Cross-cultural skills online self-assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Enhanced cross-cultural coaching				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Preferred selection for development offerings/programmes			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Assignees to act as mentors to local professionals in the host country			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Increase employee effectiveness in the host location	Employee and family adaptability assessment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Cross-cultural orientation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Enhanced Cultural Coaching				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enhance career connection with global and home business	Assignment senior sponsor (home for assignments, host for transfer)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Senior HR Business Partner/Broker assigned as talent lifeline				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Formal checkpoints with senior sponsor and HR			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### \* Policy options

Learning experience	Strategic opportunity
Commodity job	Skilled position (management or technical)

1 – “Smarter Moves: Executing and integrating global mobility and talent programs,” Deloitte Development LLC 2010, available online at <https://www.deloitte.com/us/smartermoves>  
 2 – “Smart moves: A new approach to international assignments and global mobility,” Deloitte Development LLC, 2008, available online at <http://www.deloitte.com/us/smartmoves>

Mobility should address both business-driven needs and talent-driven opportunities to identify top candidates and find the right jobs to develop their competencies. A talent-based mobility framework requires thoughtful mobility policies that support different combinations of job types and people profiles. Such an approach can help organisations make wiser investments in mobility. Organisations should identify talent they are willing to invest in, develop policies to govern talent-driven deployments, and match people to opportunities that will help them reach their potential.

# Chapter 3: Global mobility effectiveness

## Assessment of the mobility function

From an examination of the strategic imperatives and the people challenges that global companies face, it is clear that global mobility should play a key role as a strategic business partner. The focus of global mobility functions varies hugely between organisations. Many perform a transactional, administrative function getting individuals from A to B. These departments tend to have neither documented processes nor value driven policy frameworks. Some global mobility functions are more strategically-focused reporting to the head of talent, and engaging with the business.

In the survey, we asked respondents to assess the overall position of the global mobility programme within their organisation. 40% feel that their global mobility programme needs significant or radical improvement. A further 36% feel that their programme is adequate, with room for improvement. In total therefore, three quarters of organisations that participated in the survey rate their mobility as no better than adequate.

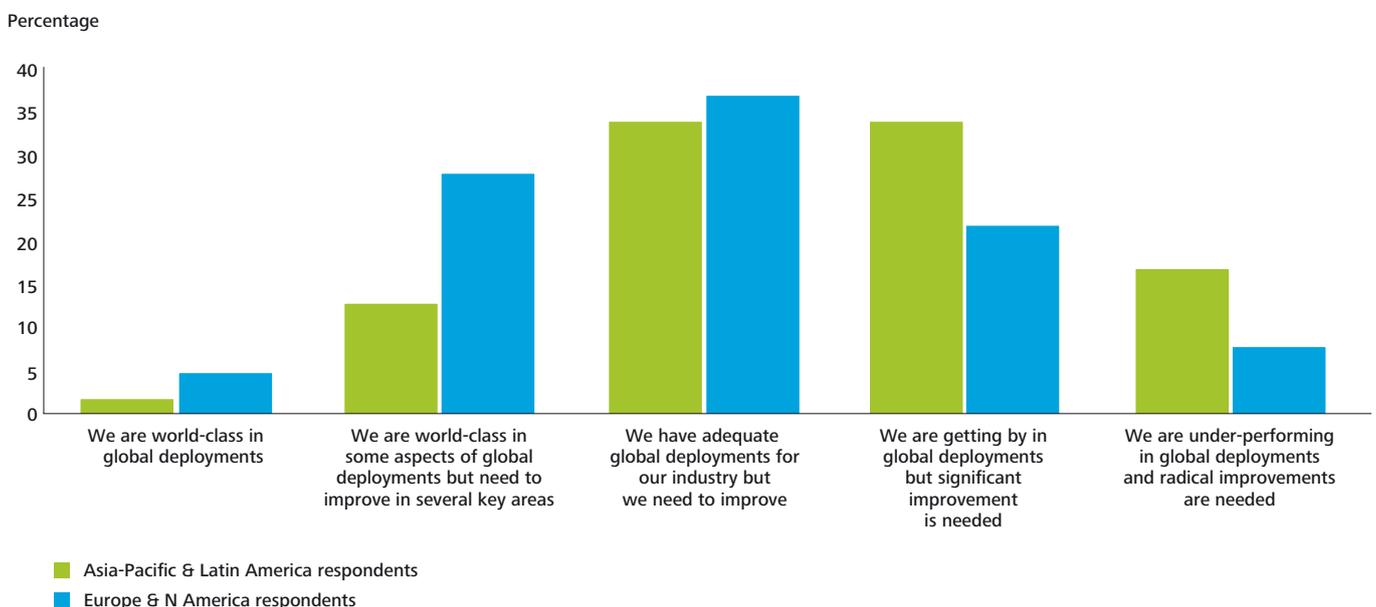
Nearly half of the business executives (outside HR) consider their mobility to be underperforming and not fulfilling the business and talent requirements compared to only a third of HR respondents. This is the clearest indication that there is a significant disconnect between the perception of those within HR and those within the business in terms of whether global mobility is fit for purpose.

## Valuing the role of global mobility

Equally concerning, only 34% of respondents believe that senior executives understand the role of global mobility in their organisation. In addition, only 37% of respondents believe that senior executives highly value or value the role of global mobility in their organisation. Given the importance of global mobility as highlighted in the results under chapter 1, these results should give chief executives and HR leaders the remit to undertake a review of the status quo. They also emphasise the need for the global mobility function to have a clear strategy and role in the organisation which is communicated and marketed effectively within the business to all core stakeholders. This will allow the business to fully understand the role of global mobility and view the function as a strategic business partner rather than an “engine” which simply moves an employee from one country to another.

In our experience, organisations which have a clear global leadership focus and support for the mobility programme are the ones which are able to engage in strategic discussions and deliver mobility most effectively. The fact that so many organisations require significant or radical improvement to their global mobility programme may be the result of a lack of clear direction from leadership and executives. Without the cultural impetus from top executives, issues such as repatriation, cost control, compliance and delivery are more likely to lead to an ineffective global mobility function. Those surveyed do not believe that senior executives value the contribution of global mobility to the organisation.

Figure 9. What statement best describes your organisation’s global mobility programme? (by region)



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“Business delivery and return on investment is becoming much more important for mobility given the shifts in the global economy.”

Emma Still, Director of Reward & Mobility Strategy,  
Sony Europe Limited

Conversely, the survey responses reveal that more than 80% of respondents feel that their senior executives would rate their mobility experience as good or excellent. This is encouraging, and a little surprising given the ‘noise’ which HR are often subjected to from assignees. The complexities of global mobility are enormous, incorporating issues in relation to selection, relocation, payroll, tax, promotion and repatriation (to name a few), but doing so within multiple jurisdictions with input from multiple stakeholders. Basic operations are mostly carried out during periods of high stress and emotion for the employees themselves, and HR business partners often face the brunt of complaints.

Given the complexity of mobility many organisations are investing in improving processes, policies, controls and governance structures so that the basic tasks can be managed more effectively. Creating a more effective global mobility function relies on integration with wider HR strategies and a clear delineation of responsibilities. For many organisations this will mean utilising the Ulrich model, including centres of excellence, shared services and HR business partners. This creates a challenge for mobility teams because their work crosses all areas. Understanding how the interactions work and where strategic mobility advice can add value is key to improving the mobility function and allowing it to meet the needs of the business.

## Deloitte’s point of view: Enhancing the value of global mobility

As organisations place more value on global assignments, the global mobility function and programme needs to shift from being an administration function (and being seen as one) to a function which is recognised as a business partner, focusing on deploying global talent more strategically and helping the company make smarter moves.

We believe that an effective global mobility programme should be able to support the business and assignees with high-quality service that is cost-effective, consistent, and easy to use, manage, and administer. The purpose of global mobility service delivery is both to help businesses make smart assignment decisions, and to help assignees with their moves. In particular, we believe effective service delivery should:

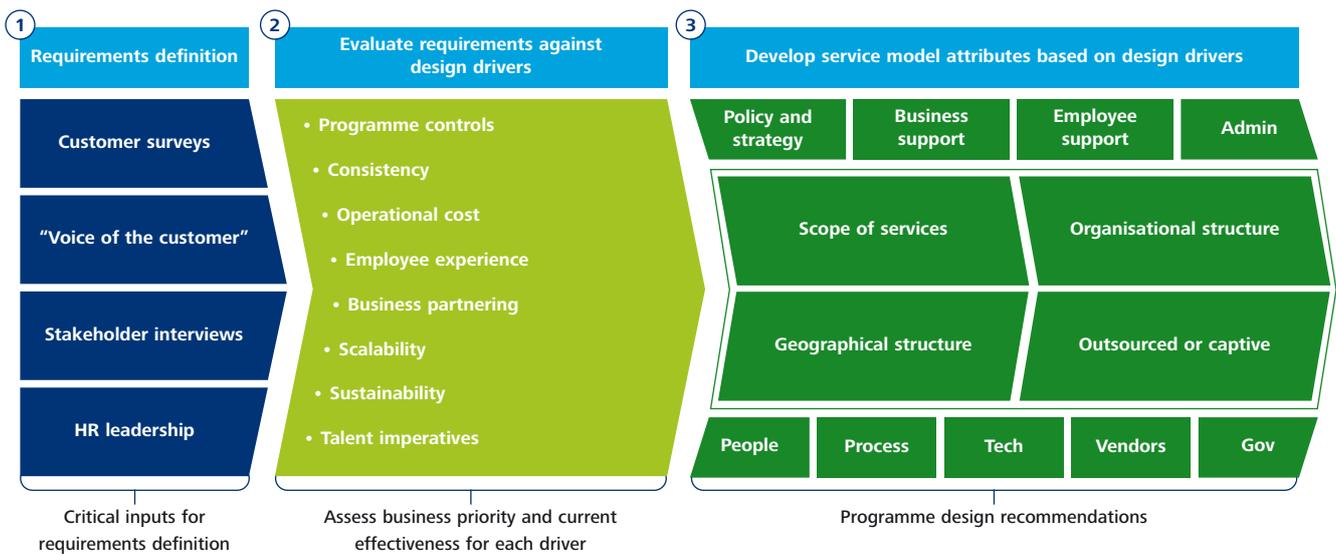
- Provide guidance to businesses on mobility-related decisions, such as: estimating the cost and developing the business case for particular assignments; selecting assignment goals and developing related metrics; helping managers evaluate candidates for assignment opportunities; advising managers on policy selection and assignment duration.
- Deliver the entire spectrum of HR services to assignees, such as: coordinating physical moves; assisting with tax and other compliance issues; assisting assignees and their families with acculturation and integration; delivering basic HR services (e.g. reimbursement, payroll, benefits administration) during an assignee’s time abroad.
- Integrate global mobility and talent management practices so assignees are appropriately deployed to suitable positions when they return to their home country (or are reassigned to another country).
- Utilise both internal resources and external service providers as needed to deliver cost effective, high-quality service.

In addition, we believe companies should strive to offer both mobile and non-mobile employees (and their managers) a service experience that is as consistent as possible. Organisations can take significant steps toward achieving this consistency by integrating certain aspects of global mobility service delivery into the company’s HR operations and infrastructure.



## Global mobility service delivery

Experience has proven that there is no generic, best-practice programme model for global mobility management. A global mobility programme must align with the organisation's business priorities.

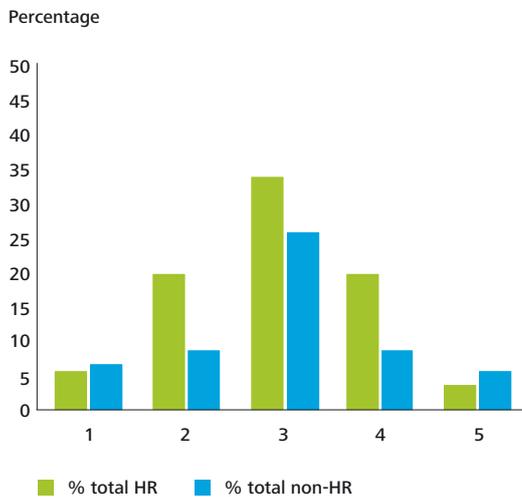


Deloitte's roadmap above indicates key steps involved in the design of a global mobility programme which is fully aligned to the business and talent drivers. This approach involves key stakeholders throughout the optimisation journey in order to manage the change and gain buy in at each stage.

# Chapter 4: Closing the gaps

The transition from global mobility being viewed as a transactional cost centre to a value-add strategic partner is a difficult one. Less than 10% of participants feel that their organisation currently perceives global mobility as a fully strategic function.

**Figure 10. To what extent do you feel your organisation perceives global mobility as a strategic/value-adding function versus a cost centre/admin function today? (1 = Strategic/value-adding function and 5 = Cost centre/admin function)**



These results do not compare favourably with other areas within strategic HR such as talent and development. However, when asked to think about the next 3-5 years, 94% feel that the perception of global mobility as a strategic or value-adding function would either increase or remain the same. This journey may prove to be difficult unless HR and leadership are committed to the project in terms of communication, resourcing and support.

The findings from the survey raise a number of questions about the future of the global mobility function, its interaction with strategic HR and the importance of global mobility in supporting business strategy.

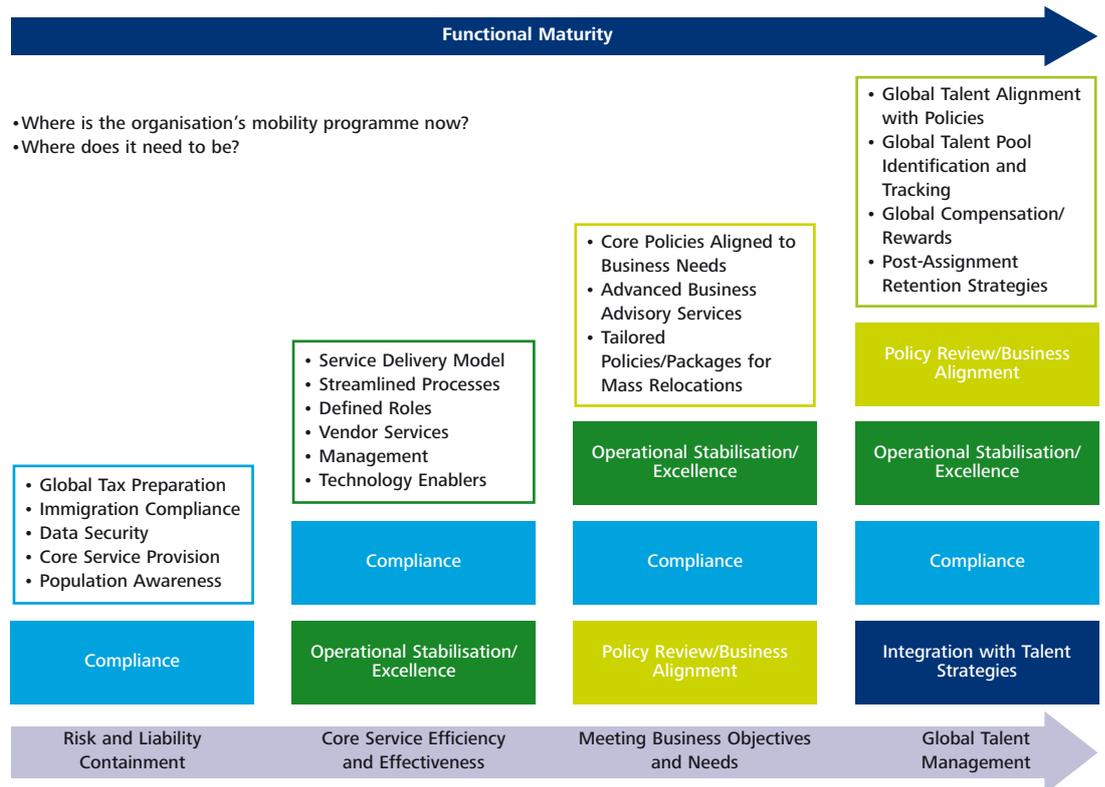
All businesses have different strategies, however our survey indicates that the movement of talent between countries is becoming increasingly important and a strategic consideration for global companies. Although not all companies will want to concentrate on development of future talent or nurturing a global culture, there should always be a strategic element to global mobility with clear strategies/goals. At the very least, moves should be evaluated against a policy framework to ensure that reward is targeted at the right individuals.



The survey raises a few important questions which chief executives and HR leaders should consider:

1) How mature is our global mobility programme?

**The Global Mobility Maturity Model**



2) Does our approach to global mobility support our business objectives and how is this managed?

3) How is global mobility perceived and valued within our organisation?

4) Given its rising importance, what are we doing to improve the performance of global mobility (including the policy, processes and structure)?

5) What is the role of our global mobility function in strategic and operational terms?

6) Have we reviewed our structures to ensure the most effective approach to mobility?

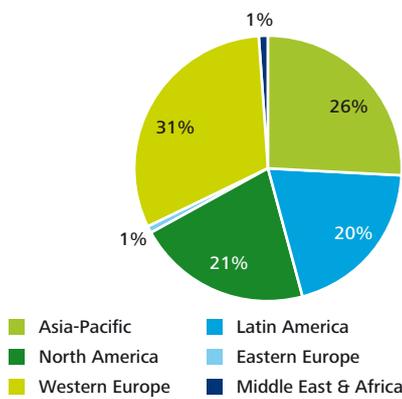
# About the survey

The Strategic Moves survey was coordinated by Deloitte in the UK, in collaboration with over 20 Deloitte member firms worldwide. Data was collected in the form of an online survey as well as various in-depth interviews.

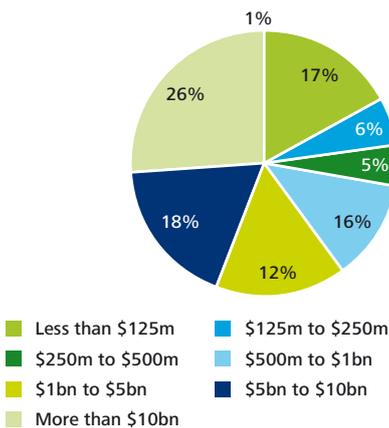
Participants in the research include 141 HR and non-HR executives, 60% of which identify their main functional role as Human Resources whilst the remaining 40% are self-identified as corporate executives outside the HR function. Of the 60% who reported their main functional role as Human Resources, 36% of job titles are Head of Global Mobility, whilst 23% are HR Directors. Notably however no one identified themselves as Head of Talent.

Participants represent major regions across the globe, evenly spread across North America, Latin America, Asia Pacific and Western Europe. A broad variety of industries are covered by the responses, with a large representation in IT and Technology, Energy and Natural Resources, Manufacturing and Professional Services. More than a quarter of companies that took part have an annual turnover of over \$10 billion.

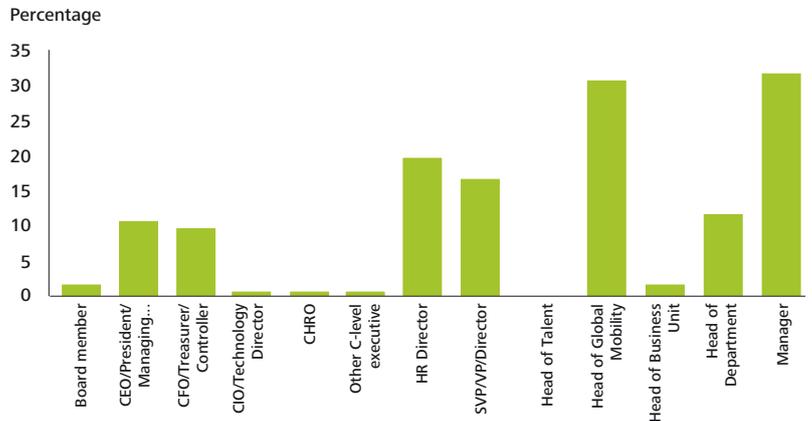
**Figure 11. Regional participation**



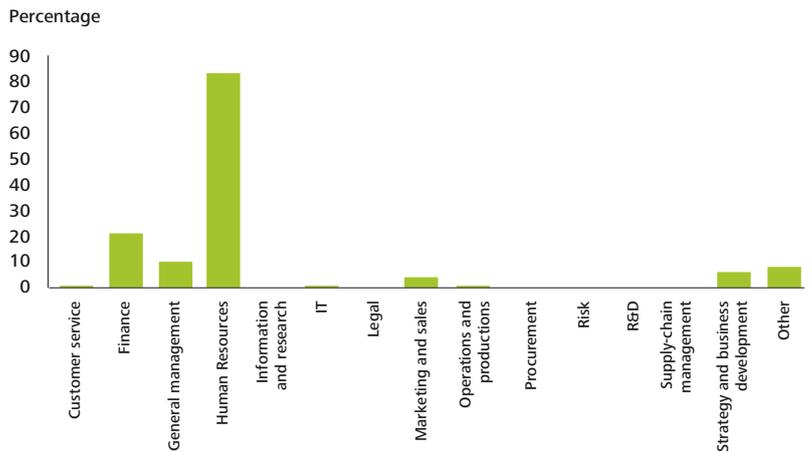
**Figure 12. Annual revenue**



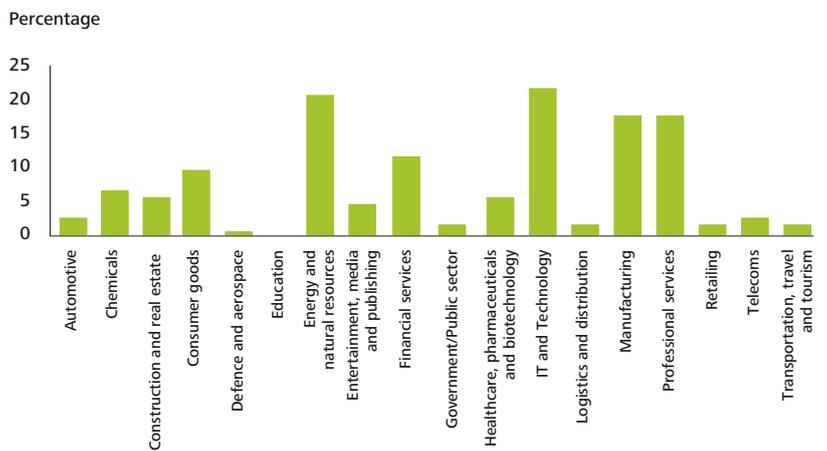
**Figure 13. Participant title**



**Figure 14. Participant function**



**Figure 15. Industry representation**



# Acknowledgments

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