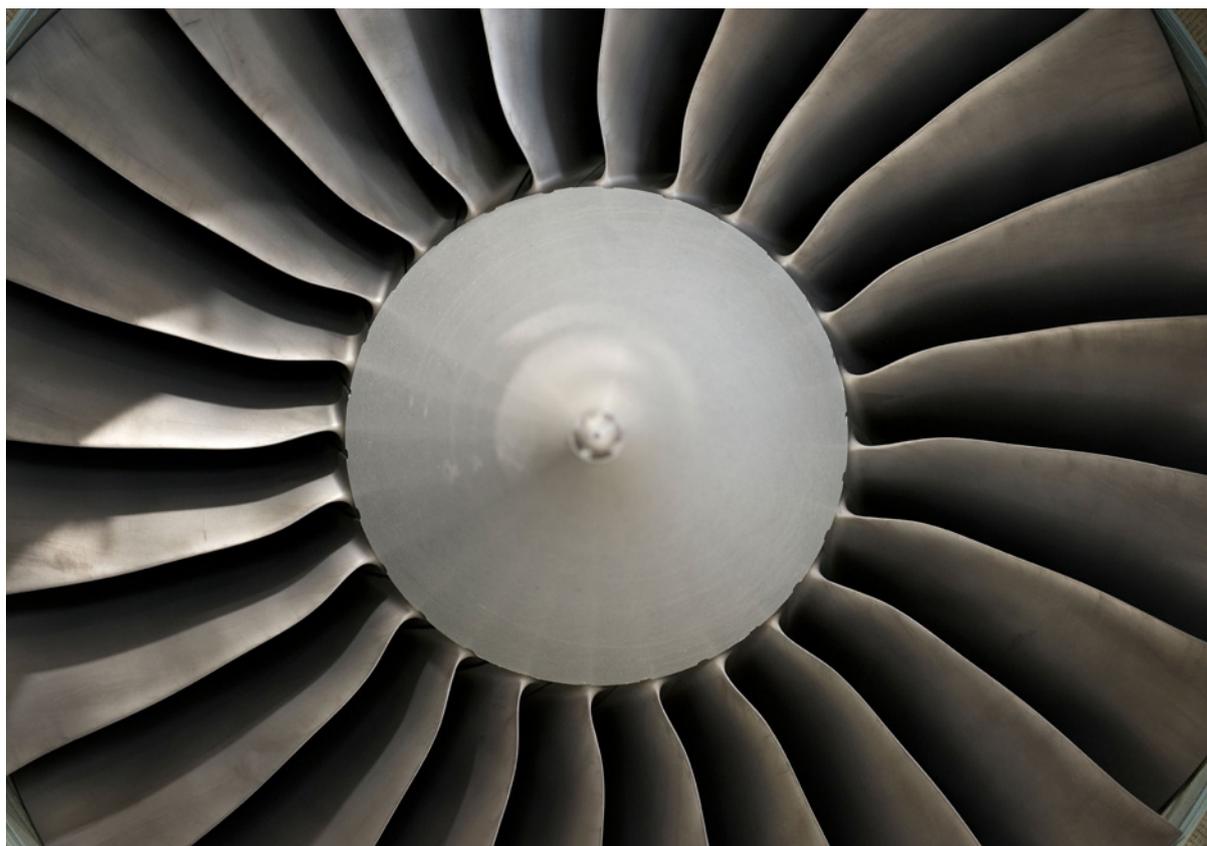


The role of HR in global mobility



Increasingly the regional HR director for Asia Pacific for many large multinationals will be based in Singapore or Hong Kong. The individual concerned will probably be there on secondment and may even report in to a global head of HR who is either a global nomad or a standard expatriate. We have seen an increasing number of HR professionals going on assignment in the last 2-3 years – which is an interesting phenomenon and may suggest that HR professionals are at the vanguard of a global trend. A trend where organisations are increasingly seeking to involve HR in key business planning decisions, the development of strategy and are asking it to really experience global mobility, both from the point of view of an assignee and from the point of view of the business. This wave of HR assignments is the result of the global skills and talent shortage. HR skills and talent are both in short supply and therefore individuals have to be deployed wherever there is a need – on top of this the skills are required more and more because management of people has become crucial to business success.

In this article we will seek to outline the role of HR in the global deployment of talent. We will review the importance of mobility, the wider context for HR and the changing face of business globally. We will look at the drivers for change within HR and examine the extent to which mobility can be a catalyst for that change. We will specifically examine the global talent resourcing model and ask whether there is an effective way of integrating global mobility with business and talent objectives. Finally, we will look at the capability requirements for HR professionals operating within global mobility and ask how they can help deliver in this changing environment.

Strategic issues

The Deloitte Strategic Moves Survey 2012 found that there is a consensus of opinion regarding the top strategic issues for organisations doing business on a global basis. Our survey of 200 multinational companies found that the top issues were emerging geographical markets, globalisation and increased competition. The management of global mobility is key to all three issues – and HR is key to the management of global mobility.

Figure 1. Global mobility island



Our survey also found that business leaders expect global mobility to address these top three issues, but that in most cases it is failing to do so. This points to a gap between the strategic direction of businesses, and the ability of global mobility to help execute this strategy. We have called this the global mobility island – and we feel that HR has a key role to play in building a bridge between the business and the island of global mobility. Mobility and HR also have a key role to play in filling the skills and talent shortages which are compounding the pain for large and small companies alike.

The businesses we spoke to had high expectations of global mobility functions – and in large part these were not being met. Only 2% of professionals regarded their global mobility function as world class, and more than 70% of business HR stakeholders felt that global mobility was underperforming or needed significant investment.

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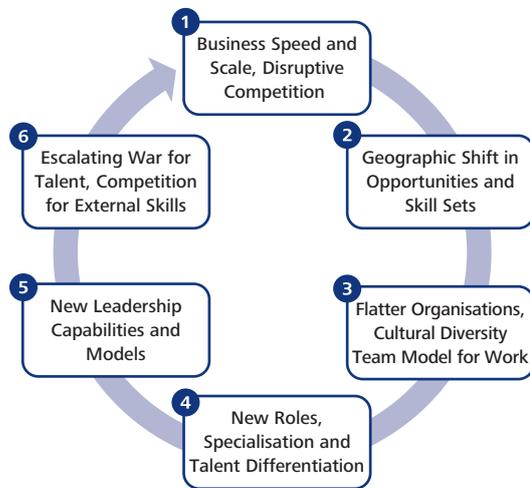
Wider HR context

For businesses operating in a multinational environment, the challenges of global mobility are mirrored in wider challenges for HR as a whole. In our recent Predictions for 2013, Bersin by Deloitte outlined the six main challenges affecting corporate talent and HR. These are (1) rapid business change (2) shift towards emerging markets (3) a borderless workplace (4) specialisation creating new career and job models (5) new styles of leadership and (6) the intense competition for talent.

In our Predictions for 2013 we argue that these drivers will lead to changes within the HR, Learning & Development and Talent Management functions in terms of practices, structures, roles, management, tools, processes, data and systems – encompassing most of the ways in which HR interacts with the business.

These predictions relate to the wider HR context; however, global mobility is a key tool for organisations to deliver a globalised workplace, an agile business and an engaged set of employees.

Figure 2. Challenges affecting corporate talent and HR



Source: Bersin by Deloitte, Predictions for 2013

Recent HR transformations have tended to focus on costs savings rather than building more agile, business driven HR functions. The Predictions for 2013 report identifies a number of ways in which companies can drive the change to a more business driven HR function. These include the following:

- Move to more agile organisation with flat, transparent, integrated talent strategies.
- Have transparent global talent mobility with continuous development.
- Implement global leadership and encourage global mindset.
- Integrate talent practices, policies and approaches globally.
- Encourage specialisation of jobs and careers.
- Integrate talent acquisition and talent management.
- Invest in HR technology.
- Utilise analytics to understand the global talent issues.
- Give HR the training and skills to maximise the opportunity.

Many of these steps are intrinsically linked to global mobility – this means that companies really wishing to revolutionise their HR function need to take a careful look at their global mobility programmes. The best global mobility programmes are the ones which deliver on all the points outlined above.

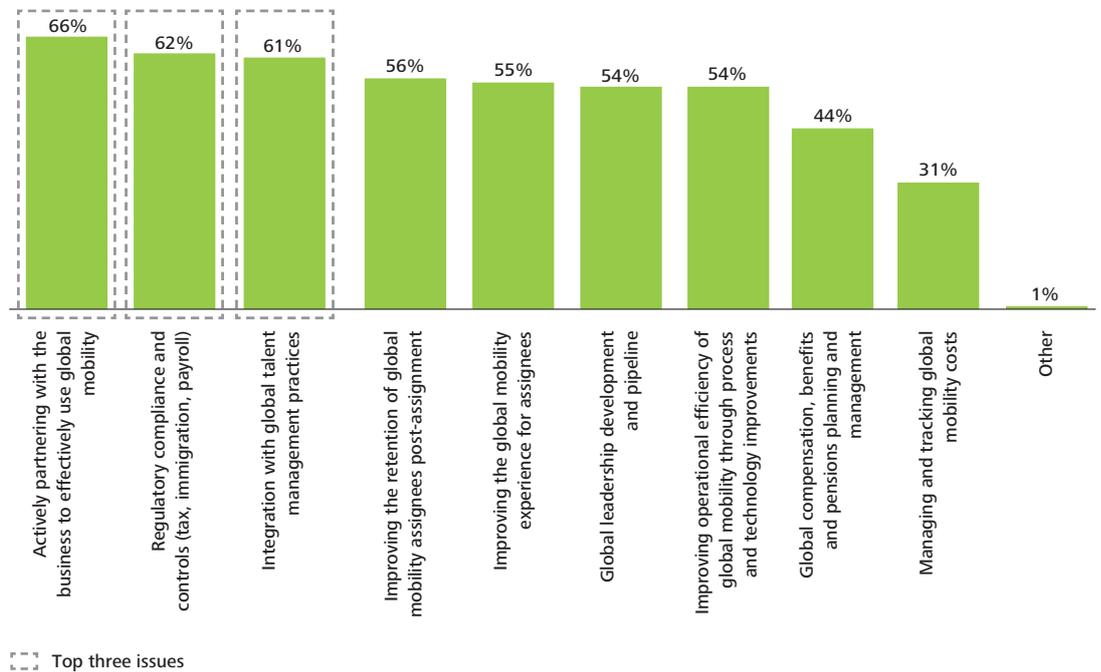
A globalised workplace

Globalisation impacts companies of all sizes. Our advisory board members told us that one of their top three talent issues is globalisation. Emerging economies have “emerged,” creating talent challenges similar to those found in developed countries. This is forcing companies (like General Mills, Ford, Qualcomm, Scotiabank and others) to question their global leadership and mobility programmes. Our new research on global leadership shows that expatriate leadership programmes have to change. Organisations cannot “parachute in” talent easily. Now they should build local leaders who understand local culture but who still embody enterprise values. Fewer than one-third of large businesses say their leaders are prepared with the skills in global awareness and fluency, and global business acumen and understanding of other cultures to achieve their goals in the global marketplace.

Bersin by Deloitte, Predictions for 2013

Addressing the issues faced by HR both in terms of mobility and more generally is a key challenge for the organisations wanting to compete at the top level.

Figure 3. Top global mobility challenges



Source: Deloitte Strategic Moves 2012

Global talent resourcing

In the Strategic Moves 2012 report we outlined the case for integration of HR and mobility. The survey showed that organisations identified a number of specific challenges for global mobility; not least that 66% of organisations thought the main challenge was “actively partnering with the business to effectively use global mobility”. The remaining challenges were split out as per the chart above.

Some organisations have sought to organise their global mobility function in a way to address both the challenges identified in the survey, and to drive some of the changes which facilitate a business driven HR. Organisations seeking to address the global mobility island have redesigned their global mobility approach to base both the strategy and the operations on global talent resourcing.

Using this structure companies are able to take control of their skills and talent management and direct their response on a global basis.

Organisations where global talent resourcing is at the centre of global mobility are able to avoid falling in to the operational quagmire of a purely process driven approach. In order to do this all their global mobility is managed by a talent acquisition team who are responsible for global resourcing. They are able to incorporate expertise from global mobility, recruitment, HR business partners and reward in order to deliver the right talent in the right place at the right time.

Using this structure companies are able to take control of their skills and talent management and direct their response on a global basis. This is underpinned by having an exact measure of the talent, skills and expertise within the organisation. Having this knowledge alongside the recruitment expertise and global mobility mindset allows companies to resource and manage their workforce on a global basis.

This kind of global talent resourcing model is best placed to satisfy the conflicting needs of talent supply and demand, and at the same time ensure that individuals are deployed in a strategic manner.

The approach relies on a robust support network of expertise, most of which will sit within centres of excellence, acting as points of contact for all global deployments. Behind these centres of excellence are the traditional HR areas of IT, service centres and local support.

The best global talent resourcing is able to fill the talent and skills gap for the organisation, and at the same time ensure that global mobility is more closely aligned to the business needs. Each talent resource request should be initiated by the business – and each one will have a pre-defined role, objective and business case based on their initial approach. Utilising talent acquisition agents to recruit the right candidates internally means that the supply and demand of talent is well balanced across the organisation.

As well as overseeing the core talent programmes the global resourcing team can incorporate other global mobility pockets. The challenge is to build a global mobility network to support the global talent resourcing model. In our experience the approach for global mobility needs to be designed based on attributes, components, properties, focus – and ultimately the overall strategy. In this case the strategy is to deliver a global mobility function closely aligned to the business, via a global resourcing model. Each of the building blocks needs to be designed with that overall strategy in mind. This is illustrated in Figure 4 which shows the different elements and their interdependence.

Capabilities

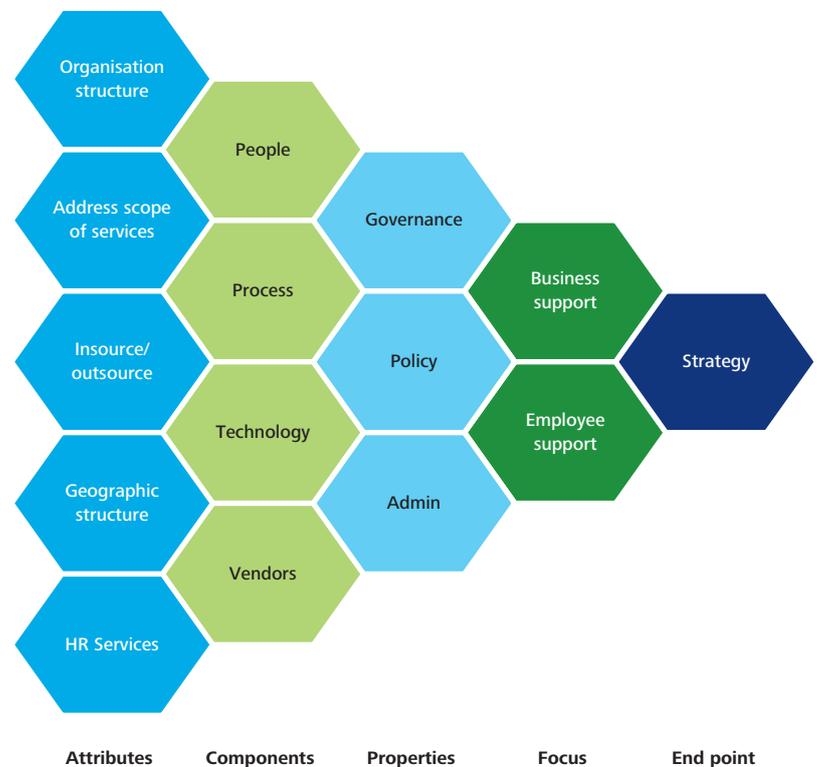
In the Strategic Moves 2012 survey we asked whether global mobility can close the gap. Our initial concern was based on the fact that so few organisations viewed themselves as being world-class in deployments (2%). We mapped out three steps in order to align global mobility to business and talent strategies as follows:

1. Agree on strategic purpose of global mobility.
2. Understand the value proposition of global deployments.
3. Enhance the use of mobility data analytics.

Furthermore we outlined the fact that new capabilities would be required in the medium term in order to address the need for alignment with specific business priorities such as M&A, high growth, emerging markets, new technologies and talent. We argued that the capability requirements would be a function of the investment in global MI technologies and of the strategic talent investment.

Ultimately there are other more tangible capability requirements. If companies want global mobility to support the global aspirations of the business they need to ensure that they can provide an excellent customer experience for both the business and the individual being deployed.

Figure 4. Designing and building a global mobility approach



The customer experience for both the assignee and the business is very dependent on the knowledge and expertise of the HR professionals involved in mobility. In some organisations local HR are closely involved in all assignments, transfers and visits, whereas in other organisations this is all managed by specialist mobility teams. In either case the HR individuals who are part of the process will need to understand mobility concepts, compensation models and basic compliance risks. In the global resourcing model we outlined above mobility professionals are positioned at the heart of the resourcing. Although this reduces the reliance on HR in setting up the assignment, there is still a requirement for the HR business partners to understand the concepts, compensation and compliance issues. There is therefore a need to ensure that HR professionals involved in mobility have the skills, experience and training to be able to manage the complex cross-border issues they may face. Even where the mobility function is fully integrated in the process, HR still needs to identify the issues and facilitate the correct conversations. On this basis we recommend that all HR business partners are trained in mobility issues.

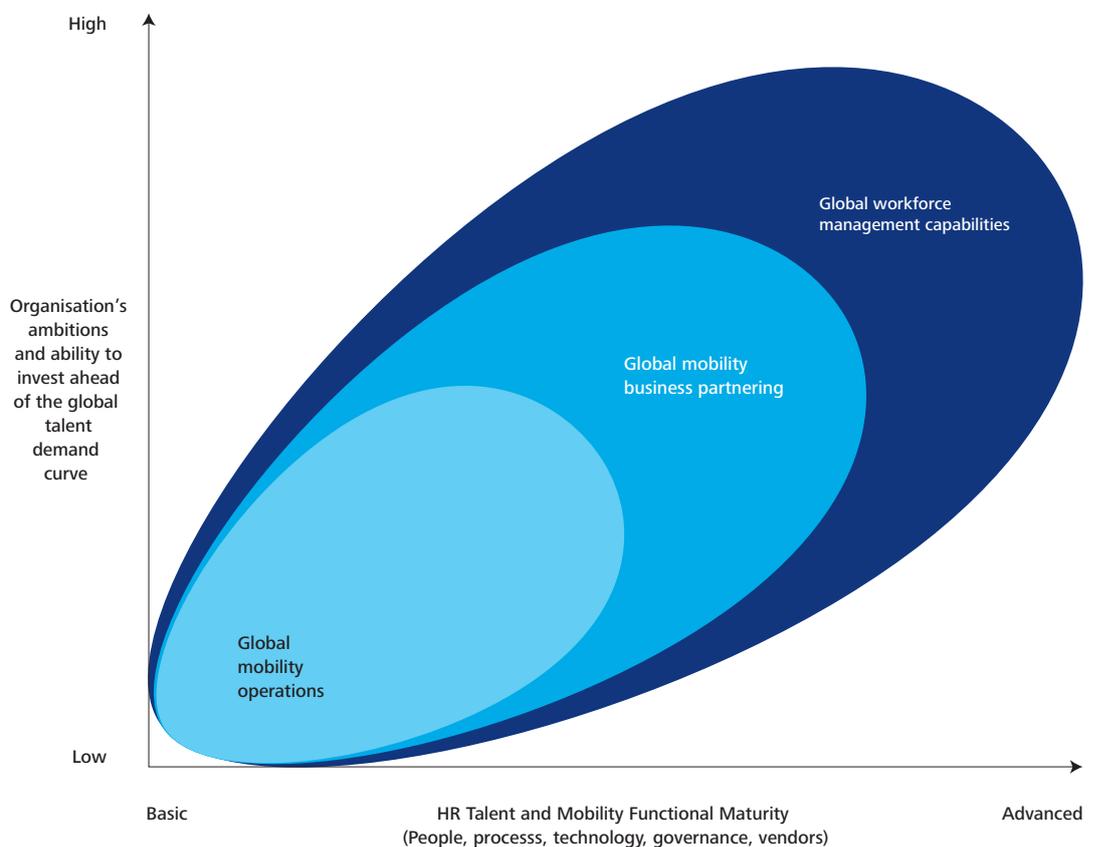
The role of HR in global mobility

As growth is increasingly centred on emerging markets and globalisation we see companies relying on global mobility to provide a key link to expansion. Despite the strategic importance of mobility there is often a gap between the operational focus of the mobility function and the business and talent strategies. We have outlined how global mobility fits within the wider HR context, and how it can become more aligned to the business. We have explored a model of global resourcing and gone on to outline the capabilities required of the mobility function and of HR professionals.

Equipping HR professionals with the right skills, ensuring that they are trained in mobility concepts and helping them to have business driven mobility conversations will allow companies to bridge the mobility island and be more focused on business objectives.

To download a copy of the 2012 Strategic Moves report go to www.deloitte.com/strategicmoves. If you would like to take part in the 2013 survey please let us know. Our sixth annual Strategic Moves Conference will be held in London on Monday 11 November 2013 details will be available on the website in due course.

Figure 5. Global mobility target capability requirements



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Contacts



Robert Hodkinson leads the Global Mobility Transformation group at Deloitte in London. He can be contacted on +44 (0) 20 7007 1832 or rhodkinson@deloitte.co.uk



Andy Cowen is a senior manager in the Deloitte Global Mobility Transformation group in London. He can be contacted on +44 (0) 20 7007 0984 or acowen@deloitte.co.uk

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