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Planning for 2025:
Navigating global talent mobility
in shifting times

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Introduction

In a world where talent knows no borders, the ability to attract and retain top global talent is critical to a company's success. The results of the 2024 US election present new dimensions for organizations to navigate relating to the movement of their workforce across borders, from hiring to relocation, and compliance with evolving tax and immigration laws*. This article provides a perspective on the strategic considerations that organizations can address now to manage global talent mobility more effectively, taking steps so they remain competitive while supporting the human experience through potential policy shifts.

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Relocation

Reimagining boundaryless work has become a business imperative. Leaders are defining new success metrics for work and worker relationships as they anticipate what's next for their workforce. As they grapple with that ambiguity, legislative uncertainty presents immediate new considerations for those global workforce leaders. The anticipation of potential changes in tax and immigration policies* presents an opportunity to shape how the intentional deployment of talent can lead to more competitive boundaryless workforce practices.

As leaders undertake scenario planning and assess how the intentional deployment of talent can be used as a talent differentiator, how those practices are executed could present unforeseen challenges.* This is because relocation practices are undergoing a historic change with:

- More permanent shifts in policies, mobility benefits and move types.
- The National Association of Realtors settlement impacting historical industry revenue models.¹
- Possible tariffs, including retaliatory actions by other nations, which may affect the cost and availability of goods and services for expatriates.

This means additional considerations are needed for the intentional deployment of talent such as costs, ability to access new markets, the needs of workers and the ability of a vendor network to timely execute. For example:

- Since the pandemic, the shipping industry has been faced with significant fluctuations in freight costs. The geopolitical events in Ukraine and the Middle East and the risks that are posed by the shutdown of inland waterways continues to drive challenges.²
- Housing shortages continue to be a common concern in major cities around the world which may impact the cost of providing housing and overall available supply when looking to relocate talent.³
- And the Spring, when the legislative agenda becomes clearer, is typically also one of the busier periods for relocations so organizations will be competing for the same suppliers and inventory in an already stressed industry.

1. <https://lawforbusiness.usc.edu/accessing-the-legal-and-market-implications-of-the-landmark-case-against-the-national-association-of-realtors/>

2. <https://unctad.org/publication/navigating-troubled-waters-impact-global-trade-disruption-shipping-routes-red-sea-black>

3. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2024/12/the-housing-affordability-crunch-deniz-igan>

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Here are some considerations on how you can be best positioned to address these potential changes:

- Assess your program cost accruals for those jurisdictions most at risk to changes in tariffs with the US.
- Assess your domestic relocation policy and consider benefits and budgets if your business decided to increase domestic relocation volumes or incentives to attract domestic employees (or new hires). Review relocation vendor network to determine if it has capacity in the event of increased move volumes.
- Review the geopolitical landscape against company growth markets and location strategy and revisit as needed.
- Assess “parking” locations for employees who may need to be based in an alternative country as they wait for their work authorization in the host country.
- Review with your temporary housing and destination services vendor to determine if viable housing and settling in options are available.
- Review your broader relocation vendor network and strategies to determine if it can meet a potential increase in demand across the industry. If needed, assess strategies to get higher priority especially if you anticipate group moves during the Spring of 2025 (e.g. negotiate more favorable payment terms).

Workforce

The shift in the geopolitical landscape necessitates thoughtful planning and proactive strategies to enable the provision of essential support and resources. Companies can begin to address these challenges now by focusing on several key areas to better manage the impacts on people and enhance the overall human experience.

- Scenario planning on potential individual and business impacts related to employer sponsored programs, including location strategy and talent retention.
- Identify existing company support programs to leverage and/or enhance to address specific employee circumstances.
- Estimate program cost impacts to implementing changes.
- Review talent strategy and business continuity plans with leadership.
- Meet with your relocation provider to understand action plan and temporary lodging inventory in situations of employee displacement (e.g. travel bans).
- Work with the business to establish a framework and understand communication approach to address employee questions and concerns.
- Work with your mobility providers on recent developments and keep internal global mobility site content up to date.



Conclusion

It is crucial to start reviewing your global mobility program data to identify potentially impacted employee populations to help inform decision-making. Additionally, meeting with business leadership to discuss impacted employee volumes and determine the company's philosophy and guidelines on responsibilities is essential. Begin to think about employee communications, FAQs and collaborate with your internal corporate communications team to align on company messaging and forums. Lastly, consider scenario planning with internal teams and vendors to develop a comprehensive action plan and response team.

Proactive preparation and organizational readiness will facilitate the management of global talent mobility amidst potential geopolitical changes.

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