Digital Mobility | Talent
2017 Trends
#DigitalMobilityTalent
Introduction

Deloitte’s 2017 Global Human Capital Trends survey identifies what appears to be the critical trends shaping the human resources (HR) agenda. The report speaks of “rewriting the rules for a digital age,” noting a radically shifting context for the workforce, the workplace, and the world of work. The trends are relevant to virtually every organization, and the report highlights a unique opportunity for HR to help leaders and organizations adapt to the changes and address the challenges. In this report, we consider how Global Mobility specialists can help address the challenges and the new roles and skills required to meet these changes.

Key statistics at a glance

68% of organizations agree that “a mobile workforce is an enabler of business and talent strategies.”

Only 3% of organizations rate themselves “world class” in global deployments.

Why do we need Global Mobility?

Asked to rate the priorities for the use of Global Mobility in their organizations, business leaders identified three top goals:

- Developing future leaders: 21%
- Attracting and retaining top talent: 21%
- Developing a global mindset: 18%

What stands in the way of effective Global Mobility?

The same sample of business leaders identified the hurdles they see between their present realities and a more effective mobility strategy.

- Cost of moving employees: 19%
- Employee willingness to move: 18%
- Lack of a structured internal talent management program: 16%

The annual Human Capital Trends survey is one of the largest HR studies of its kind. More than 10,400 respondents from 140 countries contribute to an understanding of current and potential workforce changes. The 2017 survey contains input from respondents in financial services, consumer business, technology, media, telecommunications, and manufacturing.
These priorities and challenges unfold against a backdrop of a digital revolution, including demographic, political, and social forces. Almost 90% of HR and business leaders rate building the organization of the future as their highest priority. While organizations once did digital things, they now are digital, in ways that combine new technologies with new cognitive, emotional, and behavioral expectations.

In response to these changes, Global Mobility leaders are seeking new ways to shift their organization, leverage technology, and advance their capabilities in delivering experience. This report identifies four Digital Mobility | Talent Trends, complementary to the broader Human Capital Trends that are disrupting the mobility landscape and fueling the “digital age”:

1. **Employee-driven programs**
The fast-changing and diverse employee landscape requires global workforce and related mobility programs to adapt.

2. **Mobility and talent acquisition**
The employer brand that attracts talent and effectively uses its existing talent requires that mobility and HR work more closely together.

3. **The human side of mobility**
A global move is professionally and personally disruptive. An inclusively designed, people-centered mobility experience can increase engagement, productivity, and impact.

4. **Mobility analytics**
Data-driven insights from active business processes can inform better proactive decisions on talent, deployment, and future global workforce planning.

Each of these four trends offer organizations the opportunity to envision their futures, assess their present-day capabilities, identify their areas to improve, and implement changes that can help them navigate the changing landscape and enable their business and talent priorities.
Digital Mobility | Talent Trend 1: Employee-driven programs

High-performing organizations operate as empowered networks, coordinated through culture, information systems, and talent mobility. Programs need to be adapted in order to address the diverse employee landscape and build capabilities required for the future of work.

The mobile employee landscape will continue to drive organizational change. From freelancers and gig-economy workers to an uptick in business travel, being able to adapt to the growing group of “Millennial” employees and those we call “Generation C” will create the next set of challenges for organizations.

The changing landscape of mobile employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of employee</th>
<th>Force driving change</th>
<th>Mobility implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelancers</td>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>A new global mobility ecosystem connecting services and vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital natives born 1980 – 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gig-economy workers</td>
<td>Generation C</td>
<td>An agile mobility program that is inextricably linked to the new business requirements, is adaptable, and manages compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital connected consumers who span all age groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowdsourced talent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diverse global programs and reward approaches to meet the requirements of a diverse population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business travelers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C the future:
understanding the impact of an “always-switched-on” mindset

How big is Generation C? They can be any age. Take the world’s 2.6 billion iPhones as a yardstick. What makes them tick? Easily embracing the newest technologies.

- Crowdsourcing
- AI
- Robotics
- Data-wrangling
- Blockchain

Generation C assignees are likely to thrive in a mobility environment that features:

- A self-service digital vision
- Online, real-time connections with HR, mobility, and each other
- An online ecosystem that connects them to vendors
Mobility developments

1. An ecosystem is required to meet the changing employee and digital landscape.

A new powerful global mobility model is emerging and comprises a carefully selected and highly collaborative vendor network. This new service delivery model encircles the employee with a suite of diverse mobility specialists who collaborate with one another and are empowered to share information and problem-solve within established guidelines. The model offers the mobile employee the best of both worlds: direct access to specialists when they need it and minimal disruption when they do not. Individuals are able to tailor their own experience based on how they interact with the network.

Part of this change involves technology. Process automation and robotics are beginning to replace repetitive work, while new digital tools permit deeper engagement between employees and business, especially across distances. Real-time dashboards, cloud platforms, and mobile apps are helping cement this global view by enhancing transparency, reporting and connectedness for employees, HR, and the business.

2. Global Mobility is demanding new commitments from leaders.

Sixty-eight percent of leaders agreed that a global workforce enables business and talent strategies. Supporting a commitment to effective global mobility means promoting an agile and global career model in order to adapt more quickly to new roles, new projects, and new businesses solutions. Leadership must fully support and promote the new framework in order to meet the future needs of the business. It needs to be nimble in order to adapt to rapid and disruptive organizational change, and it needs to be able to handle the ever-increasing compliance complexities and pace of change in order to control risks and exposure.


The concept of a “career” is being shaken to its core, driving companies towards “always-on” learning experiences that allow employees to build skills quickly, easily, and on their own terms as stated in the 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends Report. Global Mobility policies must adapt to the diversity of employee types and changing business needs. There is a call to challenge traditional approaches to global mobility policy suites and consider alternative programs that are fit for purpose, provide reward flexibility to the employees, and balancing organizational duty of care.
How mobility can adapt
The new employee landscape and its upheaval in learning and careers has become a catalyst for radical change to global workforce programs. In this new world, ecosystems and partnerships will strengthen the global workforce offering, and there will be exciting opportunities for global mobility to become further embedded as a strategic tool to meet business goals. A number of transformational opportunities exist:

- Develop a global mobility vendor network for your organization, mapping out shared data points, reporting, and touch points with key stakeholders (e.g., employees, HR, business). Assess opportunities to align data requests and share information.

- Embed global mobility as a core value in order to promote an agile career model. Partner with talent management and encourage top-down leadership sponsorship and communication to set the new brand, culture, and approach.

- Implement technology or tools to provide compliance analytics.

- Develop a varied policy suite that meets the needs of a diverse workforce (e.g., freelancers, business travelers, gig workers) and their alternative working practices. Consider flexible benefit packages where employees have the flexibility to choose rewards aligned to their needs, while maintaining a baseline of duty of care benefits (e.g., immigration support, health insurance).

In this new world, ecosystems and partnerships will strengthen the global workforce offering, and there will be exciting opportunities for Global Mobility to become further embedded as a strategic tool to meet business goals.

What roles and skills does the Global Mobility function need?

**Organization engineer**
To be skilled at designing and implementing agile organization structures, including team-based solutions that are impactful and scalable.

**Digital pioneer**
To understand and tap into emerging digital technologies that can enable efficient and effective delivery of strategies and programs.
Digital Mobility | Talent Trend 2: Mobility and talent acquisition

To recruit, acquire, and retain critical talent, companies now compete on a new battlefield shaped by global talent pools and global talent networks, global employer brands, social media, and changing career definitions.

Mobility and talent acquisition can no longer afford to work in silos—not when companies are competing for talent on a global scale. People view careers differently, and now more than ever, employer brands define the battle for talent.

Some of the challenges that leaders identified in Deloitte’s 2017 Global Human Capital Trends Survey bear on their ability to adapt to these changing expectations. Almost one in five (18 percent) said employee willingness to move is an impediment, while 16 percent said their organizations lack a structured internal talent management program.

To strengthen the employer brand and develop effective talent solutions, mobility and talent acquisition must collaborate. Companies that fail to adapt in this effort risk falling victim to a scarcity of key skills.

Mobility and talent acquisition can no longer afford to work in silos—not when companies are competing for talent on a global scale. People view careers differently, and now more than ever, employer brands define the battle for talent.

Mobility developments

1. Employers are leveraging mobility and talent acquisition data and insights to inform global talent-sourcing solutions.

Organizations must look to the entire global talent pool and make use of all sourcing channels, both internally and externally. This has become even more crucial amidst global regulatory uncertainty that may affect the talent-sourcing strategy and model for organizations. Should developments related to Brexit, US immigration, and policies in other countries constrain cross-border movement, talent and mobility teams will need data to understand how such changes affect talent supply and demand. Organizations that can “see” their global talent, match to critical roles, and deploy in a speedy, cost-effective, and compliant manner will not only gain a significant advantage, but will also be prepared to adapt to any potential talent-sourcing disruptions.

To accomplish this effectively, companies are placing greater importance on data analytics and cognitive technologies that provide fuller visibility into the internal and external global talent pool. This presents a strategic opportunity for the global mobility and talent acquisition functions to leverage their strengths and in-depth capabilities to support the business.
Ready, willing, Able?

Survey respondents say internal candidates are among the top three sourcing channels for international assignments, yet:

73% of companies do not maintain a candidate pool for future international assignments

53% companies report aligning mobility with talent strategy as a top challenge

2. Companies are creating an "open talent market" globally to support flexible career paths, retain talent, and enable interdisciplinary skill development.

Lifespans are growing, but the concept of a single lifelong career path is waning. In the global survey, 83 percent of respondents say their organizations are shifting to flexible, open-career models that offer enriching assignments, projects, and experiences, rather than a static career progression along traditional lines.

To keep up with these changes, organizations are moving towards an "open-market" approach that connects the internal talent pool with global business needs. This not only increases talent supply for business needs, but also allows organizations to retain and engage current employees by offering more open, diverse, and flexible career development opportunities. If done well, this "open-market" may benefit both the organization and the employees, who learn new skills and gain access to more career advancement opportunities.

3. Global Mobility helps strengthen the employer brand to attract and retain talent.

In today’s transparent digital world, candidates now often find the employer, not the reverse—so a company’s employer brand must be highly visible and attractive. Global mobility can help strengthen the employer brand by offering a value proposition that is more appealing to the changing demographic of today’s workforce: continuous opportunities for learning and growth through international work experience.

Often, international experience is expected or required as part of an employee’s career, and—equally important—employees desire global opportunities. Many job seekers already have international work experience or are willing to move to another country for work. Moreover, Millennials, who will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2025, demand rich career experiences and rapid development. The “ability to learn and progress” is now the principal driver of a company’s employer brand and 71 percent of Millennials say they expect a global assignment during the course of their careers.

Global deployments offer these eager employees the chance to face new challenges and stretch their professional skills and learning in a fast-paced environment.
How mobility can adapt

Organizations must be thoughtful and agile when it comes to building a global talent pool, as well as leveraging it to the fullest extent to meet critical business needs. This requires the combined wisdom of multiple functions and their delivery capabilities. Silos must be broken for all enabling functions to forge strong partnerships and collectively solve those complex talent issues.

For the Global Mobility function, this opens up new opportunities to contribute and directly impact strategic business issues, leveraging its deep expertise in managing global moves.

Ways to contribute include:

- Partner with talent acquisition to share data, develop insights, consult on compliance requirements to help business evaluate diverse talent channels, and make informed talent-sourcing decisions.
- Work with talent management to build a “market” that matches the right talent with the right opportunities, offering rich and meaningful career experiences to the employees while developing a skilled workforce that is critical for the business success.
- Support the business to build and promote a global employer brand with a clear, differentiated messaging that appeals to the new demographics of talent.

What roles and skills does the Global Mobility function need?

**Ecosystem curator**

To be adept at curating both the internal and external ecosystem of talent, especially as the gig workforce becomes a reality.

Organizations must be thoughtful and agile when it comes to building a global talent pool, as well as leveraging it to the fullest extent to meet critical business needs. This requires the combined wisdom of multiple functions and their delivery capabilities. Silos must be broken for all enabling functions to forge strong partnerships and collectively solve those complex talent issues.
Digital Mobility | Talent Trend 3: The human side of mobility

Mobility is about more than getting someone from point A to point B. Organizations that do mobility well—which includes attending to the human side of mobility—can expect greater individual productivity and performance and higher organizational return on investment and impact.

A global move is not only a professional event, but is also a highly personal event. The move can disrupt all dimensions of a person’s life—career, family, finances, and more. The process is complex and confusing, services are generally focused on logistics and compliance to the detriment of other needs, and employees rarely have a roadmap for the journey ahead.

What’s more, statistics tell a story of additional obstacles to participation in international opportunities by employees with “nontraditional” profiles. Candidate identification and selection is generally not as transparent as other recruiting efforts, increasing the potential for bias. Policies may also not be flexible enough to support employees’ individual circumstances.

Finally, moving an employee globally can create an “out of sight, out of mind” situation, where employees lose regular feedback and mentoring and find it difficult to reintegrate once they return.

These and other factors combine to create a poor experience, which limits engagement, productivity, success, and ROI. A positive, inclusive mobility experience, on the other hand, offers many organizational and individual benefits by tapping into human potential and driving strong performance.

A positive, inclusive mobility experience offers many organizational and individual benefits by tapping into human potential and driving strong performance.
Mobility developments

1. Organizations are increasingly focused on mobile employee engagement and the end-to-end mobile employee experience.

With increasing transparency in a digital world and the growing influence of Millennials, employees are demanding a holistic, end-to-end experience from their employers. Indeed, the employee experience, wellness, and resilience are fast becoming critical competitive differentiators for employers; there needs to be a greater focus toward the start of the employee journey, as well as closing the expectation gaps throughout the mobility life cycle (see figure 1).

However, a differentiated mobile employee experience need not mean extra cost. Often, it involves streamlining touch points, providing self-service options, and using data to iterate on the process—these three actions can actually save money in the long run while improving the experience and reducing “noise” and escalations.

A focus on employee experience also encourages higher employee engagement and productivity before, during, and postassignment, with greater assignment success and a higher return on investment.

Employee experience is fast becoming a critical competitive differentiator for employers.

Addressing mobility letdowns: Don’t repay, rethink

Many employers try to make up for poor mobility experience through increased compensation; however, our experience shows that this approach can have a limited impact on employee experience. Instead, the real opportunity lies in transforming the entire mobility experience, from identifying, selecting, and deciding on candidates; helping them with premove, planning, and adapting to the new country; and eventually assisting with reputation, localization, or their next move. The mobility experience must be designed around the employee (and his or her family, since family is critical to assignment success), with a focus on empathy, inclusivity, and engagement at every step of the way.
2. Aligning diversity and inclusion (D&I) and global mobility efforts can mobilize the diverse talent needed to address challenges and drive individual and organization performance on a global scale.

In today’s digital organization of networked teams, empowerment, open dialogue, and inclusive working styles are critical. Indeed, mounting evidence confirms that organizations with diverse workforces and inclusive workplaces outperform the competition. D&I is no longer only about “check-the-box” compliance or “doing good”—D&I is now a comprehensive business and talent strategy. At the same time, Global Mobility continues to evolve from an operational function and transactional “people mover” to a strategic business and talent partner.

While D&I and Global Mobility seem like natural partners for mobilizing and engaging diverse talent globally, they are typically disconnected within organizations. Bringing D&I and Global Mobility together through inclusive mobility offers several benefits.

Designing mobility inclusively, from candidate identification to repatriation or localization, can broaden access to international opportunities for employees with “nontraditional” profiles, (e.g., women, employees with disabilities, single parents, dual-career couples, LGBTQ employees, and ethnic and religious minorities). A focus on inclusive mobility can also support the acquisition of new and diverse talent, as well as faster and better deployments through a broader pool of talent. Finally, inclusive mobility can help build a broader pipeline of diverse, globally minded leaders ready to tackle tomorrow’s challenges.

**How mobility can adapt**

As a start, it is important for Global Mobility to start working with the D&I team and acknowledging that tending to the human side of mobility involves not just people, but optimizing processes, programs and technology. This includes:

- Focus on empathy and inclusivity for the mobile employee and encourage internal partners and external vendor to “walk in their shoes” to understand the professional and personal aspects of a move.
- Develop a collaborative vendor ecosystem, where vendors are connected and empowered to solve problems with limited company intervention.
- Review the end-to-end mobility life cycle for inclusive design, (e.g., create a transparent candidate identification, and selection process to mitigate bias).
- Offer flexible mobility programs and policy provisions that can accommodate a wide range of individual circumstances.
- Integrate opportunities to support performance management, career planning, acculturation, families, and well-being before, during, and postassignment.
- Take into account employee wellness and resilience when measuring assignment success (e.g., via pulse feedback tools and wellness apps).
- Strive toward a single mobility technology platform that integrates and shares data.
- Push mobility data to drive insights about diverse demographics and inclusive design, employee experience and engagement, and assignment success and ROI.

What roles and skills does the Global Mobility function need?

**Experience designer**

To pick up and use design thinking at the heart of everything the Global Mobility function does. There is a need to be targeted in terms of core talent personas, and facilitate a fantastic experience.

**Engagement architect**

To drive recommitment of employees’ hearts and minds at a time of significant uncertainty through the use of innovation and digital technologies.
Digital Mobility | Talent Trend 4: Mobility analytics

Measurement is no longer just before or after—it is during. It is now common for companies to recognize the strategic value of people analytics, and many of them are able to add this function without building new teams.

Organizations have traditionally kept analytics at the margins of the business. When insights emerge, they feed them into the operation. Now, organizations are more likely to integrate analytics directly into the core business so real-time insights happen when and where they are needed.

In Deloitte’s 2017 Global Human Capital Trends survey, over 71 percent of participants surveyed recognized analytics as important, yet there still are gaps on using data for talent-sourcing and recruiting, and even a wider gap (54 percent) on analytics being used in workforce planning.

With the rapidly changing employee landscape and global regulatory uncertainty, organizations need to be prepared to implement more dynamic analytics solutions while managing the compliance challenges associated with a global workforce. This “shift” to how analytics is viewed should start from understanding the impact and wealth of potential from the underlying data that underpins every mobility program, to shaping an organization’s broader global mobility strategy.

Organizations are more likely to integrate analytics directly into the core business so real-time insights happen when and where they are needed.

Measurement is no longer just before or after—it is during. It is now common for companies to recognize the strategic value of people analytics, and many of them are able to add this function without building new teams.

Mobility developments

1. Organizations should start focusing on predictive analytics in order to assess employee experience and engagement.

With the focus on the human aspects of mobility, organizations are now finding more ways to understand their employees and what makes them tick. Predictive analytics will be seen as an integral part of this change and key in what constitutes “employee value.” There will continue to be a shift from focusing on traditional metric indicators, such as revenue and billable hours, to understanding emotional, cognitive, and behavioral indicators that can be used to monitor and predict employee resilience, providing a framework for just-in-time support.

These insights, particularly when partnered with external benchmarking data or research methodologies, can be incredibly valuable in workforce planning strategies by revealing blind spots in touch points of the mobile employee life cycle and identify employees who may be underrepresented in professional and personal opportunities in the mobility space. This type of holistic reporting will also contribute to measuring the success of assignments.
2. Analytics can be used to support the global mobility delivery framework and strategy.

Organizations that are adopting analytics are bringing it to the core of their business and using it to inform business strategy. In designing a global mobility strategy that caters to the changing profile of employees as well as holistic factors, organizations need to confirm that they have a nimble delivery framework in place.

For instance, insights gained from understanding employee engagement and experience can be used in identifying and driving priorities for the business while revealing areas for optimization for the entire delivery framework. This analysis may enable more informed decisions relating to outsourcing discussions and determining the level of assignee support required, including how this support can be delivered.

3. With the rise of business travel coupled against the backdrop of an uncertain regulatory landscape, analytics can be used to help mobility partner with the business more effectively.

In recent years, authorities have placed a greater spotlight on business travel, from immigration, tax, and social security aspects. For many organizations, this is an area that is starting to be owned by Global Mobility, and the need for ongoing management of these moves, along with pre- and post-travel assessments, has resulted in greater demand for a different type of technology that can handle the volume and frequency of these data inputs.

Analytics-driven technology solutions are a key use case in managing business travelers, however being compliant is just the first step. Organizations are starting to recognize the value of the data mined from these tools, and the insights it can deliver to their business. For instance, business travel data can be used to identify countries where the level of business travel investment, assess the accuracy of budgets, and used to price projects driven by project workers.

By understanding that analytics is multidisciplinary, Global Mobility can partner with experts, consultants, and business leaders across the business to develop richer insights, meaningful information, and solutions on which to act.
How mobility can adapt
Mobility analytics plays an instrumental role in transforming global workforce programs. There are many opportunities to tap into these benefits and build a successful analytics program, including:

• Prioritize clean and reliable data by taking steps to educate key stakeholders and implementing data governance programs.

• Utilize various sources of data within your organization and integrate with external talent methodologies and market research data to reveal enhanced and market research data to reveal enhanced insights and improvement opportunities.

• Identify whether specific tools are required to manage aspects, and consider how this integrates with the rest of the delivery model.

• Develop more targeted employee engagement surveys/pulse checks to gain insights into specific areas of the mobility life cycle.

• Embed predictive analytics within mobility retention strategies, including using data to identify flight risk factors during the assignment and following repatriation as organizations focus on employee experience.

• Integrate analytics-driven talent-sourcing tools within the talent strategy, moving beyond mobile employees, and using this to identify project workers, groups of individuals, commuters in order to unlock hidden talent across the organization.

• Embed analytics to inform compliance requirements (i.e., tax, immigration, social security), including pretax, post-travel and throughout the mobility life cycle.

What roles and skills does the Global Mobility function need?

Data scientist
A need to use analytics to successfully predict the demand and supply of key skills within the industry, particularly given high retirement rates.
Conclusion

The 2017 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report reflected on seismic changes in the world of work that are fundamentally transforming business, the broader economy, and society. A principle characteristic of this new era is not merely change, but change at an accelerating rate.

The four themes explored in the report highlight some of the key disrupters that present new challenges and opportunities for Global Mobility.

**Employee-driven programs**
Agile career models and frameworks that cater toward the needs of the changing profiles of mobile employees, recognizing a global career as an enabler of leadership.

**Human side of mobility**
Mobile workforces of the future having a greater focus on employee wellness, recognizing employee experience, and inclusivity as a component of assignment success.

**Mobility and talent acquisition**
Building a global talent pool and global employer brand through harnessing data, partnering with talent, and appealing to new demographics organically.

**Mobility analytics**
Predictive analytics used in a holistic manner and driving workforce planning on a global scale; taking into account both gig and contingent workers.

Figure 2. A nimble global mobility program

A profoundly different mobility function is required in order to support organizations’ to remain competitive. Global Mobility is being asked to be more agile, user-centered, digital, evidence-based and simple (see Figure 2).

The Global Mobility function is expected to be as nimble as start-ups in their operations.
In order to meet and prepare for the expectations of a changing global workforce and demands from business leaders, mobility professionals will not only have to continue being the trusted adviser and delivery champion, but there will be an expectation to play a number of other roles (see figure 3) and develop new skill sets.

**Figure 3. Different roles of the Global Mobility function of the future**

The opportunities for Global Mobility programs and specialists are exciting. New rules need to be rewritten for the digital age, with a requirement for organizations to broaden their outlook of the mobility landscape, while embracing new skills and roles to support a global, diverse, and digitally empowered workforce.
Endnotes


Authors

Sarah Cuthill
Principal
scuthill@deloitte.com

Michelle Fertig
Senior Manager
mfertig@deloitte.com

Ed Hannibal
Principal
ehannibal@deloitte.com

Shannon Anderson-Finch
Senior Manager
sfinch@deloitte.com

Robin Jones
Principal
robijones@deloitte.com

Ying Wang
Senior Manager
yingwang9@deloitte.com

Jonathan Pearce
Principal
jrpearce@deloitte.com

Paul El-Meouchy
Manager
pelmeouchy@deloitte.com

Marc Solow
Managing Director
msolow@deloitte.com

Andrew Bruhn
Senior
abruhn@deloitte.com