Institute of Global Mobility

Responding to changing demands: the evolution of the global mobility function

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Working towards enabling strategic alignment of the Global Mobility function with business goals

**Context**

As organisations become more global (in both location and behaviour), Global Mobility (GM) functions have a key role to play in helping them develop a sustainable strategy to support Talent Management.

GM leaders are becoming increasingly concerned with demonstrating strategic value to their organisations. They are under pressure to devise strategies for optimising processes for attracting, retaining, and motivating the talent pool in order to drive the organisation to out-grow and out-perform its competitors.

In response, it is clear that organisations are evolving their GM functions at varying rates – some already have established interaction with talent teams, working with the wider business to determine and deploy its talent pipeline, whilst others are less able to dedicate the time and resource necessary to address the related challenges. At the same time, GM functions are under pressure to deliver efficient processes and this can create challenges in providing strategic value.

**Progress barriers**

We believe it is fundamental for GM functions to build an operating model which will support the implementation of successful and constructive change.

GM professionals agree that operational excellence is key to providing successful business-focused and compliant programmes, and that efficient transactional processes are central to this. Strategic value is delivered where day to day policy, operational and compliance obligations are processed effectively. This opens the door to a more constructive debate with the business around the value a specialist GM function can bring, and how business and HR teams can work together to achieve cost effective and attractive programmes vital to the development of key skills and future leaders.

However, for those reviewing how their own organisations and functions can evolve and what they can do to drive change, there is often a real challenge in ensuring high quality of delivery of transactional processes, whilst at the same time, building business-driven strategies that will support their organisation’s short and long term talent, career, and succession planning goals.
A number of companies have highlighted some specific challenges which prevent them from achieving this. These include:

- GM is frequently overlooked as a valuable function, or viewed as a transactional team by the business. This creates an atmosphere of mutual frustration, where GM strives for visibility or the business perceives inefficiency. This can cause a lack of involvement in business and compliance planning and difficulty in gaining access to the resource required to enhance the function.

- Resource challenges typified by limited headcount, responsibilities split across functions or assistance as part of a broader role, make it difficult to ensure consistent approaches to policy and process. They can often also create duplication, lead to other responsibilities prioritised, and lack of best practise in process development and management.

### Global mobility: current state assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with business managers and senior leadership to understand organisation culture and key goals.</td>
<td>Review candidate selection, assignment planning and initiation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify roles in GM programme decision-making and touch points within process.</td>
<td>Define management data tracking protocols/parameters (e.g., population status, exceptions, compliance, KPIs).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set defined intervals for connecting with relevant business leadership.</td>
<td>Review mobility payroll compliance and administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review internal resource needs to manage programme with process/technology.</td>
<td>Address assignment allowance calculation protocols.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structuring of location and team roles/responsibilities.</td>
<td>Tax compliance and payment remittance review – identify potential streamlining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring of location and team roles/responsibilities.</td>
<td>Immigration planning and tracking.</td>
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Roles and responsibilities can be unclear, or team structure may not be designed to be able to achieve efficiencies, creating duplication, confusion around policy deployment, loss of ability to effectively collate and leverage data, as well as inability to attend to strategic imperatives such as Talent Management.

Confusion and lack of clearly defined processes can also lead to challenges in meeting compliance obligations: identifying and controlling risks optimally, such as tracking visa end dates or the travel of cross-border or short-term business visitors.
## Technology

- Identify technology requirements to achieve desired business goals.
- Review current technology/data templates.
- Review system interfaces/data transfers.
- Determine fit of technology within desired process and policy (consider main aims (e.g., compliance tracking, status updates)).
- Identify opportunities for automation
- User identification and applicable training.

## Performance management

- Review data exchange parameters between parties (e.g., HR and service providers).
- Identify existing mechanisms for quality control and cost management – consider additional measures.
- Identify external service providers and review/agree related service measures.
- Assess data needs and access to management reports.
- Share proforma management data reports with key stakeholders.
- Define ongoing programme assessment process for multiple stakeholder levels.

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### Recommendations

Below is a simple three-point plan for GM to review its operations and increase the value it is seen to deliver in the organisation.

1. **Complete a current state assessment of roles, responsibilities, and team structure within the GM function in all service locations in your organisation.** The diagram above shows the four sectors into which this assessment may be captured.

2. **Determine activities currently completed by the team that should be:**
   - Ceased as they no longer deliver value or were part of a legacy process.
   - Transferred to an alternative, more appropriate team.

3. **Determine the operations model that will produce high quality results for your function and your business (e.g., centralised vs. local, in-house vs. service provider, etc.); agree key measures and indicators of success that can be used to demonstrate improvements to your business managers and senior leadership.**

   Every organisation has different needs, and these will drive the optimal structure of the GM function. However, the diagram overleaf shows one possible leading practice GM operating model.
### Roles and Responsibilities

- **Policy and programme governance**
- **Business consultation**
- **Case consultation**
- **Exception management**
- **Global contracting with suppliers**
- **Talent alignment and workforce planning**
- **Case execution**
- **Assignment costing**
- **Salary and allowance calculations**
- **Assignment letters**
- **System updates and maintenance**
- **Supplier management**
- **Local terms and conditions**
- **Performance management**
- **Career management**
- **Retention**
Analysis of roles within Global Mobility

Within this model, programme effectiveness is achieved through accurate definition and delineation of governance and case work roles which, therefore, are developed and managed within the appropriate teams or suppliers. Resources are freed up from case execution to drive a more strategic focus, enabling you to develop leading practises that support your organisation’s goals.

**Mobility expertise**

1. **Business consultation**
   This is a strategic role that requires ongoing partnering with business managers and senior leadership. Responsibilities may include:
   - Design and maintain the Global Mobility policy in light of mobility strategy
   - Alignment with talent management and workforce planning
   - Design and govern the Global Mobility delivery model
   - Create awareness about current Global Mobility programs and associated costs
   - Ensure management information delivers ongoing value to enhance business decisions

2. **Case consultation**
   This role requires consultation and communication with employees and business managers in relation to an individual assignment. For example:
   - Ensure correct policy selection
   - Explain the assignment entitlements to business managers and assignees
   - Advise on and manage tax, immigration, policy compliance
   - Provide employer costings, and employee compensation calculations

3. **Case coordination**
   This role oversees the end to end assignment management, requiring communication with employees and suppliers across all individual assignments. For example:
   - Supervise and coordinate the execution
   - Initiation of all required services

**Outsourced provider/shared service centre**

4. **Case execution**
   This could be a centralised or local role which ensures all documents are produced in line with process and that services are provided in accordance with agreed KPIs in order to successfully set up the assignment. For example:
   - Preparation of the agreement
   - Preparation of costings and calculations based on agreed parameters
   - Maintaining the system data

5. **Supplier management**
   This role develops the infrastructure required to deliver all services and manage the relationship with all suppliers. For example:
   - Invoice auditing and authorisation
   - Claim handling
   - Vendor coordination
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