

Issue  
RES Forum Research  
September 2019

3

# Flawless

## Programme Design and the Employee Value Proposition

Delivering for all Stakeholders

Authored by Professor Michael F. Dickmann, Professor of International HRM,  
Cranfield University, School of Management, United Kingdom

**RES FORUM**

 Harmony  
Relocation  
Network

 **Reedge**

 **STERLING  
LEXICON**

# Contact

The RES Forum cooperates with leading academics in the field of Global Mobility. The main goal is to enhance the practical perspective of the RES Forum with a more academic research approach. We aim to match the understanding of pressing issues in HR management with research expertise in order to achieve academic thought leadership in the field of global HR management.

## The RES Forum

T +44 20 7127 8075

E [office@theresforum.com](mailto:office@theresforum.com)

[www.theresforum.com](http://www.theresforum.com)

## About The RES Forum

The RES Forum is an independent, highly engaged and international community of senior in-house International Human Resources professionals with more than 1600 members in over 45 countries. We are not influenced by external parties or third-party vendors. We share information to make our working lives easier and to assist in solving difficult work challenges. We collaborate on shared projects and initiatives, and we learn together. Our agenda, set entirely by our membership, is delivered through a spectrum of services including data analytics, Global Mobility and International HR thought leadership and advanced learning and accreditation programmes in the area of Global Mobility management.



This report is authored by

**Professor Michael F. Dickmann**

*Professor of International HRM,  
Cranfield University, School of  
Management, United Kingdom*

*Strategic Advisor to The RES Forum*

## Note from the author

*Due to rounding, percentages in  
all figures and tables in this report  
may not total 100%*

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following who supported the writing and production of this report:

- Vanessa Cremers & Merel Verlinden, Harmony Relocation Network
- Melanie Klaschka, Sterling Lexicon
- Andrea Piacentini & Heather Hughes, The RES Forum

Thank you to all of The RES Forum Members who took part in the research for this report. Without you, this report would not have been possible.

# In association with:



## Harmony Relocation Network

Paul Bernardt  
Managing Director  
T +31 294 415 012  
E [p.berhardt@harmonyrelo.com](mailto:p.berhardt@harmonyrelo.com)  
[www.harmonyrelo.com](http://www.harmonyrelo.com)

### About Harmony

Harmony is a global network of locally owned relocation companies, upholding strong family values through generations of heritage. We are a network of committed partners, brought together in one truly global and solid infrastructure with cutting edge technology, an ISO-tested quality system and leading sustainability criteria. Our network (founded in 1992) consists of over 140 members in 60 countries, serving 180 countries across 6 continents, providing the same level of high quality services, local expertise and personal commitment. All our members are co-owners of Harmony Relocation Network.

.....



## ReedgeHR

T +44 207 127 8075  
E [office@theresforum.com](mailto:office@theresforum.com)

### About ReedgeHR

ReedgeHR provides Digital Global Mobility management solutions powered by Robotic Process Automation. An electronic communications platform provides a personalized employee experience and programme-wide compliance oversight at a glance. ReedgeHR is the employee-centred future of digital mobility management.

.....



## Sterling Lexicon

Peter Sewell  
Managing Director, EMEA  
T +44 7939 552081  
E [peter.sewell@sterling.com](mailto:peter.sewell@sterling.com)  
[www.sterlinglexicon.com](http://www.sterlinglexicon.com)

### About Sterling Lexicon

Sterling Lexicon offers end-to-end relocation solutions that enhance and optimize your mobility experience. We deliver happy, productive employees through a personalized, high-touch approach. Whether you're mobilizing talent for a new office, managing overseas assignees, or recruiting college graduates, a partnership with Sterling Lexicon means you have integrated solutions tailored to fit your business goals. Discover the positive impact Sterling Lexicon can have on your global mobility programme.

# Introduction

## Proactive Global Mobility management amidst global and national tensions

The world is increasingly a much more volatile and unpredictable place ([see RES Forum 2017](#)). Tensions between the global powers, economic hostilities that impact on international business and large-scale migration flows pose additional challenges to Global Mobility (GM) departments and require them to become more flexible and agile. In addition, political developments in some countries may increase the degree of unfriendliness or even hostility towards migrants and expatriates. Governments may react by making it harder to obtain working and residence permits. However, even if there are no obvious legal and regulatory changes it is likely that, in several countries, existing regulations with respect to international assignees may be more stringently enforced in the future. GM compliance work has (again) risen in importance. GM professionals have reacted to these substantive regulatory demands with high quality, stable policies and practices. However, there is a further challenge. Other local threats – humanitarian and natural disasters, business sustainability risks – may lead to uncertain and often unpredictable emergency events. These require prepared but highly flexible reactions, meaning that GM departments have to balance flawless programme design with sophisticated planning and rapid reaction capability.

Proactive Global Mobility (GM) management also means that GM leaders have a thorough understanding of the strategic and operational international challenges and goals that their organizations encounter. What are the key compliance issues for the organization? What return on investment and value does it get from its globally mobile staff? How satisfied are the key stakeholders – international assignees (and their families), their leaders, sending and receiving units, senior managers – with the GM department's approaches in terms of programme design? In this report, key data on GM programme design and effectiveness is outlined, a global Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is developed, and

a number of key GM metrics are proposed. All of this aims to inform and to inspire GM professionals to review programme design approaches and ideas.

**“The inability to track assignee movement does not allow for pro-active planning on compliance requirements (i.e. tax and immigration).”**

**Senior Mobility Manager, Americas Region**

## Cost effective, high quality GM programme design that enables valued GM experiences

The trend to distinguish more categories of assignees (e.g. short term, long term, business travellers, international commuters, project specialists) and to understand some of the diverse interests associated with particular forms of global work (e.g. developmental versus business critical) allows multinational corporations (MNCs) to develop tailored GM packages. This can lead to a more cost-effective but also higher quality GM programme offering. While the perception of the diverse packages depends on perceived monetary and benefits attractiveness, fairness and consistency over time, the ability of specific locations and contexts to enable assignees and their families to have valued GM experiences, will also be crucial ([RES Forum 2018](#)). Assignees are increasingly becoming global career capitalists aiming to maximize their gain in business and international competencies as well as career-relevant networks. Crucially, people want to live their lives to the fullest which for some means gaining international experiences as a means of growing personally and professionally. While there can never be a guarantee

of this, GM programme design can factor in some broad elements that are likely to result in positive international work experiences. Given that highly skilled and flexible professionals have more choices of where and for what organization to work for, it is increasingly crucial to design an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that attracts, motivates, develops and retains these people.

### **Programme Design and Delivery – flawless design and operationalization to create an attractive global Employee Value Proposition (EVP)**

It is highly important that a global EVP appeals to assignment candidates, global workers and repatriates. Organizations need to have an appropriate mix of rewards, development, work content and career opportunities that generate a sufficient number of high-quality expatriates. We will concentrate on these insights and broaden them to include issues such as the principles underlying GM programmes. These will include compliance principles (e.g. total adherence to local laws and regulations with respect to immigration, work permits and taxation), risk management principles (enabling low risk foreign work with respect to national and local terrorist, criminal and natural dangers), GM work principles (using appropriate departmental decision processes, use and management of service providers) and broader principles in relation to assignee rights and obligations. In addition, the value of global work may be tracked through mechanisms such as data analytics and return on investment (ROI) assessments. The data presented in this section allows some benchmarking with respect to the RES Forum member organizations' programme design considerations, distinctions and approaches. We then draw up recommendations of how flawless GM programme design can develop a global EVP.

### **SAFE GM and Global EVP**

The RES Forum Annual Report 2018 developed a leading-edge GM framework that distinguishes flawless Global Mobility programme design as one of four key elements that aids successful GM work. The report developed a wide array of strategic and operational recommendations. This year we are refining these even further through the addition of Global EVP elements in each of the four quadrants of



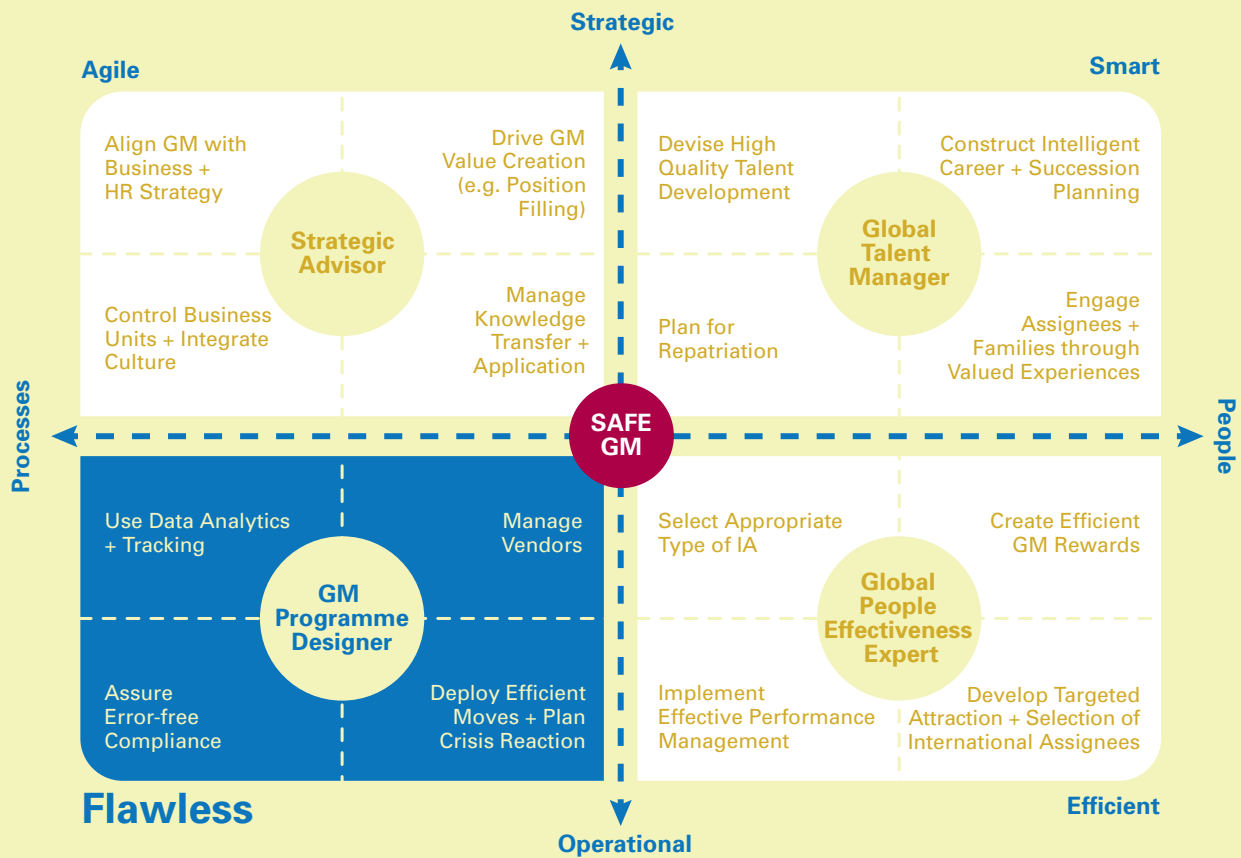
the GM model. We also develop some assessment ideas of programme design and present a dashboard of how these can be visualized.

### Broad High-Quality GM Data

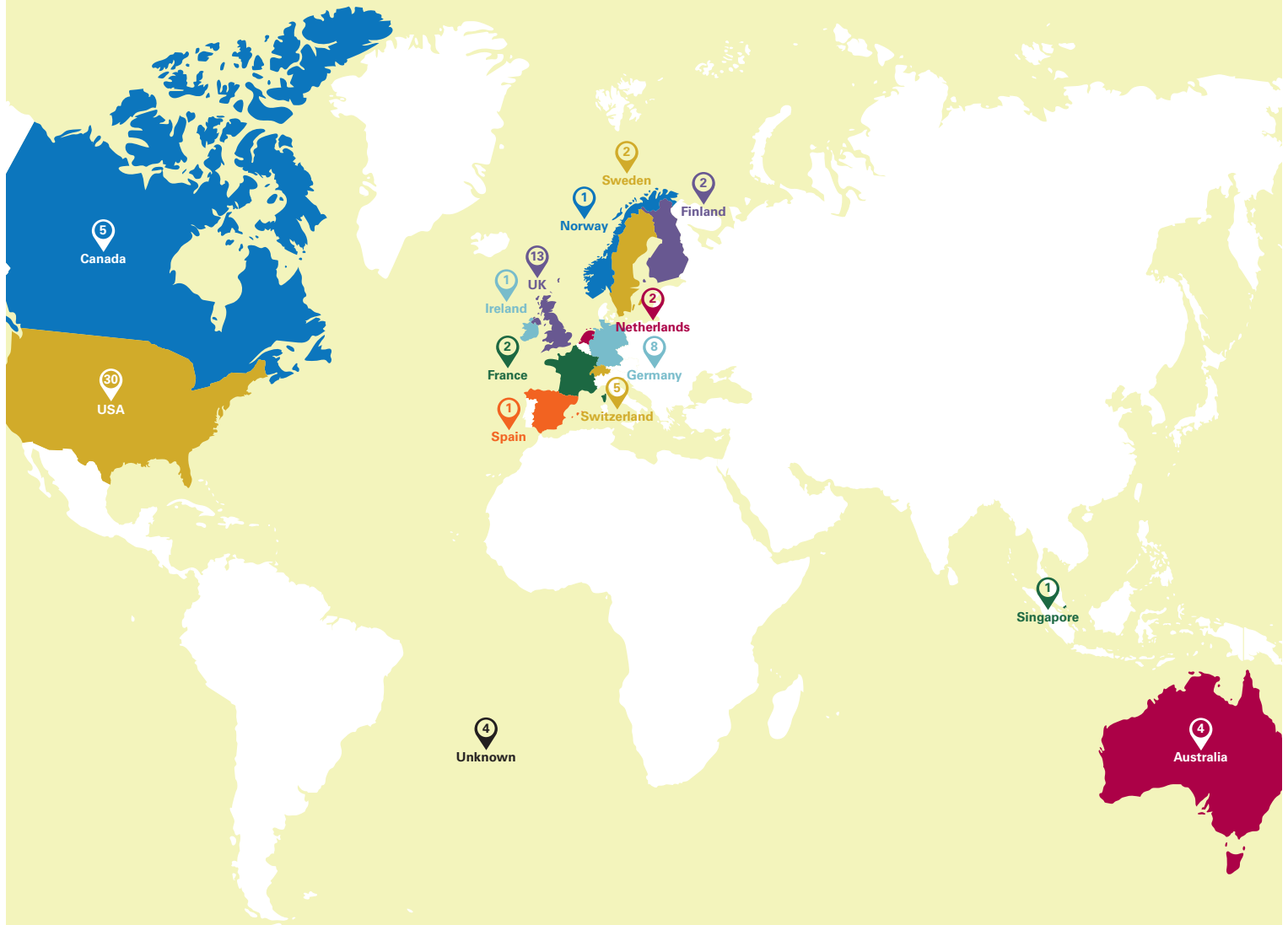
The RES Forum website has a range of information, GM tools and insights for members. In addition, the website gives more information about the methodology used and data sources that inform this report in the document **RES Forum Research Reports 2019 - Data Sources and Methodology**. Using a variety of data and insights from quarterly reports alongside benchmarking tools developed by the RES Forum plus the ad-hoc surveys, the key data source for this annual report was one extensive survey. More than 80 international companies, represented by senior GM

managers, provided their GM data. The seniority of the respondents and prominence of the companies meant that they possessed good insights and often had access to excellent GM data. Their qualitative and quantitative data gave us rich insights to base our conclusions on. They worked for companies from sectors such as Aerospace & Aviation, Banking & Finance, Chemical & Pharmaceutical, Construction, Consulting, Energy, FMCG, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Professional Services, Retail and Technology. Over a third of respondents' firms operated in over 50 countries and almost twenty percent of MNCs assigned their global workers to more than 50 countries. Thus, the RES Forum data provides insights into the programme design considerations and approaches of MNCs with a global footprint.

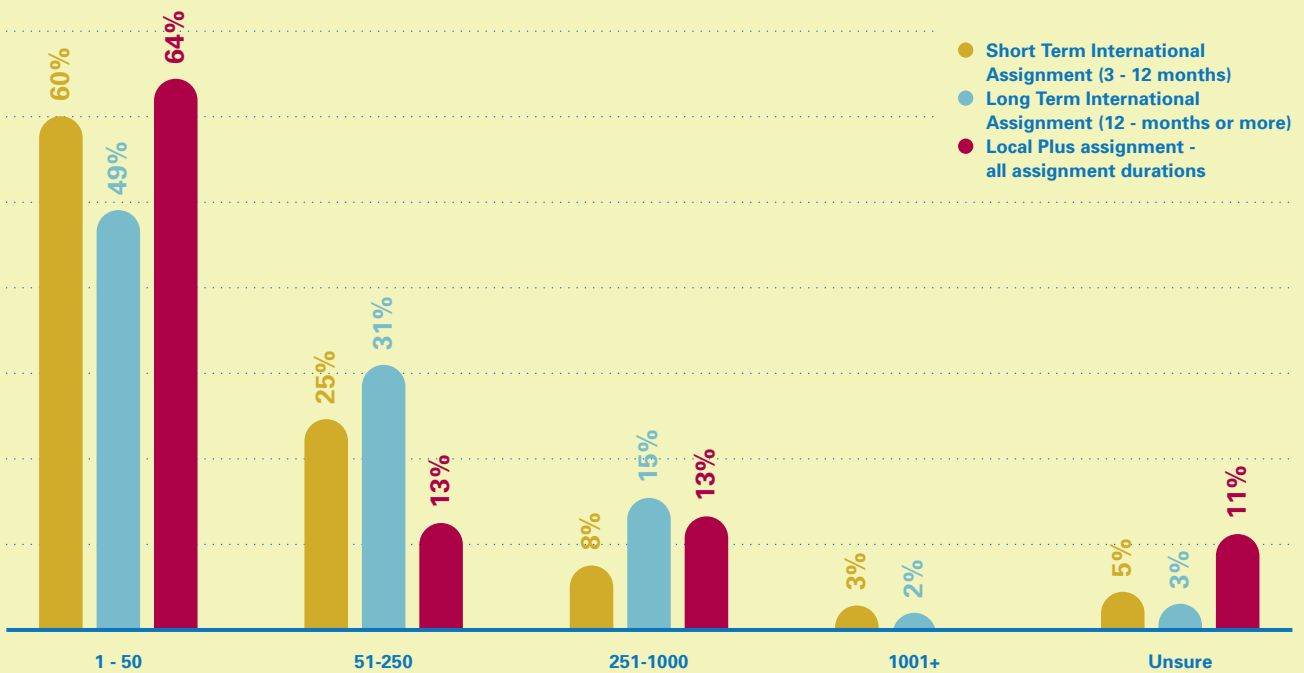
Figure 1: SAFE Model with Flawless Programme Design Focus



**Figure 2: Geographical Distribution of Head Offices of Respondents' MNCs**



**Figure 3: For each of the following assignment types, what is the TOTAL global assignee population of your organization?**



# The Status Quo of Flawless GM Programme Design

## High global integration of GM structures and processes but continued assignee tracking difficulties leads to substantial risks

About half of MNCs have a globally integrated HR service centre structure (49%), with just over a fifth (22%) working regionally and executing their GM approaches through several regional HR hubs. Only a small minority (6%) of firms had exclusively local GM delivery. Where firms had mobility Centres of Expertise (CoE) the functions undertaken most often were global vendor management (93%), policy writing and management (90%), the management of assignment documentation (74%), the management of global tax compliance (72%) and assignee tracking and management (71%). Unfortunately, only about one in four companies could rely on their assignee tracking with 100% accuracy (23%) and a further four in ten organizations thought their tracking system was reasonably accurate (42%). A quarter of firms thought that their system was occasionally inaccurate (25%) and one in ten did not trust their tracking data to be accurate (9%). Adding the last two statistics together, with respect to compliance and emergency situations this therefore leaves a third of companies substantially exposed to external and regulatory risks.

## Increasing the breadth of GM support activities to increase assignment attractiveness and performance

Within the GM activities that were undertaken, a trend to broaden GM approaches could be noted. There is a large range of activities that companies design to prepare, support and manage their assignees. In terms of frequency of use, these range from job share agreements which are highly unlikely to be

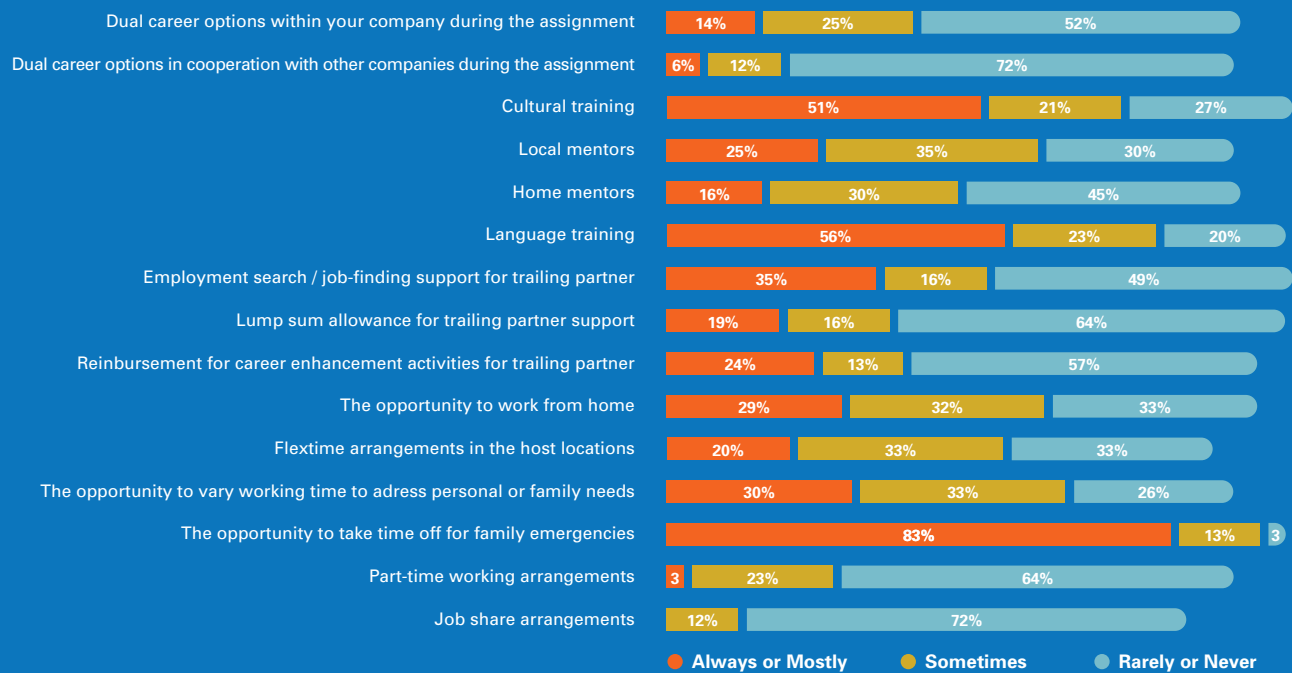
offered, to the opportunity to take time off for family emergencies which is always granted by more than half of organizations. Other frequently used practices or policies that are mostly or always provided during international assignments include language training (56%), cultural training (51%) and employment search/job finding support for a trailing partner (35%). This data clearly shows substantial progress over time. It seems that organizations are now more acutely aware of the potential positive effects of sensitizing and training people in general culture skills and particular host culture information. Over time it has become more popular to support couples who suffer from dual career challenges.

**“Tax, relocation and immigration providers’ support is extremely varied depending on who your contact is. Often, instead of simplifying and facilitating the process, it takes time and resources for our in-house team to manage them.”**

**International Mobility Manager, EMEA region**

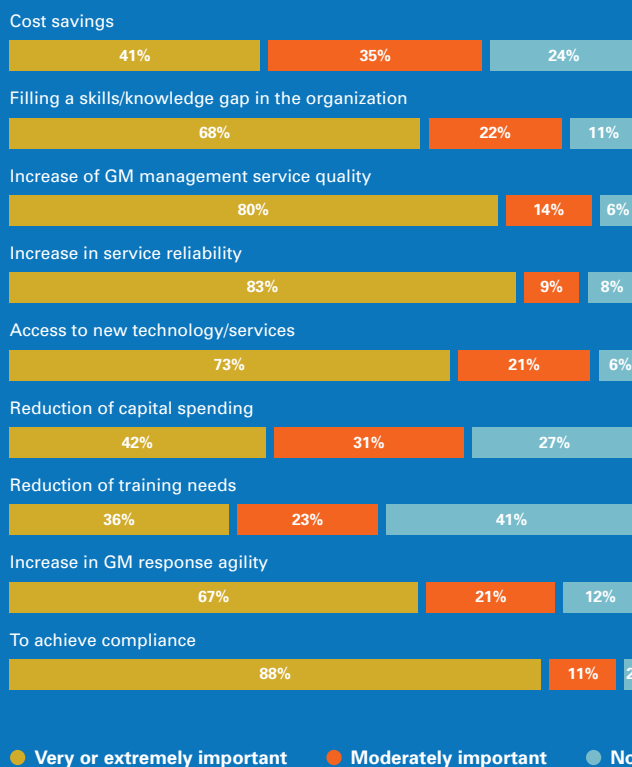


**Figure 4: To what extent does your company offer the following practices during international assignments?**  
My organization provides...

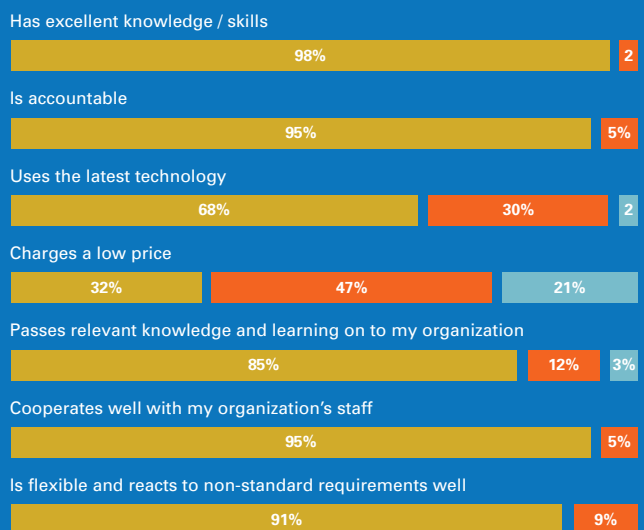


*N.B. Percentages may not add up to 100% as the percentage for those that responded 'Don't know' is not included*

**Figure 5: How important are the following factors in your decision to use outsourcing providers?**



**Figure 6: During your outsourcing relationship, how important are the following characteristics? The outsourcing provider's team...**



# What the experts say

Often in the procurement process, the focus is on elements against which scores can easily be attributed—scope of service, costs, SLAs, KPIs etc. One important factor that can be overlooked is the working culture at the vendor and whether there is a match or synergy with the client. This can be made more complicated when buying a 'Global' service, as this often involves the organization's procurement teams who may overlook the importance of this cultural element.

Whilst the relationship is about procurement in the corporate space, the focus is often on the aforementioned metrics. However, when individuals and their families relocate, the focus shifts from dry, corporate, elements to very personal experiences. Where there is a good cultural fit between parties, this can lead to true partnership between the client and the vendor which is the optimal position. As we see in this chapter, and particularly in Figure 5, there is less concern for costs than there is in the provision of a good service therefore it is important that this cultural element is drawn out early in the procurement stage to avoid such problems.

Conversely where the focus is on costs, it is important that the scope of services and KPIs are clearly defined and shared with internal clients so that expectations are suitably managed. Any deviations from standard scopes and processes should be tracked and appropriate action taken as necessary.

From my own experience, true partnership is paramount to provide the most value-add to assignees and businesses and this can only happen where there is a good cultural fit between parties.

*Roy Fu  
Asia Pacific Mobility Lead  
Hong Kong*

## Distinguishing different assignee populations and managing these

The RES Forum data on employee effectiveness shows that companies increasingly distinguish between different expatriation populations, with MNCs becoming much more likely to have separate policies for commuter assignments and (extended) business travel. This allows firms not only to tailor their internal policies and attraction mechanisms but also to have a firmer grasp on travel and location patterns. The consequence is that compliance may be handled more consciously and more effectively.

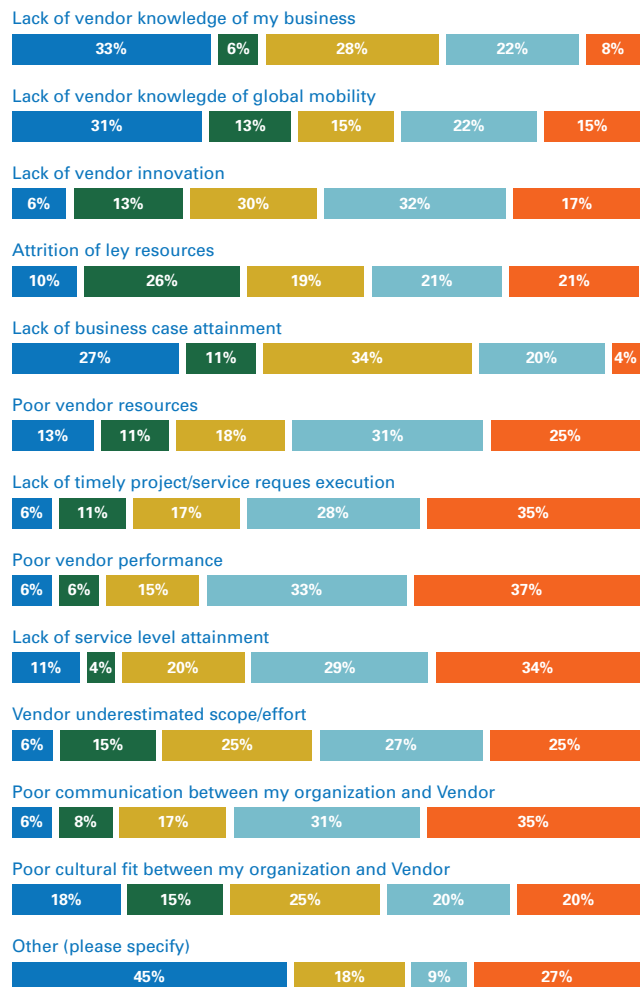
## The GM activities most likely to be outsourced

The most commonly outsourced activities were tax services provision (97%), household goods shipping (97%), destination services (home search, school search, 95%) and immigration provision (91%). Taking a closer look at compliance, this is an area where the 'stakes are high' (i.e. there are substantial risks associated with non-compliance), expert knowledge is needed and regulations may change substantially over time. Therefore, it is no great surprise that many compliance areas are outsourced. The most likely areas to be outsourced to a specialist provider are personal tax compliance (89%), immigration compliance (71%) and social security compliance (61%). Corporate tax compliance (33%) and expat payroll compliance (23%) are less frequently outsourced. In terms of broad GM activities, compensation package preparation (14%) and assignment management (including the creation of assignment packages, offer letters and employee contracts, 15%) were highly likely to be done entirely in-house. There is little indication that these activities which need in-depth company and assignee knowledge, are likely to be predominantly outsourced in the near future.

## Quality of service provision and the relationship to outsourcing providers

Companies are highly risk averse in relation to GM compliance and it is often the quality, reliability and speed of service rather than the cost that drives outsourcing decisions. The key drivers for using outsourcing service providers (extremely important or very important) were to achieve compliance (88%), to increase service reliability (83%) and to increase GM management service quality (80%). In essence, all factors outlined in Figure 5 are important.

**Figure 7:** If you feel you have reason to be dissatisfied, what impact did the following factors have on your dissatisfaction with the outsourcing service provider?



- No impact
- A slight impact
- A Moderate impact
- A high impact
- An extremely high impact

“What we find is a very standard response from our vendors (immigration, tax) and not necessarily the level of thinking, without prompting, that would elevate their service delivery.”

Senior GM Manager, APAC Region

# What the experts say

An outsourcing relationship is like any relationship, communication must be open and goals should be clear and must be discussed periodically. When parties are not aligned on the goal and the creation of the plan to achieve it, this will always lead to issues. Reflecting on previous projects to outsource GM services, the key learnings for me are the need to remove ambiguity and to obtain and respect capability.

Lack of clarity in verbal, written or contractual communications can send parties off on completely the wrong track. Clear goals help to focus on these ambiguous 'grey areas' and clarify what it is you are trying to express. Keep in mind that contractual documents do tend to be quite lengthy by their very nature, and excessive attention to detail could have a negative as well as a positive effect (giving the other party the impression that you do not trust in their ability, or overcomplicating matters), so clarity and brevity when discussing KPIs, SLAs and suchlike, must go hand in hand.

Understanding the abilities and restrictions of your outsourcing partner is essential. From the point where you ask them to commit to KPIs and schedules to their ability to deliver on outcomes, it is crucial that you develop a clear understanding of their respective capacities so rewards can be developed for driving great outcomes. Likewise, levels of restitution can be set for failing to meet targets. Doing so effectively will encourage best performance and behaviours.

*Shakheel Gooroochurn*  
*Head of Reward and Policy*  
*beIN Media Group*  
*Doha, Qatar*

Once in an outsourcing relationship, what is regarded as extremely or very important for the success of the collaboration? Figure 6 shows that excellent knowledge and skills (98%), good cooperation (95%), accountability (95%) and flexibility on the part of the service provider (91%) are particularly valued by MNCs. Interestingly, only a third of firms ranked low outsourcing costs as important (32%).

### **Satisfaction levels and reasons for concern in the outsourcing relationship**

Overall, it seems that MNCs are reasonably satisfied with their outsourcing providers. While only three percent were very satisfied, six out of ten companies (59%) were satisfied with a further five out of ten (22%) being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. While only nine percent of companies were dissatisfied, six percent were very dissatisfied. We asked all respondents about the key reasons that drive their dissatisfaction. A generic poor vendor performance (71% of high and extremely high impact on satisfaction levels), poor communication (67%), a lack of service level attainment and a lack of timely project/service request execution (64%) were the main items. It seems that vendors could and should enhance the quality of their service provision.

**“Career progression, performance, retention, diversity, change in workforce, engagement of the new generation. We expect to predict how our new workforce is changing and pro-actively initiate initiatives to ensure that we don’t lose talent.”**

**Talent Mobility Manager, EMEA Region**

### **Measuring Return on Investment (ROI) is important if GM departments want to strengthen their internal positions**

GM professionals need to be strategically insightful and to shape the (international) capabilities of their organization, while at the same time understanding their (global) employee populations and displaying excellent operational skills when putting GM strategies into practice, be it with top management, vendors or assignees. While imperfect, there are a number of indicators that can help

# What the experts say

**Providers are always really keen to build a relationship with me as the Head of the function, but I’d love for them to spend as much time getting to know my global team, our assignees, and our business. The challenges I hear about internally almost always come down to a lack of knowledge of our organization and the locations we operate in. So, we need our providers to consider our needs as part of their process, not just to enable a better account management relationship.**

**When providers miss the nuance of what we do and the people who do it, they open themselves up to criticism of process, service delivery and cost.**

**As businesses, when we’re selling our services to potential customers, we always talk about what makes us different - we need our providers to see and act on that too!**

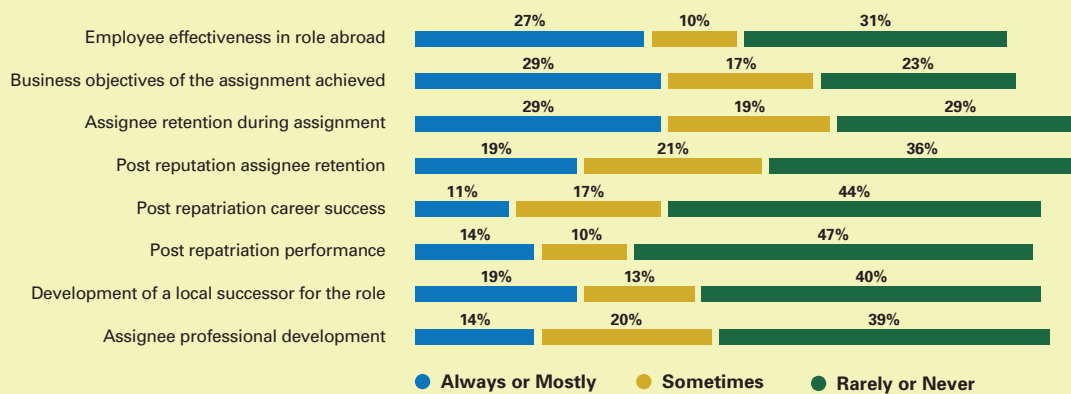
**Natalie Agostinho**  
**Global Head of Mobility Services**  
**British Council**  
**Manchester, UK**

MNCs to assess whether a particular assignment and/or their GM activities are successful. These include employee effectiveness in the role abroad, business objectives of the assignment achieved, assignee retention during and post working abroad, career success, development and performance indicators as well as position filling with local successors. This list is not exhaustive but can, nevertheless, inspire companies to collect data to evaluate the impact of their GM programmes. In essence, the data shows that these areas are less frequently 'always' or 'mostly' assessed compared to 'rarely' or 'never' in firms. The most likely ROI assessment (business objectives achieved, assignee retention during assignment and employee effectiveness in foreign role) is used by

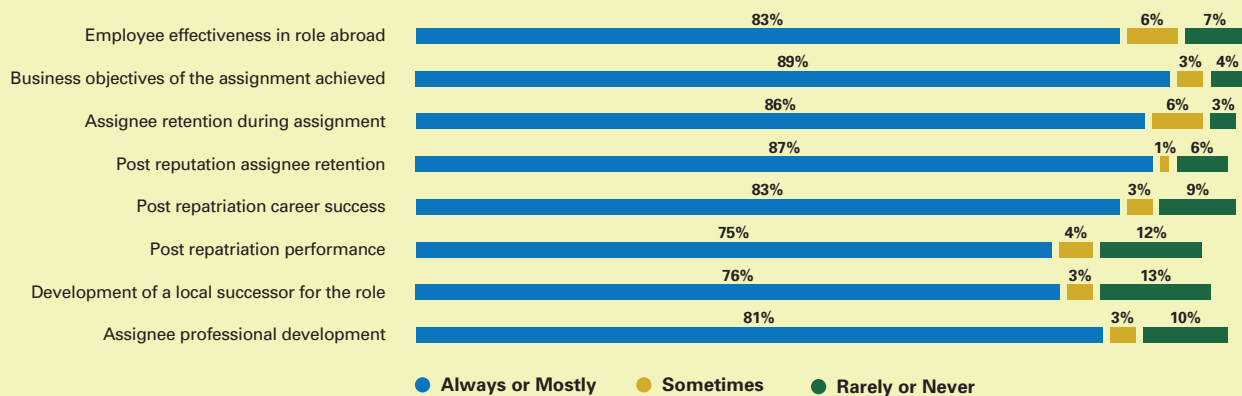
less than a third of companies ('always' and 'mostly'). Unfortunately, it is still the case that too few MNCs make a concerted effort to understand the impact of their GM activities. How can GM professionals be taken seriously when often they cannot give indicators of the success/ROI or value of their work?

We also asked respondents whether these areas should be used in three years' time to assess ROI assessment. The difference is stark; more than three quarters of respondents indicated that each of these elements should be assessed, a difference of more than fifty percent. Clearly, the need to 'up the game' in terms of ROI has been identified in organizations.

**Figure 8: To what extent does your organization measure the following areas in terms of return on investment (ROI) of international assignments?**



**Figure 9: In terms of the future, in three years' time to what extent SHOULD your organization measure the following areas in terms of return on investment (ROI) of international assignments?**



N.B. Percentages may not add up to 100% as the percentage for those that responded 'Don't know' is not included

# Flawless GM Programme Design and How to Use the Global Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

## Creating an attractive and compelling Global EVP

People want to work in firms where they can identify with the vision and mission and where they believe that the 'package' inherent in the employment (be it salary, development, careers, networks, colleagues, organizational culture and leadership) is attractive (**Bader and Oldenburg, 2018**). Increasingly, millennials and other workers care about aspects within their own country and across the globe. Where individuals want to engage in an international career, a global compelling EVP is crucial. In our research on VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) environments in the **RES Forum Annual Reports 2016 and 2017**, we outlined how important it is to create resources within an organization that are unique, non-substitutable and difficult to copy. These could then create a true competitive advantage if these resources are also valuable in the market place. In other words, creating highly valuable talent that has global insights and truly understands the organization and its worldwide operating model is key to strengthening the organization. Therefore, using human resource management to design, implement and communicate an attractive EVP is highly important – especially if people are agile and willing to learn and adapt. This would lead the firm to possess dynamic capabilities to flexibly react to competitive challenges.

## Managing Global EVPs in all aspects of GM work

When individuals think about what makes global work attractive to them, they have a variety of individual, organizational and country/context factors that they use to assess the attractiveness of working abroad. It is clear that the best way to influence their assessment is to design an attractive global work value proposition in all organizational areas. Therefore, it is recommended that GM professionals use the SAFE framework to systematically delineate and refine their offer in the areas of strategic advisor, global talent manager, GM programme designer and global people effectiveness expert. While the strategic advisor role has a less immediate impact on global experiences, the three other areas constitute immediate touch points for international workers and those who may wish to accept global assignments. The global EVP has two dimensions: it distinguishes organizational versus individual as well as tangible versus intangible elements. Incorporating less tangible aspects allows policy makers to develop a more complete EVP and will take account of the more holistic assessment of individuals with respect to global work opportunities. Intangible elements of the EVP are very often overlooked in the existing literature and in the design of programme management approaches. However, these are increasingly crucial to the success of GM approaches. Here, we present first organizational and then individual elements of the global EVP, covering both tangible and intangible aspects.

## GM Programme Design – Managing *tangible, organizational* aspects of the EVP

Tangible, organizational GM programme design is a product of senior managers, GM professionals and other stakeholder's input such as governments, other regulatory bodies and outsourcing vendors. In many senses, tangible, organizational aspects are often well defined as these relate to compliance areas. However, understanding the depth and breadth of regulation and keeping up with the dynamics can be quite difficult. In addition, assessing ROI and value has been an enduring challenge.

### GM Strategies to manage GM Programme Design

- Use data analytics to assess value and ROI. The call for using more evidence-based HRM and GM in order to improve the cycle of planning, delivery, assessment and improvement is clear and strong. While there are many barriers to overcome, including having adequate resources and line management cooperation, this will be key in strengthening GM professionals' positions in their own operations, their arguments, as well as their programme design and delivery.
- Assess what GM activities should be delivered, either in-house or outsourced. Understanding value in GM goes some way to enabling professionals to make outsourcing decisions. It is already clear that GM departments value quality of service and reliability over costs when working with outsourcing providers. Systematically assessing their quality (see dashboard below) and tacking appropriate interventions can lead to an improvement in GM service quality.

### GM Policies and Practices to manage GM Programme Design:

- Ensure assignee tracking and compliance. This is clearly paramount in terms of risk management for corporations and individuals. We have seen that a substantial number of firms do not always trust their system to deliver accurate information thereby exposing firms and individuals to the possibility of nasty surprises.
- Plan for efficient moves. One of the original practices of GM professionals, the problems often lie in the cooperation with local/global service vendors and unexpected developments/demands by assignees. A systematic process analysis and periodic reassessments are already often happening in firms with the aim of improving move efficiency and effectiveness.

## GM Programme Design – Managing *intangible, organizational* aspects of the EVP

Much of what determines the standing of a GM department is intangible or behind the scenes planning that cannot readily be observed by assignees in 'normal' business. However, the reactions to unusual challenges do determine the 'brand' of the GM department. Ironically, this will also often shape the willingness of senior managers and assignees alike to voice criticism or support. In essence, unusual events and how GM professionals react to these shape perceptions about the leadership qualities of mobility professionals.

### GM Reputation and Successes:

- React successfully to (humanitarian) crises and unrest. The companies' reaction to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis or earthquakes or man-made hostility, is undoubtedly incredibly important to local staff, assignees and their families. A lot of the crisis preparation is behind the scenes work and appears intangible to most ([RES Forum 2015](#)). The events and the firm's reaction will be talked about for years and will shape the willingness to work abroad and the assessment of GM departments.
- Create a track record of risk management. In parallel to natural and terrorism threats, risk management aimed at being compliant as an organization, overall and for individual assignees, is highly important. This acts as a hygiene factor (Hertzberg, 2008) in that, being flawless is seen as so normal that this does not motivate people to work abroad. However, as soon as staff notice that assignees are pursued by governments in relation to their working or residence visas, a good deal of trust and willingness from (potential) assignees to go on an assignment is lost.

### GM Leadership:

- Cooperate effectively with vendors. The RES Forum data clearly shows the importance of quality with respect to the service provision of vendors. In addition, many less tangible aspects such as the on-going communication, flexibility and learning of both parties (the firm and the outsourcing provider) determine how effective the cooperation really is and, thereby, how it impacts the perceived quality of GM departments.
- Engage in flexible communication with expatriates' leaders, local teams and local HR. Part of programme design, especially when connected



to (home) travel and other benefit issues, resourcing decisions, learning opportunities or risk management consequences, will benefit from on-going, open and trust-based conversations with key local stakeholders.

### **GM Programme Design – Managing *tangible, individual aspects of the EVP***

Individual, tangible elements of the EVP are mostly shaped by a number of key factors; whatever the organization seems to offer in relation to foreign assignments, the stories and experiences of global workers and their own, individual interests.

#### **Individual GM Purpose:**

- Secure legal work in host country. The legality of working and living in a host country is highly important to assignees. While this is normally assured for long term and short term assignees, there remain problems with business travellers, especially where they are travelling on tourist visas and/or when their job demands suddenly mean an extended stay.
- Enable focus on job abroad due to frictionless moves. Individual assignees normally welcome what they see as the positive changes to their lives when working abroad while tolerating the less positive elements. This is akin to change where many people like change – but hardly anyone likes to be changed. Making moves abroad as frictionless as possible allows assignees to focus on their jobs and the new environment. It has been shown to encourage cultural adjustment and performance.

#### **GM Opportunities:**

- Refine opportunities through service providers and external GM leaders. Service providers face a large array of assignment demands and have developed many approaches. Working closely with outsourcers and external GM professionals, such as those that are part of the RES Forum, can lead to broader opportunities for assignees and improved services.
- Increase security through geo-tracking and other measures. Personal security is obviously important and depends also on the actions and cooperation of global assignees. Training expatriates about how to behave in hostile and unfamiliar environments, how to behave in dangerous situations and how to use the security mechanisms (such as geo-tracking) that firms employ, should increase the perceived and actual security of assignees.

# What the experts say

**Our key challenges focus on two areas:**

- 1. High demanding clients' needs which require immediate mobility support;**
- 2. Lack of Mobility Strategic Planning since GM is not considered as a HR top priority.**

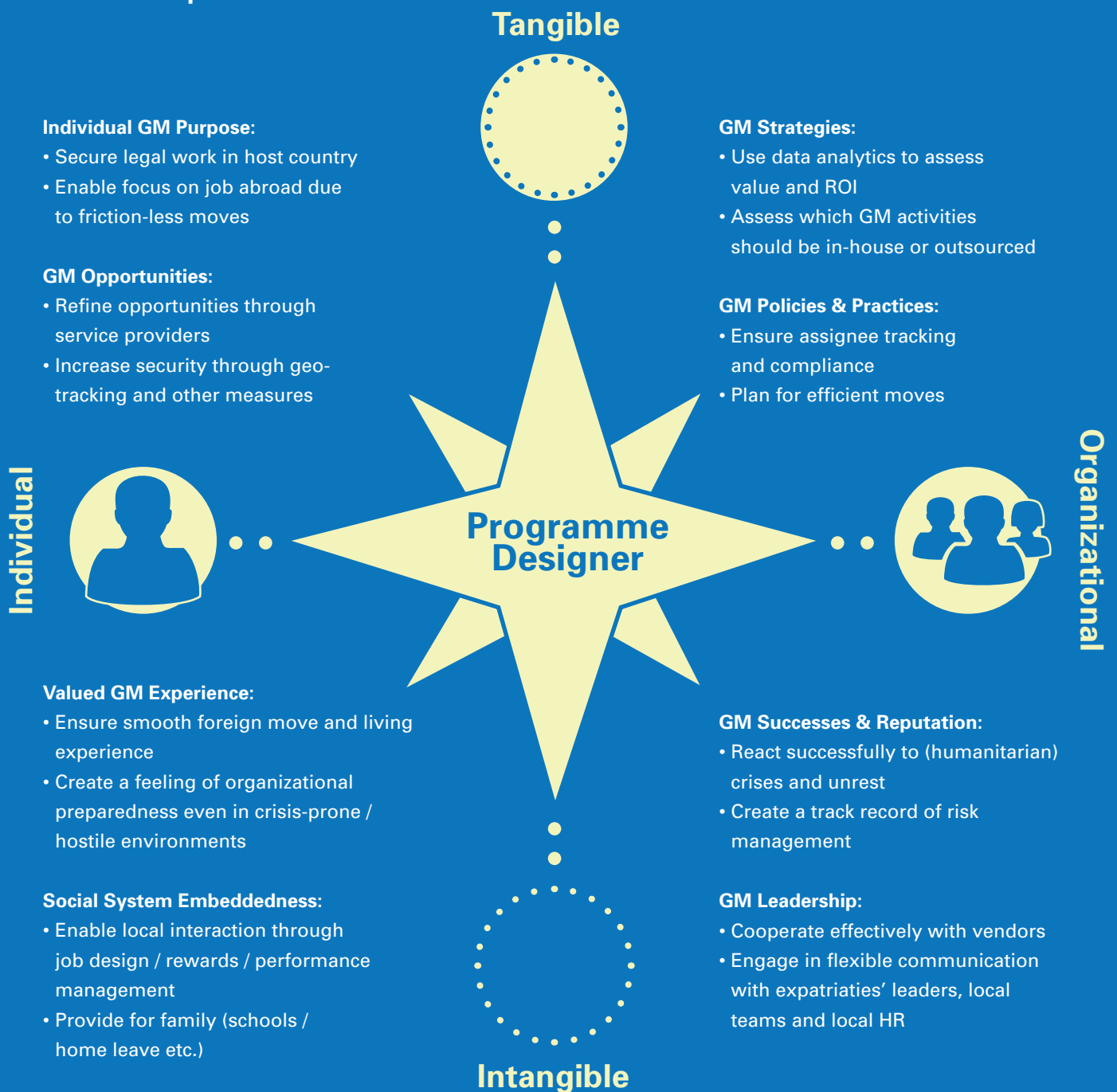
***Mobility Manager,  
Hong Kong***

**Through the GM metrics work, access to accurate data and bringing data together from multiple sources in a platform that is easy to use has been significantly challenging. Manipulation of data is required to ensure it 'tells a story' but we want to be in a position where this is not required.**

***HR Specialist,  
APAC Region***

Figure 10:

# Flawless GM Programme Designer - Employee Value Proposition



## GM Programme Design – Managing *intangible, individual aspects of the EVP*

The intangible individual elements of programme design are, by their nature, most difficult to influence. They will vary individually but the organization's track record of prior GM activities and successes and communication about how the firm is planning to react to unusual or dangerous situations in their host countries/worldwide will go some way towards shaping and managing these.

### Valued GM Experience:

- Foster smooth foreign living experience. Beyond the move, assignees and their families live abroad and want to enjoy the experience. The literature is rich in recommendations on how to help global workers adjust to their host culture (Haslberger, Brewster and Hippler, 2013) and broad environment (Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2013). The key is to select individuals with cultural agility in the first place (Caligiuri, 2013) and to be sensitive about how they see their host country, how they experience all sorts of interactions emotionally and how appropriately they behave.
- Create a feeling of organizational preparedness even in crisis-prone/hostile environments. Actions speak louder than words. We discussed above how GM planning can tackle difficult situations in hostile environments. Nevertheless, although terrorist or other dangerous events are rare, it is important to communicate with assignees and to create the impression that the firm is well prepared.

### Social System Embeddedness:

- Enable local interaction through job design/rewards/performance management. The more assignees engage with their local teams and wider local environment, the more likely they are to adjust to the host context and to perform better. Thus, a range of human resource mechanisms such as job design, reward structuring and on-going performance management can enable autonomy, leeway and incentives for local interaction.

- Provide for families (schools/home leave, etc.). GM professionals know very well that when the expatriate's family is unhappy, there is trouble on the horizon. It is very common for organizations to provide for assignees' families through the reward package design. Beyond that, firms should strive to be seen to care for expatriates and their families. Flexible handling of small/unusual requests can be highly impactful and can contribute to a more appealing EVP.

## Assessing the Success of GM Programme Design

Figure 10 gives an overview of the EVP for GM Programme Design. Some of the more administrative activities may soon be taken over by solutions using artificial intelligence (see **RES Forum 2019**). However, much of the quality of programme design depends on GM professionals having a clear GM vision, developing the right programme management policies and practices and implementing them flawlessly. To really understand the impact, attractiveness and pervasiveness of the GM department's activities in this segment of the SAFE model, the tracking of a range of indicators needs to happen. These are outlined in Figure 11. At the bottom of the graphic are two figures that collate information about the general GM population (including a split into different forms of assignments). The figures also provide some diversity information. The other elements of Figure 11 depict a sample dashboard of GM programme design elements. The key success indicators are summarized under the headings of ROI, compliance, programme design satisfaction, outsourcing and risk management and should be managed actively. While we are conscious that we could have drawn up many more indicators, we hope that this dashboard can serve as an inspiration to the reader's GM department. This makes the chapter an indispensable read for all levels of GM professional, both from an in-house and supplier side. Firms face a variety of country, industry and internal staff factors that necessitate moulding a SAFE model in general and GM Programme Design in particular, to their actual needs. Doing so with a global EVP in mind will help in their quest to contribute to the competitive advantage of their organization.

# What the experts say

In the journey towards flawless execution of GM, emerging technologies such as AI, machine learning and data analytics will be key to delivering better quality data. Companies are looking for clearer returns on investment for mobility interventions and data is key to this, to explain the effectiveness of such programmes and cost savings. Data analytics are crucial to help GM professionals use intelligent systems to identify, predict and manage relocation risks.

In GM, better data is required with regard to:

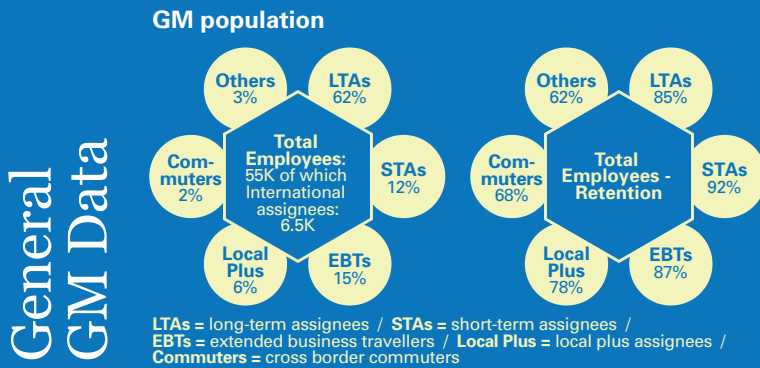
- Timescales from request to assignee being in roles. Using historical data on previous moves will build a dataset which will allow better planning and management of expectations.
- Real-time payroll data. The integration of payroll systems and payslip modelling is needed so that GM professionals are working with real time information. The timing of the monthly pay processing and working to fix errors and process tax rulings is difficult, especially when close to final reporting periods.
- Demographics of successful assignees. As richer datasets become available, using such information to predict assignment success based on professional career, education and other social factors will allow the pre-assignment process to call out potential areas of concern and allow GM to work with business partners to make sure such issues are addressed upfront rather than mid assignment.

*Shakheel Gooroochurn*  
*Head of Reward and Policy*  
*belN Media Group*  
*Doha, Qatar*

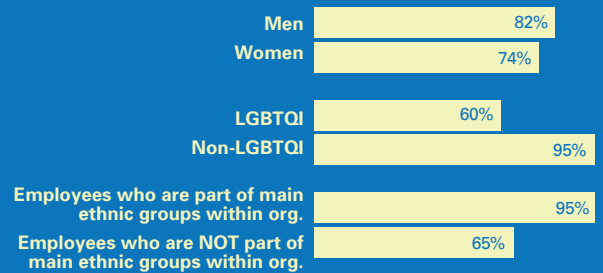


# 10 Global Mobility Programme Designer Metrics

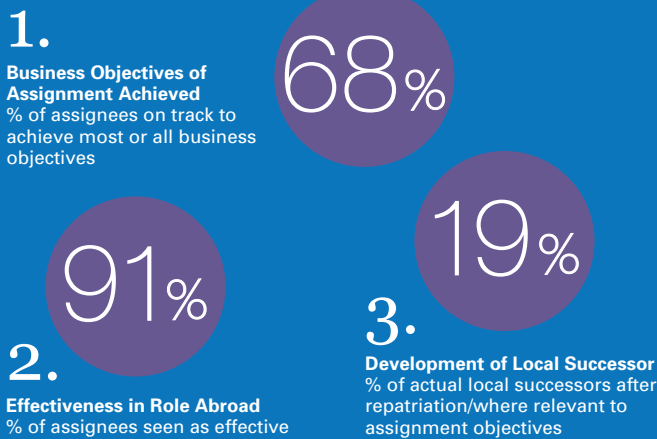
A Sample Dashboard. What should your department be aiming for?



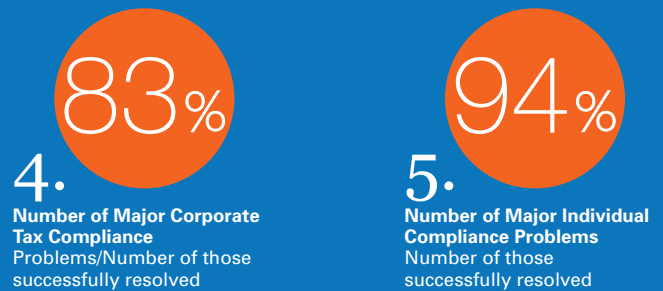
Percentage of staff in each of group that perceives company diversity policies relating to GM opportunities to be fair...



## ROI/Value



## Compliance



## Programme Design Satisfaction



## Outsourcing/ Risk Management

