

VISION 2030

THE FUTURE OF TALENT MOBILITY

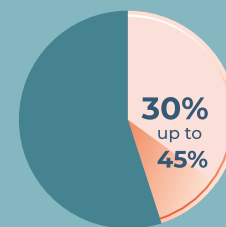
By Professor Michael Dickmann and
Professor Benjamin Bader

INTRODUCTION

Emerging macro trends have compelled multinational enterprises (MNEs) to re-evaluate their global staffing strategies. The rise of remote work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to a more dispersed and flexible workforce, challenging traditional expatriate models. Geopolitical shifts, such as trade tensions and regulatory changes, are influencing talent deployment decisions. Furthermore, the demand for specialized digital skills and the gig economy's growth are prompting MNEs to adopt more agile, project-based staffing models to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global competitive environment.

In fact, the percentage of gig workers is expected to rise significantly in the future as the global economy increasingly shifts towards flexible, on-demand labour. Technological advancements, the expansion of digital platforms and - especially amongst educated younger employees from highly developed market economies - changing work preferences, are driving this trend.

*By 2030, some estimates suggest that gig workers could make up as much as **30-45%** of the global workforce.*



Projected Gig Workers in Global Workforce by 2030

Crucially, amongst traditionally employed, highly developed employees, the wish for self-determination, excitement and development at work is increasing. This means that many MNEs are experiencing rising demands for non-traditional assignment patterns. While “workations”, where employees extend their vacation to work overseas for a few more weeks, have become more common - and more supported - in many organizations, it is likely that we will experience a new form of international gig work driven by the highly skilled, core manager, expert and professional.



To explore these developments and corporate reactions in the Global Mobility (GM) realm, we have carried out in-depth research, with a focus on obtaining an extensive view of how GM professionals see the future. Using the Critical Incident Method, we interviewed a range of GM experts and HR leaders throughout spring and summer 2024, allowing us to write this report on a substantial empirical basis. The Critical Incident Method is a qualitative research technique that involves collecting and analysing specific, significant events that are deemed critical by the participants. This method is particularly effective in exploring how significant events have influenced GM practice. By focusing on these critical incidents, the study captures the participants' reflections on past disruptions and how these shaped their approaches and strategies in GM. In this context, by having GM experts and HR leaders reflect on past major events and their impacts, the research leverages the critical incident approach to uncover deep insights into how these professionals navigated crises, and how they anticipate future challenges. This method is particularly valuable because it highlights how individuals and organizations respond to significant, often disruptive, events - providing a rich basis for understanding the underlying factors that drive change in GM strategies. The use of this method, combined with the forward-looking aspect of exploring future trends, makes the research reflective and anticipatory, ensuring that the findings are robust, contextually grounded, and highly relevant for strategic planning in GM.

We opened each interview by presenting people with important events from the past (like 9/11, 2007 financial crisis, COVID-19, etc.) and asked how they perceived their impact on GM. Then we explored what the next "big things" might / could be and how GM could respond. Due to space limitations, our report concentrates on some of the key trends identified. We have broadened the discussion to overall (global) talent management, careers and corporate strategies. This resulted in the identification of a dozen different areas that could experience substantial change over the coming five years.



The Intersection of Remote Work, Career Integration, and the Gig Economy: **A NEW ERA OF MOBILITY**

**WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHE QUANCARD,
GLOBAL MOBILITY CLIENT SERVICE DELIVERY LEADER, GALLAGHER**

Remote work has fundamentally transformed the landscape of employment, particularly in the realm of Global Mobility (GM).

Far from diminishing its significance, remote work is poised to amplify the importance and scale of GM. The ability to collaborate on international teams and projects is encouraging professionals and organizations to explore opportunities across the globe, fostering a dynamic environment for business and professional growth. Despite current governmental forces around the world pushing against globalization, the trend of reshoring will likely coexist with increased global mobility. As supply chains evolve, the demand for GM will persist, serving as a strategic lever for organizational success.

THE INTERSECTION OF REMOTE WORK, CAREER INTEGRATION, AND THE GIG ECONOMY: A NEW ERA OF MOBILITY

BY CHRISTOPHE QUANCARD, GALLAGHER

UNIQUE DIFFERENTIATOR TO ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 30 years, global experience has transitioned from being a unique differentiator on a CV to an essential component of career development. Employees across organizations of all types and scale now expect international exposure and experience as part of their career trajectory. Consequently, employers must integrate this expectation into their brand identity. Beyond career advancement and skill enhancement, employees view international opportunities as a means of personal growth, enriching their life experiences beyond the confines of the workplace.

As project teams become increasingly global, requiring diverse skill sets, organizations must tap into talent across their international networks and devise solutions that facilitate global collaboration. While team members may primarily work from their home countries, the ability to temporarily relocate them for critical jobs or projects can be invaluable.

Although people truly seek more global work, balancing the desire for international experience with personal commitments and team dynamics presents challenges. Employees may be reluctant to leave their families and networks for extended periods, and home teams may hesitate to release valuable members. Regardless of assignment type and duration, employee experience, family satisfaction and employee retention are becoming central to effective GM management, even for short-term deployments. Offering well designed international gigs that provide CV-boosting global exposure and foster camaraderie with colleagues worldwide can optimize resource utilization while strengthening organizational culture and employee retention.

THE INTERSECTION OF REMOTE WORK, CAREER INTEGRATION, AND THE GIG ECONOMY: A NEW ERA OF MOBILITY

BY CHRISTOPHE QUANCARD, GALLAGHER

THE RIGHT PEOPLE, IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME – THE RIGHT WAY

The evolution of global and flexible careers does not require people to settle for contract or temporary cross-border work. Organizations can enhance their employer brand and optimize their global workforce by leveraging international gig job boards and use GM programs as strategic tools to align employee experience with business priorities. By matching the right skills to the right projects and locations, regardless of geographical constraints, organizations can embrace a future of mobility characterized by flexible careers that allow employees to learn and grow globally without severing ties to their home base.

Organizations that adeptly align skills and employee experiences on a global scale will not only retain talent but also enhance their brand, culture, and project team effectiveness. The future of work transcends traditional boundaries. It is neither strictly remote nor in-person. Neither exclusively full-time nor part-time. We are entering an era where work is flexible and self-directed. To fully capitalize on these trends, organizations should embed mobility into the core of their employee experience, making it a foundational step in addressing business challenges and employee experience. A unified global workforce, adaptable to various roles and environments, will render mobility commonplace, transparent, and easily navigable for both employees and business leaders. This approach will sustain global careers

and instill confidence in employees, encouraging loyalty to the organization amidst widespread skill shortages.

To realize this vision, we must integrate this perspective into the mobility tools and programs of the future. Flexibility for both businesses and employees will position mobility as a pivotal element in the organizational landscape. Just as we seamlessly order an Uber or book an Airbnb today, in the future, employees will effortlessly engage with global opportunities, manage relocations, and ensure compliance through streamlined, app-based experiences. This will empower them to navigate their careers and achieve their goals while consistently delivering value to their organizations.

THE FUTURE IS GLOBAL, CHARACTERIZED BY MOVEMENT AND FLEXIBILITY

Embracing this paradigm will unlock unprecedented opportunities for growth and innovation in the world of work. At Gallagher Multinational Benefits & Mobility, we focus on using technology as a lever to deliver people first mobility customized for our clients and their employees' unique needs. We use tools designed to boost our team's effectiveness and value in every moment of the mobility journey.

Increased Demand for Flexibility in GM: **ROLE FLEXIBILITY AS A KEY ELEMENT**

Our research showed that one of the next major workforce shifts will be towards role flexibility, allowing employees greater access to global projects and corporate (gig) opportunities within organizations. Organizations have already adapted to flexible working hours and remote work, but now need to prepare for a significant increase in gig work and international remote work requests.

Given a situation where HR is increasingly evaluated on individual and team experiences that lead to engagement and performance, requests to work remotely in international locations / requested traditional assignments need to have a high degree of customization and personalization.

Most organizations are currently unprepared for the rise in such requests for gig / self-tailored / international remote work and need to create a "skills workforce ecosystem" to attract, develop, make productive, and retain both essential and superior talent. The employee-employer relationship continues to be key and the links to the employee value propositions, where expectations have shifted, are important to depict. This means that GM leaders must consider new solutions that uphold regulatory compliance while providing flexibility to compete with emerging work patterns, including gig work opportunities.

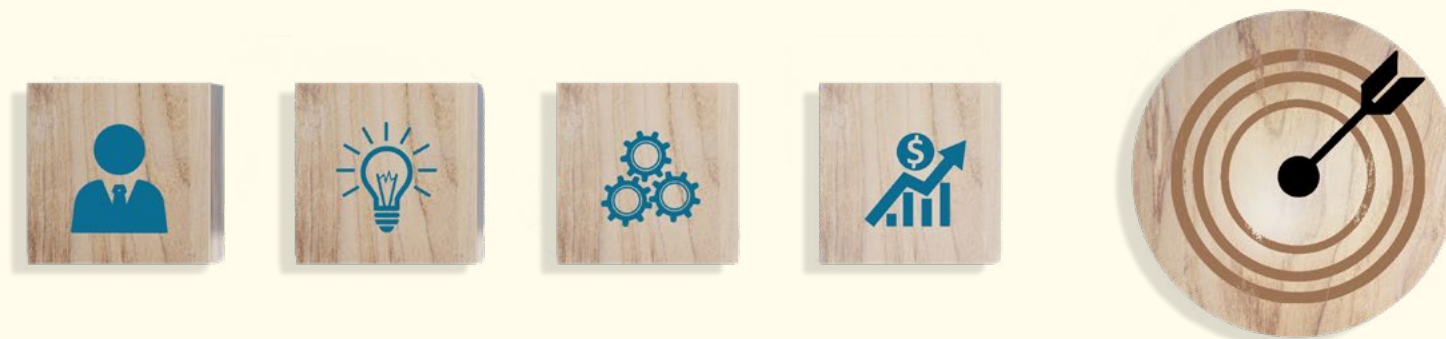


Enhanced Talent Management: **TOWARDS SKILLS-BASED STAFFING AND INCREASED AGILITY**

By now, the signs are pointing to a strong need to integrate talent management with GM strategies, focusing on capability development, highly flexible career pathing, and agile staffing patterns to attract and retain top talent. A major recent study exploring more than 20 large MNEs (all 'household' names) showed that leading-edge firms are moving away from a thinking that identifies international positions to fill for their global high-flyers and, instead, are moving towards concentrating on much more skills-focussed staffing patterns whilst integrating personal choice (Jooss, Collings, McMackin & Dickmann, 2024) . This will demand a highly agile talent management function that liaises intensively with key talent, as well as other major stakeholders, such as departmental heads and the GM function.

Technology Integration and Regulatory Compliance: **MASTERING COMPLEXITY**

Given a more agile approach to talent, added to the pressure to be more flexible in terms of high potentials' global careers, the adoption of advanced technologies will be necessary to track and manage a dispersed and mobile workforce effectively, ensuring compliance and optimizing productivity. Managing compliance with international regulations (tax, social security, immigration) will become more complex as employees engage in more diverse work arrangements across borders. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in GM has been explicated in a recent RES Forum report and remains one of the key tools to increase efficiency and effectiveness in GM . Obviously, there are several pitfalls to avoid when shifting to a stronger reliance on AI, but our experts were of the opinion that the benefits outweigh the costs.





THE IMPACT OF A “REMOTE-FIRST” WORLD IN 2030 ON ALPHASENSE

WRITTEN BY FRAZER WILLIAMSON, ALPHASENSE

INTRODUCTION

By 2030, a remote-first work model will be the norm for numerous industries, significantly impacting how companies operate. Where traditional industries may struggle to adapt to the new strategies and practicalities required for effective workforce planning, AlphaSense has, from inception as a SaaS start up 13 years ago, leveraged fluid working arrangements to develop into the enterprise, AI driven business insights leader it is today, valued at \$4bn on the path to IPO.

Understanding and adapting to the demands of a remote-first world will be essential for long-term success and to ensure a competitive edge in 2030. This paper explores the anticipated effects on AlphaSense’s digital infrastructure, cultural cohesion, and talent management strategies, as well as the impact of cross-border compliance on the future of the business.

THE IMPACT OF A “REMOTE-FIRST” WORLD IN 2030 ON ALPHASENSE

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1. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

AlphaSense employs hundreds of software engineers, product development specialists, and sales professionals in the US, Canada, UK, Finland, India, Singapore, Canada, and Ireland. Engineering talent in particular has been sourced from locations with significant investment in software development and AI education or experience. Leveraging talent in non-entity locations has been enabled through an agile Employer on Record partnership. Together, these specialists around the world work collaboratively across time zones to develop new offerings, and enhance existing products and services on the market. We have physical office locations, but there is no assumption that working from the office is more valuable than working from home, or even working remotely from anywhere in the world.

A robust digital infrastructure has been crucial for sustaining productivity, ensuring data security, and enabling seamless cross-border collaboration in an extremely agile company with a start up mentality at its core. Given the global footprint of AlphaSense’s engineering and design talent, investing in next gen collaborative tools, and effective communication channels to engage in immersive brainstorming and complex project discussions will always be critical for success. AlphaSense leverages intelligent workflow management software to allocate tasks, monitor project statuses and communicate effectively. Digital software such as Asana, Confluence, Jira, and more products will continue to be used to bridge physical distances, enabling engineers and product designers to troubleshoot and innovate with a higher degree of interactivity. This will only continue in the future, with investment likely to increase.

These tools will effectively become the backbone of the company as we continue to expand, scale products and demonstrate the value of a globally dispersed collaborative, and productive workforce. In 2030 reliance on such tools, with more embedded AI, will accelerate, and I would imagine spill over into other departments including HR and finance, where traditional communication channels such as email, Zoom, and Slack have been embedded for years. Leveraging AI for Human Resources and finance will offer greater task automation, forecasting, sustainability, and much more. The widespread adoption of AI will not merely be a trend, but a strategic shift that will foster innovation and drive value in a remote-first set up.

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2. CROSS-BORDER COMPLIANCE

Operating a remote model will present new challenges related to cross-border compliance. The Employer on Record engagement is already a useful foundation for tracking and maintaining compliance with ever changing regulations. With the advent of our International Temporary Remote Work programme in 2025, ensuring compliance to tax regulations, data privacy laws, PE risks, and employment policies will vary across the regions in which we operate, creating a complex landscape to navigate. Compliance management software powered by remote work feasibility assessments will be indispensable in tracking and adapting to regulatory changes, as well as ensuring that the company's operations and employees comply with local laws.

Data sovereignty or Intellectual Property, in particular, is anticipated to be a critical issue. Many countries may require that data generated within their borders remain accessible locally, even for companies like AlphaSense, which operates globally. This could necessitate localized data centers or cloud partnerships to align with regional policies while maintaining compliance with global data privacy standards, such as GDPR in the EU. Moreover, the management of employee contracts across borders will demand precision to remain compliant with regional labor laws, ensuring that AlphaSense minimizes legal risks associated with global employment practices.

3. CULTURAL COHESION

Fostering cultural cohesion in a geographically dispersed workforce will be one of the biggest challenges of a remote-first world. Establishing a coherent set of core values and mission-driven objectives should typically bind teams together. International expat, rotational or developmental assignments aside, for AlphaSense, creating a unified organizational culture through Engineering, QA, Product, Sales, Marketing, and the People support functions will continue to evolve through virtual team building events, regular cultural exchange sessions, and initiatives to celebrate local festivals. The culture building strategy has always been a process of evolution, rather than a static set of norms or regulations. A cohesive identity is not necessarily integral for growth, when success has been driven through flexible interactions, joint missions, and adaptable networking.

By 2030, I envisage the adoption of sophisticated digital culture-building tools to simulate many aspects of in-office interactions, helping teams stay connected. To strengthen cultural cohesion, I promote the introduction of a “regional ambassador” model, appointing employees from different regions to represent cultural perspectives and feedback within the organization and functions. These ambassadors would serve as liaisons between local teams and upper management, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity, which is critical for joint missions, projects, and global collaboration.

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4. TALENT MANAGEMENT

The scope of AlphaSense’s talent acquisition has already been broad, allowing it to recruit the best talent from any region under our EoR engagement, where relocation to a core hub was not possible. This will continue, alongside promoting initiatives to attract highly specialized individuals through the development of attractive compensation packages, equitable pay and benefits, career progression, and skills development. M&A activity over the years have allowed AlphaSense to take the “best practices” and evolve uniformly. One troubling strategy I foresee in the future, perhaps across other industry verticals, is a location-agnostic compensation model, where employees are paid based on their roles and skill levels, rather than their geographic location. This approach could enhance equity and attract top global talent, but comes with some significant workforce planning considerations. Arguably it is a game changer for many.

Closer to home, investing in AI-driven HR tools to automate tasks such as onboarding, performance evaluations, and personalized career development plans should provide tailored growth opportunities and insights for employees, thereby improving retention rates. Prioritizing continuous upskilling is also critical, and even now the fast paced evolution of new AI models requires our specialists to up their game! By 2030, technology in the AI industry will have evolved beyond recognition, and so investing in advanced training programs to keep employees on the cutting edge of AI innovation will be invaluable for many companies. Partnering with online education platforms to provide certifications and skills workshops will not only enhance team capabilities but also demonstrate AlphaSense’s commitment to career growth.

CONCLUSION

A fluid workforce strategy and the “remote-first” world of 2030 already co-exist in 2025 at AlphaSense. The business is already in a position of strength, but to maintain the competitive edge and position as a leader in AI-driven market intelligence, AlphaSense will continue to proactively invest in digital infrastructure and products that promote cross border collaboration, both with our own employees, as well as clients. The workforce of the future is expected to embrace the remote first world, and optimize the tech stack to collaborate, develop, and grow. A cohesive culture should therefore be accepted as an evolving process versus a goal, a statement, or a set of values.

Focus on Employees and their Families Abroad: **PROVIDING A HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE**

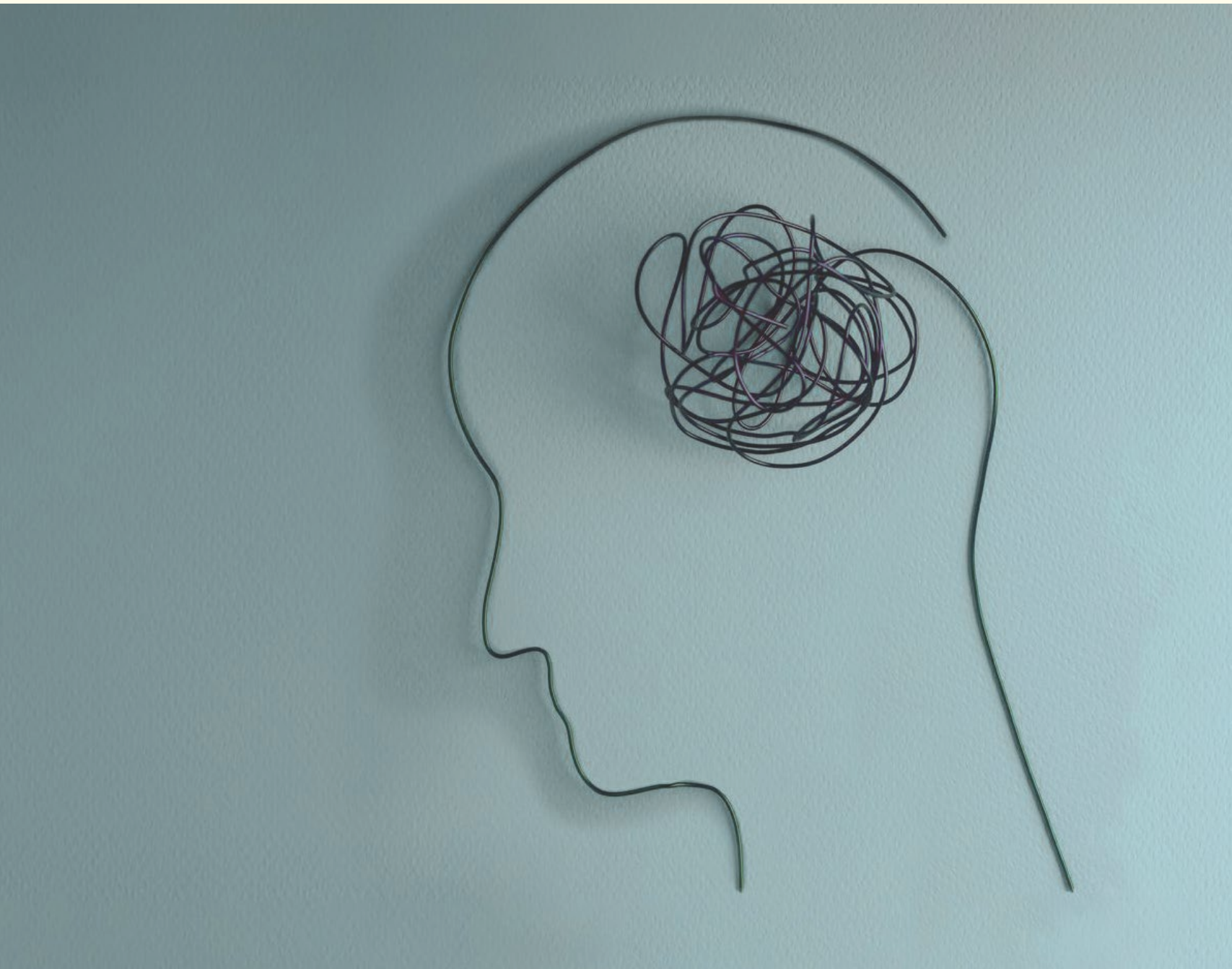
While this is not new to GM, experts believe there is room for improvement. The emergence of gig work patterns, new role definitions, and the need for greater agility call for more family-inclusive approaches to international assignments.

To improve MNE strategies and enhance the employee and family experience, organizations should integrate family-focused policies from pre-assignment planning through repatriation and reintegration. This includes conducting comprehensive family needs assessments to address the specific requirements of diverse family constructs and cultures, recognizing that family units and roles vary widely across regions.

Additionally, with the increased prevalence of families with children requiring support for special needs, organizations should ensure access to specialized resources and services that can assist with educational and developmental needs in a global context. Local support mechanisms - such as networks for relocating families and resources tailored to family well-being - are critical to ensuring smoother transitions. Career planning should incorporate considerations for all accompanying family members, including employment opportunities for spouses in dual-career families and educational continuity and transition support for children, ensuring a cohesive approach that values the contributions of the entire family unit.

By designing strategies that emphasize diverse cultural perspectives and family constructs, while keeping the GM employee value proposition and psychological safety for families at the forefront, organizations can better support their globally mobile employees and their families, ultimately contributing to assignment success and employee satisfaction.





Mental health issues are more important: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS

Mental health is one of the key challenges of our era and the statics are becoming ever bleaker. Mental health is worsening globally, with rising rates of anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, leading to increased social isolation, economic uncertainty, and health fears. New digital technology and social media is also widely attributed to the worsening situation.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence of mental health conditions has surged, with millions more affected since the pandemic.



Younger populations, particularly adolescents, are experiencing significant mental health challenges, and the demand for mental health services is outpacing available resources, highlighting a growing public health crisis.

Given that global assignments put employees and their families under increased strain – the stress of moving, loss of face-to-face interaction with many friends, anxiety about the future / unknown circumstances, potentially hostile local environment, more and novel work demands, less support – mental health concerns are particularly prevalent in GM. And there may be generational differences, with Gen Z seen to need a stronger sense of belonging upon arrival and during their work abroad. Some of our experts outlined that a stronger sensitivity, more early warning mechanisms, and more support and understanding of the mental health challenges that their staff are facing are needed. However, some of our interviewees wanted to go further.

GM needs to think about sustainable global careers: TOWARDS HEALTH, HAPPINESS & PERFORMANCE

Sustainable careers are long-term professional paths that balance personal fulfilment, skill development, and job security, while adapting to changing economic, technological, and social conditions. They emphasize continuous learning, resilience, and alignment with one's values, ensuring career longevity and adaptability.

Sustainable careers are characterized by three elements of the individual:

1. *health,*
2. *happiness and*
3. *productivity.*



Health when working abroad includes both physical and mental issues and, as we have seen above, is faced with unique challenges overseas.

Happiness is linked to health and embodies a large variety of aspects from the spheres of family, colleagues, social contacts in host country, home country links, remuneration, work pressures, stress, job content, and engagement.

Productivity is geared to the AMO framework that calls for the incorporation of ability, motivation and opportunity for employees.

Therefore, the understanding of individual talent and the work with assignees needs to become more individualized and sophisticated. While there are principles developed in how this may shape MNE's actions, more concrete data is being gathered through a research project at the University of Vasa, as well as other research initiatives such as the 5C Group. Supporting sustainable global careers through sophisticated GM approaches will need a high degree of agility and creativity from GM leaders to master the challenges of the future.

THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

WRITTEN BY SEAN COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF ESG,
ASIA TALENT MOBILITY ALLIANCE (ATMA)

Global Mobility (GM) has always been a conduit to developing talent and enabling a rich and diverse career, whether that be talent rotation programs, project moves or executive assignments. But what about the GM professional's career?

Mobility often works in a silo within HR and, due to the specific technical skillsets of the function, are often bookmarked in the role and overlooked for talent development programs or cross function career opportunities within the organization. This can be career limiting and when GM professionals find themselves out of a job it can be difficult to break into HR or other business roles outside of the GM function. This is despite having significant exposure into many aspects of HR and skill sets that could easily transition into broader roles.

THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

BY SEAN COLLINS, ESG, ASIA TALENT MOBILITY ALLIANCE (ATMA)

ADVICE FOR GM MANAGERS LOOKING TO GROW YOUR CAREER

At Talent Mobility Search, a recruitment firm specialising in GM and HR roles, Managing Partner, Sean Collins, offers the following career guidance to GM managers who are looking to grow their career:

1. Build strong relationships with your key HR stakeholders. Make sure they know who you are and how talent mobility can play into and impact the company's talent strategy. This will enable you to get involved in strategic HR projects early and build your credibility.
2. Seek out stretch projects and assignments within HR. This could be a broader C&B project, workforce planning, M&A or new country expansion. This will push you outside your comfort zone but will help build your broader HR skills and strengthen key HR relationships. These projects also help differentiate yourself from others on your resume.
3. Speak to your manager and HR leader about your ambition to grow your broader HR career. It will be much easier to transition into a broader HR role within your current organization than to apply externally (where you would not have built the same relationships and credibility).
4. Invest in external HR courses, especially those that offer accreditation recognised within your country. Some companies may offer financial support for learning programs related to your role.
5. Build your commercial and business acumen by truly understanding and immersing yourself in the business you are in. How it makes money, its established and new growth markets, the competitive landscape, how a new product or service is developed and taken to market (and the regional differences / requirements). This will allow you to add more strategic value to the organisation and build your personal brand.

THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

BY SEAN COLLINS, ESG, ASIA TALENT MOBILITY ALLIANCE (ATMA)

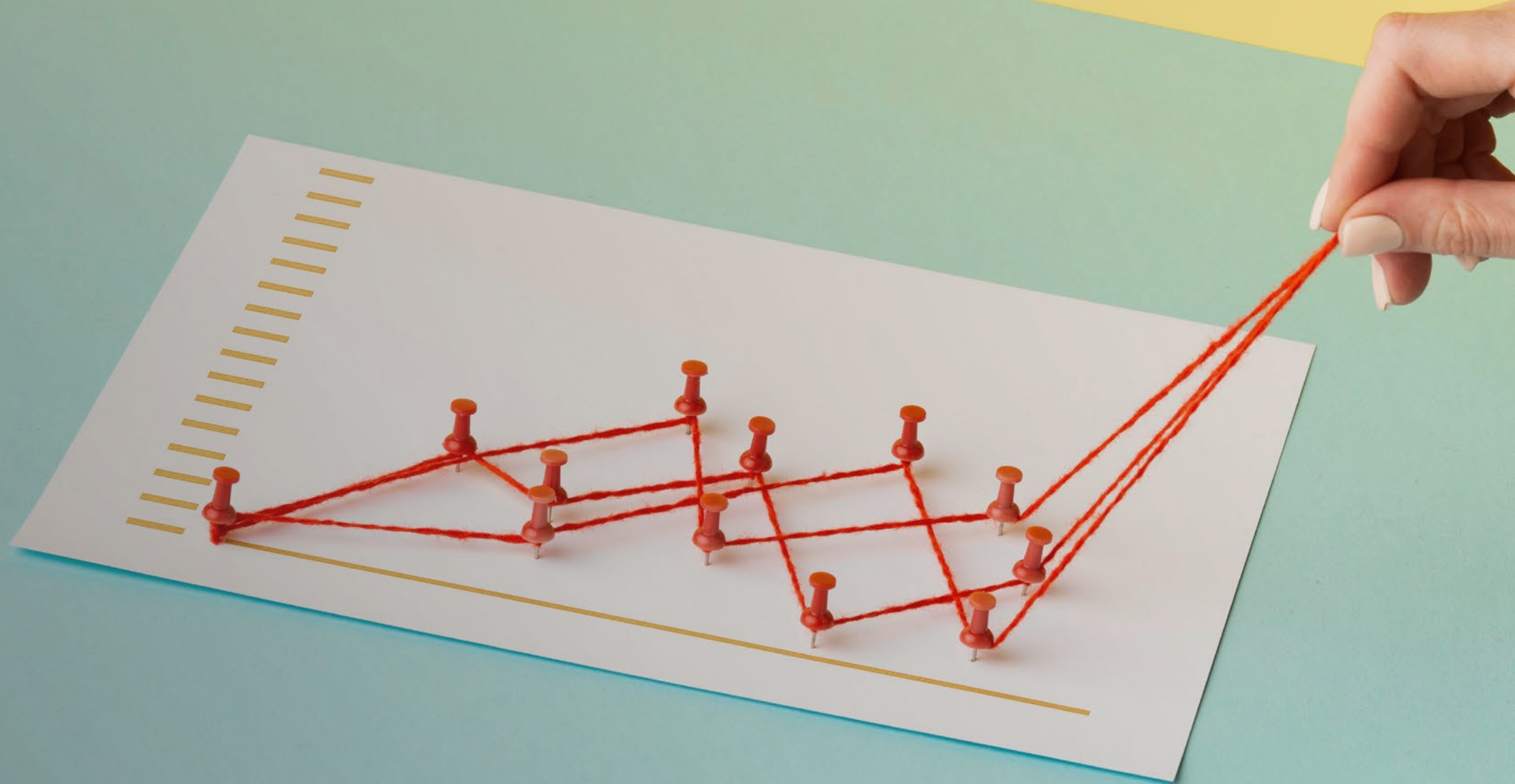
6. As ESG becomes a greater focus across all organizations an opportunity exists for GM managers to support their company's ESG strategy and build their career capital. This can be across all three pillars:
 - a. Environmental – tracking CO2 emissions from the program and developing a strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of global mobility.
 - b. Social – how global mobility can support the DE&I initiatives of the company as well as the wellbeing and employee experience within the program (including supporting diverse employee groups).
 - c. Governance – ensuring compliance and ethical standards across the GM program.
7. As GM evolves, ensure your skillsets are future proofed by embracing and taking on all forms of talent mobility such as extended business travel, remote work and virtual assignments.

Following the guidance above will better place Global Mobility Managers to secure roles within the broader HR space, in roles such as DE&I, C&B / Rewards, and Governance, as well as generalist HR roles such as HRBP, HR Manager, etc. By building HR skillsets, GM Managers also increase their chances of securing blended HR / Mobility roles in smaller organisations that do not warrant a full time GM headcount. This is a great opportunity to leverage existing GM experience and build out the broader HR experience.

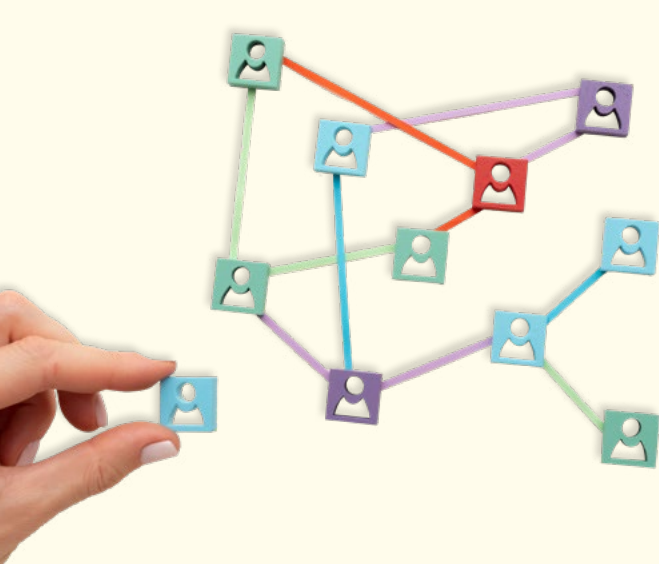
In summary, the onus is on the individual to drive their own career path, by seeking out opportunities for growth, learn new skills and build strong networks both internally and externally. This will ensure better job security, a sustainable career and personal wellbeing and fulfilment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BROADER GM INDUSTRY (RMCs and DSPs)

After outlining half a dozen key developments for GM departments, the experts also explored another six core trends for the broader GM industry.



EXPANSION OF SERVICES: TAKING ACCOUNT OF GIG WORKERS' EXPECTATIONS AND THE NEED FOR INTEGRATION



Relocation Management Companies (RMCs) and Destination Service Providers (DSPs) will need to offer more diverse services, including support for short-term and project-based assignments. These services must address various assignment scenarios that are extremely short-term. They may also need more flexible services, in terms of early returns, or employee requirements for a higher degree of instant integration and (local) interaction.

INCREASED DEMAND FOR TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS: MORE REAL-TIME ANALYTICS

Due to more agility and short-term gig patterns, there will be a higher demand for robust technology platforms that can manage complex mobility programs, track compliance, and provide real-time data and analytics. In short, as GM becomes more demand-driven and more complex, the underlying technology needs not just to be able to cope with this, but also to provide intelligence for quick, yet sophisticated decision-making.

FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE EXPERTISE: THE NEED TO DELVE DEEPER

Governments have become increasingly active in shaping GM regulations, driven by concerns over tax compliance, immigration, and labour rights. In response to rising cross-border work, many countries have tightened visa policies, introduced digital nomad visas, and enforced stricter tax laws. Additionally, governments are collaborating to address challenges like remote work and expatriate management, ensuring that GM practices align with national interests and protect workers' rights. RMCs and DSPs will need to deepen their expertise in global compliance to assist organizations in navigating the intricate landscape of international regulations.

CUSTOMIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION: TOWARDS AN INDIVIDUALIZATION OF SERVICE OFFERS

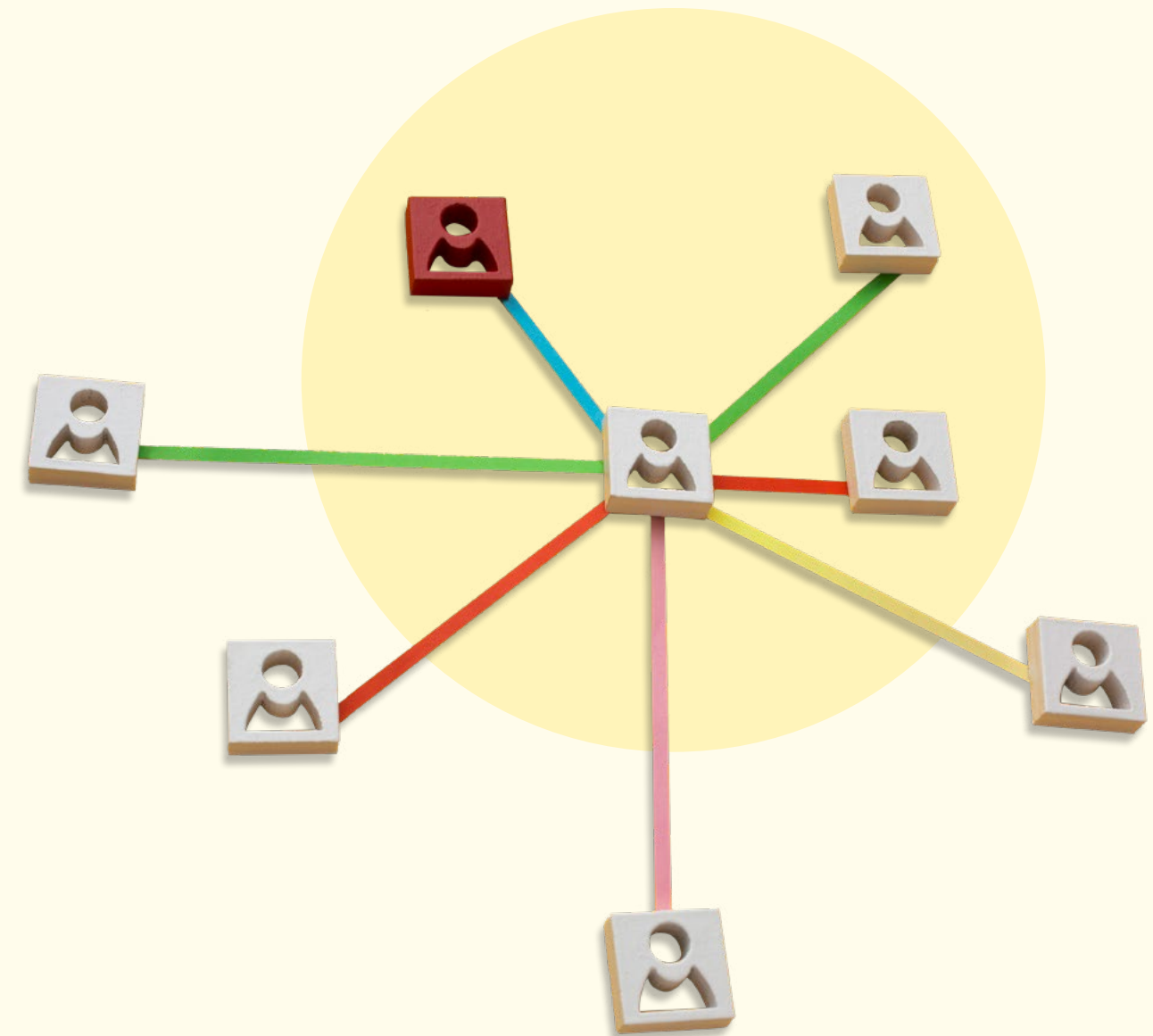
In general, the need to individualize HR services is growing as diverse workforces demand tailored approaches to employee engagement, development, and well-being. One-size-fits-all solutions no longer suffice, as employees seek personalized support reflecting their unique needs, career goals, and life circumstances. By individualizing HR services, organizations can enhance job satisfaction, boost productivity, and improve retention, creating a more agile and responsive work environment that meets the expectations of a modern, dynamic workforce. To avoid being left behind, GM service providers will need to offer more customized and personalized relocation and assignment support to cater to the varied needs of employees and organizations.

COLLABORATION WITH HR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT: MIRRORED AGILITY

The need to individualize the service offering necessitates a closer look at individual interests and demands. However, the company perspective should not be forgotten. A closer collaboration with HR and talent management departments will be essential to align mobility services with broader talent strategies and ensure a seamless employee experience. Given that there is a shift towards more agile GM approaches, this will mean a high degree of flexibility from RMC and DSP organizations.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF GM APPROACHES/BENCHMARKS: AUGMENTING QUALITY FURTHER

Our experts saw RMCs and DSPs as valued partners who need to understand their businesses and their globally mobile employees. There is nothing new here. However, employees now have ever better information access, providing better insights into foreign locations and career implications. In addition, loyalty to organizations is decreasing, meaning many employees have a higher willingness to move to another company. This retention challenge is particularly pertinent where assignments pursue long-term goals such as creating a leadership pipeline. External service providers will need to achieve superb quality to be ticking all the boxes so that all stakeholders are satisfied.





GIG WORKERS: READYING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE PARADIGM SHIFT

WRITTEN BY HANNAH RICHARDSON, SVP GLOBAL STRATEGIC SERVICES

The global landscape of employment is undergoing a seismic shift. This is evidenced by the trends highlighted by Professors Michael Dickmann and Benjamin Bader in the RES Forum paper, Vision 2030 - the future of talent mobility. The future of gig workers is poised to disrupt and redefine traditional employment models, driven by technological advancements - specifically employment platforms - as well as the enormity of societal change. Together these macro trends are influencing global work patterns and employee expectations, whilst redefining employee purpose and meaning in their work. Gen Z especially seek flexible arrangements that integrate with their lifestyles, opportunities to continuously develop new skills and fair pay for fair work. They also require a leadership that cares about more than just profits.

A significant trend is the rise of remote work. This shift has led to a more dispersed and flexible global workforce, challenging traditional employment models that many multinational enterprises (MNEs) have previously relied upon. As organizations adapt to this new reality, the concept of gig work is gaining traction, particularly with talent that wants empowered choices around not only when and where they work, but also the type of work they elect to do. Variety and learning new skills are especially important.

GIG WORKERS: READYING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE PARADIGM SHIFT

BY HANNAH RICHARDSON, SVP GLOBAL STRATEGIC SERVICES

WHAT IS GIG WORK?

Gig work can be characterized by short-term or project-based assignments and is expected to become a cornerstone of modern employment. According to Statista in 2017, there were 57.3M gig workers in the USA. By 2028 there will be 90.1M gig workers. This means that more than half of the US workforce will be employed in the gig economy. This trend is particularly pronounced among highly educated and skilled workers from developed markets. This talent group seek variety in the projects or work they undertake. They also seek flexibility of when and where they work and require opportunities to build new skills and progress their career development. These workers are increasingly seeking non-traditional employment patterns and, as a result, corporates need to be ready to fulfil the demand. Recent data from Gartner shows there will be 85 million unfilled jobs by 2030 - a global labour shortage - propelled by a global skills mismatch, with 23% of existing roles not existing within the next five years.

Technology and digital tools play a crucial role in this workforce transformation. The expansion of digital platforms facilitates the connection between gig workers and potential employers, making it easier to find and manage short-term projects.

RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The gig economy offers significant advantages for organizations. It allows them to maintain a global workforce that can be scaled quickly and, therefore, remain competitive. This agility is particularly valuable in a rapidly changing macro-environment that is heavily influenced by events often outside of an organization's control: geopolitical shifts; societal change; environmental events; economic impacts; and the on-going acceleration of technological advancement. By adopting gig work models into a corporation's global workforce, companies can access a diverse pool of talent without the long-term commitments typically associated with traditional employment.

However, this shift towards a non-traditional employment model is not without risk. One primary concern is the need for robust global compliance frameworks to manage gig workers effectively. Additionally, there are implications for employee benefits and protections, which need to be addressed to ensure a fair and sustainable gig economy.

GIG WORKERS: READYING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE PARADIGM SHIFT

BY HANNAH RICHARDSON, SVP GLOBAL STRATEGIC SERVICES

THE FUTURE OF GIG WORK

Historically, Global Mobility (GM) has focused on long-term expatriate assignments, but the future may see a rise in international gig work. This new form of mobility will be driven by highly skilled professionals who seek the flexibility to live and work in different countries on a short-term basis. Such mobility offers numerous benefits, including exposure to diverse work environments and the ability to build a global network. We already see many corporations implementing governance frameworks to enable self-elected international moves, primarily as a talent retention strategy. This demonstrates a clear shift away from both traditional employment and mobility models towards a new dynamic future of work.

MNEs need to think about how they blend traditional assignment strategies and solutions with the new evolving needs of the business and its global talent to promote and support a globally mobile workforce that is underpinned with robust governance and compliance frameworks. This includes providing support for international and domestic gig workers, such as assistance with visa, work permit compliance, accommodation, local cultural integration.

In conclusion, the future of gig workers represents a paradigm shift in the global workforce. As the gig economy continues to grow, it will reshape traditional employment models, offering both opportunities and challenges. Organizations that are ready and embrace this shift to manage gig workers will be well-positioned to thrive in the dynamic global market.

The key to success lies in balancing the top priorities of the business. According to Gartner's 2024 CEO survey, the top three priorities are: growth, technology and workforce. GM leaders need to consider how they build flexibility and create the right structure to ensure that gig workers are attracted and valued. As we look ahead, it is clear that the gig economy will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of work and continue to evolve and disrupt traditional employment practises, be they domestic or international. The question we must all consider is, are our organizations ready for this global workforce paradigm shift? If not, we must take steps to prepare ourselves, or risk being left behind.

CONCLUSION

Using the Critical Incident Method, this research report has collated, analysed and integrated the views of various experts on how they see industry trends shaping GM in 2030. As always, predicting the future is difficult. However, it can help us envisage how our organizations are best able to deal with the challenges and how we can maximise opportunities in the rapidly changing world of (global) work. We depicted a dozen trends and outlined what GM professionals can do about these to shape effective strategies, policies and practices.

If you want to assess how your organization is positioned currently, we invite you to use our Future Preparedness Tool at the end of this report. We hope that you enjoyed the read and, more importantly, find it beneficial and inspiring for your GM programme.



HOW THE TOOL WORKS

1. SCENARIO PRESENTATION:

The tool introduces multiple scenarios, each representing a distinct potential future for GM. These scenarios are based on the trends discovered in our research, encouraging organizations to think about how these trends might evolve and impact their operations.

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT:

For each scenario, users rate their organization's readiness on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "Not Prepared" and 10 indicating "Fully Prepared." The assessment covers various dimensions, including flexibility, technology integration, talent management, compliance, and employee well-being.

3. DETAILED SCENARIO ANALYSIS:

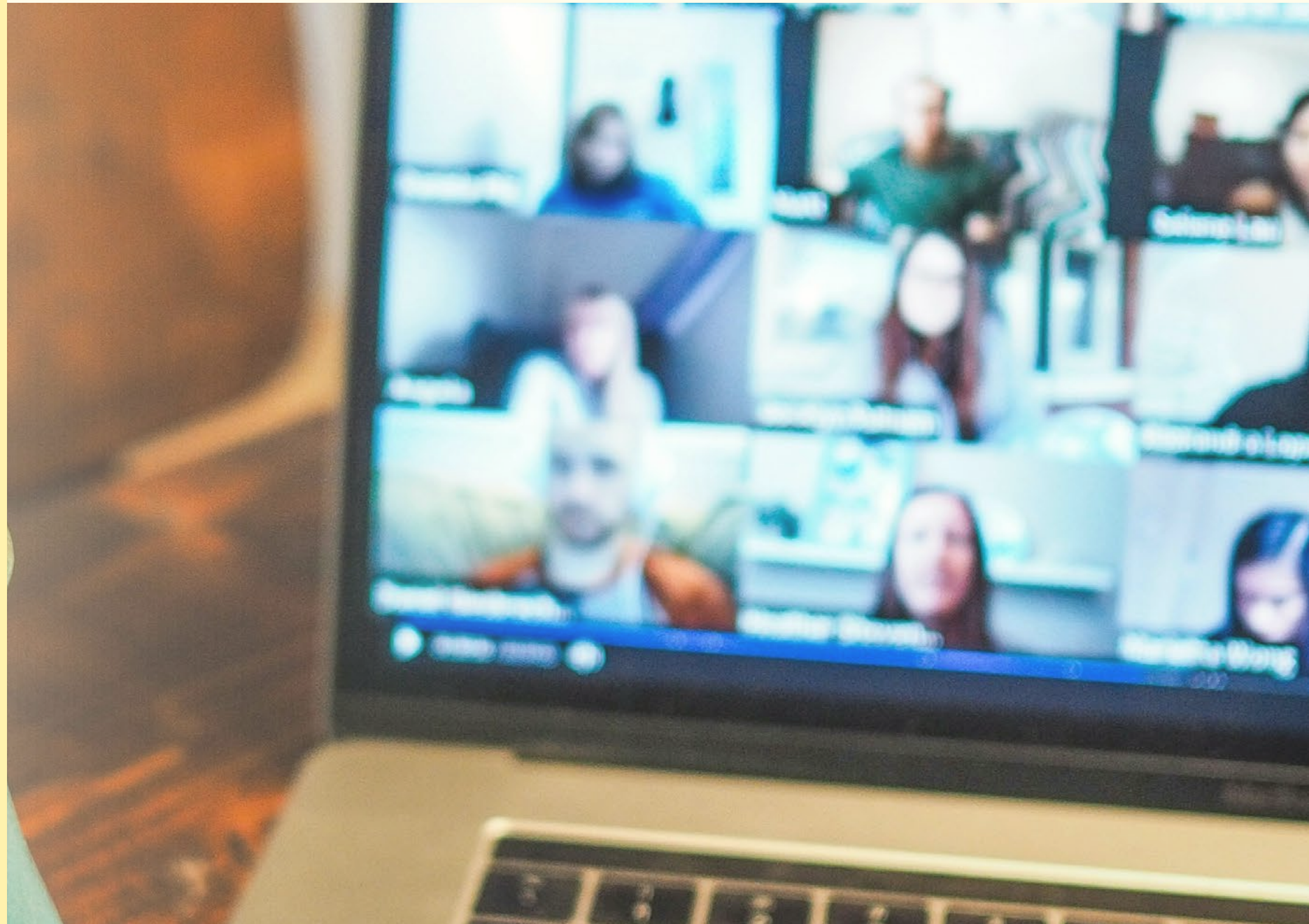
Each scenario includes specific questions that delve into different aspects of the organization's capabilities. This allows for a more detailed and nuanced assessment of how prepared the organization is to handle each potential future.

4. CALCULATING YOUR OVERALL PREPAREDNESS:

After completing the self-assessment for each of the four focus areas, sum the individual scores (4 = min, 40 = max). Then, divide this total by 4 to obtain your overall preparedness score for the respective scenario. This score will provide an average measure of how well your organization is equipped to thrive in each scenario. This final number will give you a clear indication of your organization's readiness for the scenario, highlighting areas where you excel and those where further development is needed.

SCENARIO A: THE REMOTE-FIRST WORLD

In this scenario, remote work has evolved from being a temporary solution during the COVID-19 pandemic to becoming the predominant mode of employment. A large portion of the global workforce now operates from various international locations, often far from their organization's headquarters. The traditional office model is largely phased out, with companies embracing virtual collaboration tools and digital platforms to maintain productivity and connectivity. This shift has brought about significant changes in how organizations manage their employees, maintain their culture, and ensure compliance with varying international regulations. The Remote-First World requires organizations to rethink their strategies for talent management, technological infrastructure, and employee well-being, all while navigating the complexities of cross-border work arrangements.



ASSESSMENT FOCUS

1. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Evaluate the robustness and effectiveness of your digital tools and platforms. Consider whether they support seamless communication, collaboration, and data security for a globally distributed workforce. Are your systems scalable, and can they handle the increased demand for virtual meetings, file sharing, and other remote work needs? How easily can your employees access the tools they need to perform their jobs from anywhere in the world?

Self-Assessment: Rate your digital infrastructure on a scale of 1 to 10.

2. CROSS-BORDER COMPLIANCE:

Assess your organization's ability to manage the complex tax, immigration, and labour laws associated with a remote workforce that operates across multiple jurisdictions. How well does your organization stay informed about, and comply with, the varying legal requirements in different countries? Are you equipped to handle the intricacies of cross-border employment, such as permanent establishment risks, local payroll obligations, and visa management?

Self-Assessment: Rate your cross-border compliance capabilities on a scale of 1 to 10.

3. CULTURAL COHESION:

Consider how well your organization maintains a cohesive culture and ensures employee engagement in a predominantly virtual environment. What strategies are in place to foster a sense of belonging and shared values among employees who may never meet in person? How do you sustain company culture and promote collaboration across different time zones and cultural backgrounds?

Self-Assessment: Rate your cultural cohesion efforts on a scale of 1 to 10.

4. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT:

Review your support structures for remote employees, focusing on their mental health, work-life balance, and productivity. Do you offer adequate resources for remote workers to manage stress and maintain their well-being? How effectively do you support employees in balancing their professional and personal lives, especially those in different time zones or with unique home environments?

Self-Assessment: Rate your cultural cohesion efforts on a scale of 1 to 10.



SCENARIO B: THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS

In this scenario, the focus on sustainability has extended beyond environmental concerns to encompass the wellbeing, career development, and long-term satisfaction of employees. Organizations recognize that supporting sustainable careers - those that balance personal fulfilment, continuous learning, and job security - is essential for attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive global market. As a result, GM programmes are being redesigned to prioritize employee wellbeing, mental health, and career growth. This approach ensures that employees are not only productive but also happy and engaged over the long term. In a world where work-life balance, mental health, and job satisfaction are paramount, organizations must develop strategies that align with these evolving priorities while still achieving business objectives.

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

1. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:

Evaluate the effectiveness of your organization's mental health programs for globally mobile employees and their families. Consider whether your organization provides access to mental health resources, counselling services, and support networks that are tailored to the unique challenges faced by expatriates. How proactive is your organization in addressing mental health concerns, and how well are these services integrated into the overall GM programme?

Self-Assessment: Rate your mental health support systems on a scale of 1 to 10.

2. CAREER INTEGRATION:

Assess how well your GM programme aligns with broader career development initiatives. This includes ensuring that international assignments contribute meaningfully to the employee's long-term career goals and development plans. Are there clear pathways for career progression for those who take on global roles? How well do you support employees in transitioning back to their home country or into new roles after their assignment ends?

Self-Assessment: Rate your career integration efforts on a scale of 1 to 10.

3. SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES:

Consider how your GM practices contribute to broader sustainability goals, such as reducing carbon footprints, promoting work-life balance, and ensuring the long-term viability of your GM programme. Are your practices designed to minimize environmental impact while maximizing employee satisfaction and retention? How well does your programme align with the organization's overall sustainability strategy?

Self-Assessment: Rate your sustainability practices on a scale of 1 to 10.

4. EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS AND PRODUCTIVITY:

Analyse the methods you use to measure and enhance the happiness and productivity of employees on international assignments. Do you regularly gather feedback from expatriates to understand their experiences and needs? How effectively do you address any issues that arise to maintain high levels of job satisfaction and productivity? Consider whether your organization takes a holistic approach to supporting expatriates, including providing personalized support based on individual needs and preferences.

Self-Assessment: Rate your efforts to ensure employee happiness and productivity on a scale of 1 to 10.

SCENARIO C: GIG ECONOMY DOMINANCE

In this scenario, the gig economy has expanded significantly, with a large portion of the workforce engaged in short-term, project-based work rather than traditional full-time employment. This shift has transformed the GM landscape, as organizations increasingly rely on a more flexible, on-demand workforce to meet their business needs. The dominance of the gig economy requires companies to adapt their GM programmes to accommodate the unique demands of gig workers, who often require different forms of support, technology, and compliance management. Organizations must be agile in their approach, ensuring that they can attract, integrate, and manage a diverse and transient workforce while maintaining efficiency and compliance across multiple jurisdictions.



ASSESSMENT FOCUS

1. FLEXIBILITY AND AGILITY:

Evaluate your organization's ability to accommodate the needs of gig workers, including those engaged in short-term, project-based assignments. Consider how quickly and effectively your organization can adapt to fluctuating demands for different skills and expertise. How flexible are your policies and processes in supporting the dynamic nature of gig work, including the ability to scale up or down based on project requirements?

Self-Assessment: Rate your flexibility and agility on a scale of 1 to 10.

2. INTEGRATION OF GIG WORKERS:

Assess how well gig workers are integrated into your organization's broader talent management strategy. This includes providing them with access to the same resources, opportunities, and support as traditional employees. How effectively does your organization onboard, engage, and retain gig workers? Do you offer pathways for gig workers to transition into more permanent roles if they desire?

Self-Assessment: Rate your integration of gig workers on a scale of 1 to 10.

3. TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS:

Consider whether your current technology infrastructure supports the unique needs of a gig-based workforce. This includes tools for project management, communication, and collaboration that are accessible to gig workers who may be dispersed across different locations and time zones. How well does your technology enable gig workers to contribute effectively and stay connected with the organization, regardless of their location or contract duration?

Self-Assessment: Rate your technology and tools on a scale of 1 to 10.

4. COMPLIANCE AND CONTRACTS:

Review your compliance and contractual strategies to manage the legal complexities of employing gig workers across borders. This includes understanding and adhering to different labour laws, tax obligations, and employment standards in various countries. How robust are your systems for ensuring that all contractual agreements with gig workers are legally compliant and protect the organization from potential risks?

Self-Assessment: Rate your compliance and contracts management on a scale of 1 to 10.

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As part of Gallagher Multinational Benefits and HR Consulting, our Global Mobility advisory teams are specialists, who can help clients translate intent into practice, by simplifying the complex, fast moving, costly and time-consuming world of Global Mobility. We work with our clients to identify opportunities for implementing the most practical approach for their company when redefining and developing agile strategies.

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At Expat Valley, we believe that international relocation should be an enriching experience that allows children and their families to thrive. As a global expert in Successful Family Relocation Experiences, we are committed to supporting the needs and wellbeing of internationally mobile children, their parents, and other stakeholders invested in successful international relocation such as global workforce employers, international educators and schools, and relocation industry service providers.

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The RES Forum has the tools, knowledge and community to help mobility professionals keep pace with changes in the industry, and help the industry keep pace with the needs of mobility professionals.

Through research, analytics, eLearning, events, and policy templates & consultancy, we provide support and guidance to help mobility professionals navigate the ever-changing GM landscape.

We enjoy the exhaustive knowledge of our consultants, academics, Strategic Advisory Board and Technical Partners, as well as our international community of senior in-house HR and GM professionals, which includes 1,000 members in over 45 countries.

In conversation with leaders and experts from across the industry, our academics study the most pressing topics within the world of GM and cross-border working. Then we share their collective insight to provide clarity, tools and advice to help our members through the many challenges they face.

The RES Forum is an independent organization. We are not influenced by external parties or third-party vendors.

References available on request.

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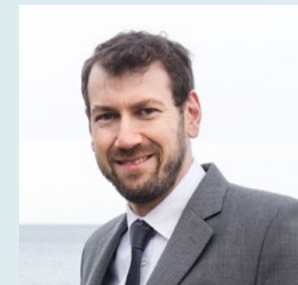
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*WITH THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR INSIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE.
WITHOUT YOU, THIS REPORT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.*