



SANTA FE
RELOCATION

REPURPOSE

CHALLENGING CHANGE

GMS2020/21

ВЕРН



DEFINE

DESIGN

**TRANSFORMATION
TALENT TO
THRIVE
BEYOND**

**10
46
64
90**

DELIVER



Mobility is not disappearing in a (post) COVID-19 world. It is evolving and challenging all of us who are passionate about this industry to thrive and embrace change in all of its forms.

REPURPOSE

Leader's view

Welcome to Santa Fe Relocation's ninth annual Global Mobility survey (GMS). It comes at a time of unprecedented change, not only in our industry but it has also touched the work and social lives of all of us across the globe.

The participation was exceptionally high—we surveyed 838 professionals responsible for Global Mobility programmes across 45 countries. In addition, 55 Business Leaders were surveyed spanning the UK, the US, France, Singapore and Hong Kong, covering more than 12 key industry sectors. This year's survey opened just before the governmental lockdowns and self-isolation mandates had really been felt in the West. We closed participation in June 2020, so responses reflect both general trend directions that we commented on in 2019—**TRANSFORMATION**—for example, and the influence and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the owner and CEO of Santa Fe Relocation, I have been really impressed with the way that our customers' Global Mobility teams, together with our own client service teams have diligently stepped up to the plate to support internationally mobile employees and their families who have in many cases, been effectively stranded in a location. We have moved through that phase now and we start to plan for the coming 12 to 24 months to assess how businesses will adapt their Global Mobility and talent strategies.

Looking back at what we said in our 2019 leader's view, it's interesting to note that we said that the world is one of conflicting priorities, and continuously accelerating change that requires constant adapting.

Yann Blandy

Owner & Chief Executive Officer
Santa Fe Relocation



This accelerant is driving us all to be more creative, challenge status quo and repurpose our organisations to remain competitive and thrive in the coming months and years. Data analytics and evolving technological advancements are increasingly at the epicentre of board level discussions and decision-making. Managing any size of Global Mobility programme is becoming increasingly complex, and it is critical to have integrated systems that enable controlled compliance, enhance employee experience and deliver financial and people performance metrics.

Not only are products and services being re-imagined, but so too are the people and resourcing options. Depending on the vertical sector in which Global Mobility operates, the types of mobility deployments are likely to fundamentally change; whether it is necessary for an employee to undertake either an assignment or a permanent/indefinite transfer for three to five years or whether this will become a more hybrid solution. For example, this could require the employee to undertake an initial on-site secondment for a year to eighteen months, followed by business trips and finally a virtual assignment, leading the host team from their home location—or even a third location!

Whether you are interested in re-organising your Global Mobility programme, talent trends or the compliance implications from the changing types of mobility, we hope that you will derive value from the findings.

Many of the themes are consistent with our 2019 analysis, which support the trends and findings in this report.

Mobility is not disappearing in a (post) COVID-19 world. It is evolving and challenging all of us who are passionate about this industry to thrive and embrace change in all of its forms.

Survey at a glance

International work arrangements

5.1m

total number of staff employed by organisations that took part in this survey.

556,287+

internationally mobile employees employed by organisations represented in this survey.

24,578+

full-time and part-time Global Mobility professionals employed by organisations represented in this survey.

62%

of businesses initiated short-term assignments in 2019 and 57% of businesses initiated long-term assignments.

32%

of all internationally mobile employees were female.

Global Mobility organisation

63%

of North American Global Mobility teams predict strategic functions will be absorbed by HR business partners or divided between talent and reward.

39%

of Global Mobility teams expect a net growth in virtual work arrangements in the next 24 months.

41%

of Global Mobility teams expect digital innovation to result in improved management of compliance and risk through connected systems and processes.

52%

of Global Mobility teams do not provide data analytics on total programme costs.

63%

of Global Mobility teams are planning to invest in new technology over the next 24 months.

Risk and compliance

39%

of Global Mobility teams relocated staff to new destinations in the past 12 months.

29%

of Global Mobility teams view immigration compliance as the main challenge to achieving Global Mobility objectives over the next 24 months.

38%

of Global Mobility teams identify cultural differences as the key factor in challenging locations.

71%

of Global Mobility teams have an immigration programme in place to ensure their business travellers are compliant.

75%

of Global Mobility teams use Excel spreadsheets to manage business travellers.

Mobility

has become

more complex

and uncertain,

and the

Global Mobility

team is now

more visible

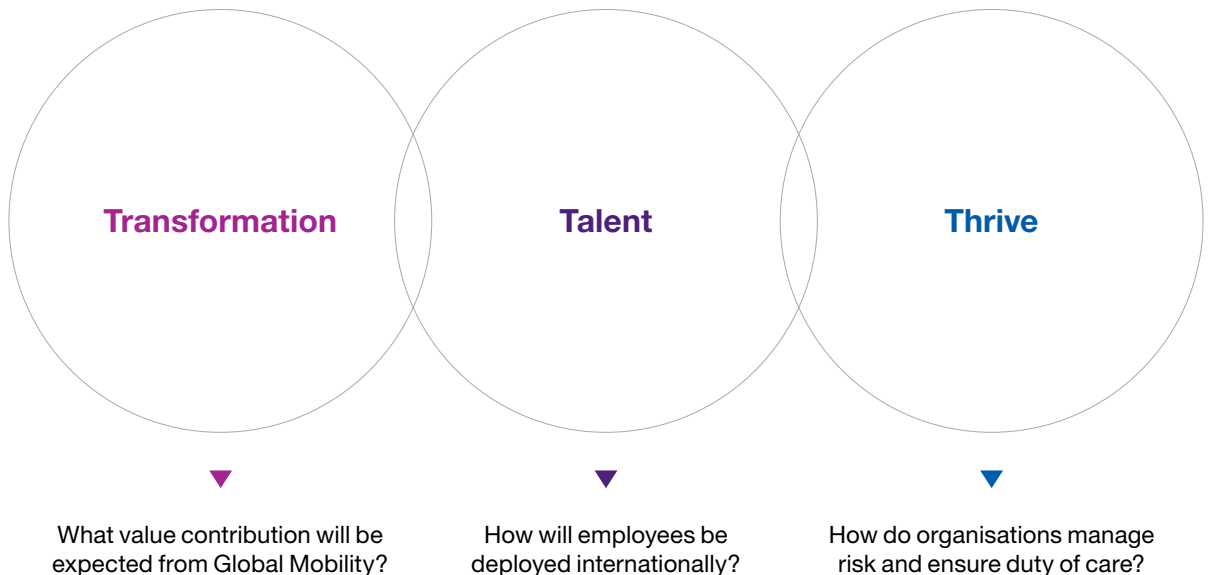
to leadership.

Overview

In the GMS report 2019, **REVISION**¹, our research clearly highlighted the necessity and desire of Global Mobility professionals to transform their roles to focus on value-based activities such as talent planning, advisory support, enhanced analytics and risk profiling. The Business Leaders research also indicated that they too were looking for a stronger business contribution from Global Mobility, while recognising that the operational role of mobilising employees still had to be delivered.

Fast forward eighteen months and we are now in the middle of a global pandemic that has dramatically impacted our business and social lives, coupled with an uncertain geopolitical environment and nations that are becoming increasingly partisan. In this report we look at how business and Global Mobility are responding and adapting to these external pressures.

This report addresses three critical areas



As organisations redesign their operating models to adapt to a new global context, Global Mobility teams are looking to establish how they fit into the Global Mobility puzzle. Organisations operating in a more fluid, virtual and agile way will have layered implications for Human Resources and Global Mobility professionals to address.

Layered implications

- + Re-purposing Global Mobility to remain an enabler and not a blocker.
- + Compliance tracking and risk mitigation in new, unclear mobility scenarios.
- + Talent management—ensuring adequate duty of care and employee value proposition.
- + Commercial management—defining and measuring total programme costs.

Finally, we have included two special features in **THRIVE**.

Special features

1. A focus on the substantial cost-saving opportunities from effective tax planning and the need to consider both the optimal talent resourcing options and the cost investment.
2. A practical guide to relocation in the midst of the pandemic. Mobilising employees and their families will require a balance of duty of care combined with enabling employees to feel motivated to accept new international work arrangements.

John Rason
Group Head of Consulting
Santa Fe Relocation

Contributors

In addition to sharing the results from the Global Mobility survey 2020/21, this report also provides critical analysis and insights from the following industry leaders.

Cassi Bauer

Director, Global Mobility
Oceaneering

Cassi Bauer is the Global Director of Employee Mobility for Oceaneering in Houston, Texas. Prior to joining Oceaneering, Cassi was Global Director of Global Mobility at Chicago Bridge and Iron, and has held positions at WorleyParsons and Weatherford, the latter being a transformational role. Cassi has significant experience with mobility, related to assignments and global tax compliance. She is well-versed in leading teams responsible for deploying crews and mobilising domestic and third party contingent worker forces.

David Carmichael

Director, Global Mobility, COE
CGI

David is an experienced Global Mobility professional of many years, having worked in the profession for over 25 years. He is the director of Global Mobility at CGI, the Canadian headquartered information technology and consulting corporation. Prior to joining CGI, David worked as a service provider with two leading consulting firms and, before that, was based in the Sinai Desert for five years as the expatriate manager for a multinational peace-keeping organisation.

Dinesh Jangra

Global Practice Leader,
Global Mobility Services
Crowe

Dinesh has more than 20 years of experience in providing cross-border technical advice and assistance in the deployment of talent by all sizes of global organisations. He has led and developed Global Mobility compliance and advisory programmes for some of the world's leading organisations and specialises in the delivery of multi-country and multidisciplinary programmes and cross-border technical, policy and process advice aimed at reducing costs and enabling global visibility. His expertise lies in identifying and advising organisations on issues and opportunities pertinent to operations that cross international jurisdictions and the cross-border roles of their employees. He enables clients to plan and proactively manage their overall people-related costs and risks whilst avoiding the pitfalls of non-compliance.

Erik Mathys

Group Compensation & Benefits
International Mobility & Executive
Pay Manager
Etex

Erik Mathys has a proven track-record in compensation and benefits and more specific in the field of international mobility. He has a master in economics with a specialisation in tax law. He started his career in consulting working for eight years in human capital and global employer services at Arthur Andersen and Deloitte. Before joining Etex Erik worked for five years as compensation and benefits and expatriation manager for the Benelux region at Saint-Gobain, a French multinational company.

Erik Mathys continued

In 2013 Erik joined Etex, a Belgian headquartered company working in building materials. At Etex Erik leads the compensation and benefits, international mobility and senior management topics on a global level. In this role he provides support to and coordinates with the local HR competence centres, HR departments worldwide and managing directors of home and host countries to build and strengthen the relevant competencies and have the Etex policies worked out and applied.

Ernst Steltenpohl

Co-founder
Expatisse Academy

Ernst is co-founder of the Expatisse Academy and a member of its faculty since 2011. He has many years of experience in compensation and benefits and is chairman of several platforms (compensation and benefits, job evaluation, international mobility) with top international companies as members. He was responsible for compensation and benefits at Heineken, Friesland Foods and Sara Lee International for many years, where he initiated and managed international compensation and benefits platforms and surveys (Netherlands, Europe, Africa and Middle East, Far East, Canada). Ernst studied in the Netherlands (Universities of Amsterdam and Tilburg), France (INSEAD) and the USA (Cornell University) in mechanical engineering and has a master's degree in sociology, management and organisation development.

John Rason

Group Head of Consulting
Santa Fe Relocation

Recognised as a thought leader and speaker on strategic international HR, talent management and Global Mobility, John has 15 years of global consultancy experience. Having previously held senior HR leadership roles in numerous global businesses across a range of industry sectors, John now works with global organisations to create value and improve the structure of Global Mobility programmes; focusing on aligning strategic objectives with operational delivery.

Julia Palmer

Chief Operating Officer (COO), Relocation
Santa Fe Relocation

A respected mobility advisor globally, Julia has 20 years' big four experience working with clients across all regions and industries to develop their Global Mobility strategy and supporting framework. She has forged her expertise by transforming the mobility programmes of a wide range of organisations, from multinational conglomerates to brand new start-ups seeking to globalise; consistently enabling these clients to form closer links between the talent and mobility agenda, with the use of data and insights.

Montserrat López Santín

Relocation Director,
Southern Europe
Santa Fe Relocation

Montserrat has worked in the business for 19 years in various functional areas, providing support to people and companies by establishing their mobility programmes from arrival to final departure. She currently manages the daily advice to companies responsible for relocating families around the world, tailoring their strategy to their specific needs as well as accompany them in their development into new offices and projects, assessing areas such as housing, schooling or registrations for destinations globally. Master's degree in HR Management she is part of the teaching staff of the Postgraduate HR Internationalisation and Global Mobility at the University UPF, Barcelona School of Management.

Peter Graham

Group Director Relocation,
Immigration
Santa Fe Relocation

Peter has worked in the field of immigration for more than 30 years. His career spans both government and private sector work. Peter spent 17 years at the UK Home Office working in both national and international immigration policy and strategy where he had the opportunity to work in every stage of the immigration lifecycle.

Peter joined Santa Fe Relocation in March 2017 after having spent the previous 10 years leading IBM's global border and immigration business. A recognised thought leader and regular speaker on border and immigration matters, Peter included among his clients the World Economic Forum, Interpol, Department of Homeland Security, Australia Customs, the Irish Medicines Board and the UK Home Office.

Dr Phil Renshaw

Visiting Fellow
Cranfield University
Director
Coaching On the Go

With a background in international banking, treasury and as a Finance Director, Phil is regarded as an expert in the value of international assignments. His work as an executive coach exposed him to Global Mobility and hence the passion to understand why so much is invested in mobility with so little knowledge about its value. He has published many times on this and continues to research, coach and facilitate at Cranfield University and elsewhere. Phil is also co-author of Coaching on-the-Go.

Raquel Tovar

Manager Employee Mobility
CommScope

A highly successful Global Mobility professional with ten years of progressive experience in HR, US and global immigration, international assignments/mobility, and rig moves. Raquel is a skilled solution provider for global companies with a multinational workforce, driving change, and process improvement initiatives. She has a passion for communicating effectively at various organisational levels and cross-divisional HR offices worldwide with the highest manner of confidentiality and integrity. Her customer-centric leadership skills demonstrated by utilising active communication techniques and superior interpersonal skills result in consistently exceeding performance metrics.

Véronique Smets

Head of International Mobility
Engie

International mobility manager within the Engie Group for 10 years. Active member of International Mobility networks in France (Cindex and Magellan) and Belgium (Expatriate Network). With a 20 year career focused on HR, employee benefits and international mobility and an experience as expatriate spouse.

TRANSFORM

11

John Rason

Group Head of Consulting

Santa Fe Relocation

1

ATION

As mobility has become more complex and uncertain, so has the Global Mobility team become more visible to leadership.

As businesses decide to re-activate their international talent deployment, mobility teams are faced with situations that are less predictable in terms of time and outcomes, such as the ability to relocate to a host country with a familiar process and structure. Immigration conditions are changing and as government employees have also been on lockdown, it is likely that there will be a backlog of cases to manage.

In the GMS report 2019, **REVISION**, our research clearly highlighted the necessity and desire of Global Mobility professionals to transform their roles to focus on value-based activities such as talent planning, advisory support, enhanced analytics and risk profiling. The Business Leaders' research indicated that they too were looking for a stronger business contribution from Global Mobility, while recognising that the operational role of mobilising employees still had to be delivered. Fast forward 18 months and we are now in the middle of a global pandemic that has dramatically impacted our business and social lives, coupled with an uncertain geopolitical environment and nations that are becoming increasingly partisan.

TRANSFORMATION key themes

- ▶ **Implications for Global Mobility**
- ▶ **Evolution of Global Mobility team structure**
- ▶ **Evolution of Global Mobility team roles**
- ▶ **Interventions and trends likely to impact the GM function**
- ▶ **Analytics—tracking, reporting and advising**

We expect a phased return, driven by customer demand recovery. Crisis and recovery will last well into 2021, and old business practices will no longer work.

Business Leader

Please note: Some percentage totals exceed 100% because respondents were able to select multiple answers. GM and BL are short for Global Mobility and Business Leaders, respectively.

The additional pressures on Global Mobility professionals as a result of the pandemic have been substantial—often adapting themselves to remote working, supporting distressed employees and their families who found themselves isolated in a third country, or who were in the process of expatriating or repatriating and were effectively in a form of Global Mobility limbo. Tracking and tracing international employees, including business travellers, became and remains a key process, combined with daily updates to leadership on immigration, travel restrictions and safety within their country footprint. In many cases, Global Mobility professionals have been co-opted into Business Continuity Planning teams.

Globally, many organisations run a very structured Global Mobility programme, able to respond to policy and host country living situations. COVID-19 created situations that were unprecedented, where there were no clear answers. This has had the added effect of in-house Global Mobility professionals collaborating more closely with their external mobility supply chain, to develop best case solutions.

Before looking at the findings in detail, we provide independent research that highlights that not only are Global Mobility teams transforming, but that they will be doing so within a very different organisation context, driven to a large extent by their industry sector. The impact of the pandemic has been an accelerant of change.

In a recent article by McKinsey & Company² their research supports this view.

Fig. 1 (McKinsey exhibit 3): McKinsey industry economic-profit trends from before COVID-19 crisis have been accelerated because of it



*Largest non-financial companies by revenue in 2018 with data for 2003-18 available. Source: Corporate Performance Analytics by McKinsey.

Exhibit from “The great acceleration”, July 2020, McKinsey & Company, www.mckinsey.com. Copyright © 2020 McKinsey & Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

What we are seeing is a great acceleration of trends that existed before the crisis. For example, online delivery’s volume increased by the same amount in eight weeks as it had over the entire previous decade. Telemedicine experienced a tenfold growth in subscribers in just 15 days. Similar acceleration patterns can be seen in online education, nearshoring, and remote working, to name but a few areas. All these trends were clear before the crisis and have been amplified by it.

The industry data support this view in Fig. 1. To a remarkable degree, industries that were experiencing declining economic profit before the crisis have suffered even greater declines because of it, while those that were growing their profit have seen outside gains.

McKinsey & Company

Implications for Global Mobility

While all industry sectors are impacted by the pandemic, the business focus and financial pressures are varied. A one size fits all approach to repurposing Global Mobility structures is not feasible, nor is it likely to deliver the desired optimised outcomes for the organisation and the international talent they deploy. Another accelerant from the pandemic has seen enhanced visibility of the Global Mobility function with executive C-suite leadership.

Much has been written about having a seat at the top table for Global Mobility. We suggest that a better focus would be to have an influence at the top table. Pro-actively influencing talent and business investment decisions over the coming months will require insightful analytics from Global Mobility, together with advisory support on immigration, compliance and host country environmental conditions.

Evolution of Global Mobility team structure

As a turbulent unprecedented year rapidly moves towards the end of 2020, and businesses focus on wider recovery in 2021, Global Mobility professionals report an expected restructuring of their roles. In keeping with the consistent trend of business management looking for greater advisory support, the data in **Figs. 2-4** highlights that Global Mobility teams see transformation as a key activity over the next 24 months.

We described the accelerant impact of the pandemic—the dynamics impacting Global Mobility are:

1	Mobility has become more complex and uncertain, and teams are more visible to leadership.
2	Global Mobility professionals are being engaged more regularly by leadership and their contribution in terms of talent planning and risk mitigation has increased. For some, verticals (industry sectors) add to the list cost-saving initiatives.
3	Global Mobility should be more involved in defining the commercial and talent drivers in the form of a people investment, considering alternative resourcing models.
4	The increased complexity of work formats brought about by the pandemic (such as remote working) is added pressure on the resourcing model as we adapt; in some cases, reduced full-time equivalents (FTEs) headcount within Global Mobility functions. This may result in increasing reliance on specialist technology and external supply chain support.

The pandemic has in many cases made employees more open to using tracking tools and process—the health driver is now almost non-negotiable. As this sentiment has changed, if organisations can introduce track tools and processes, they will offer many ancillary efficiencies (and therefore potential cost-savings) to compliance and risk management activity associated with immigration, tax, social security and payrolls.

Fig. 2 highlights that overall there is a continued focus on transforming and re-distributing the Global Mobility contribution into strategic and transactional functions, with an overall increase to 42% of those who believe that this will be achieved by shifting transactional mobility to an internal shared service function. Consistent with last year, 36% also see this transformation delivered through outsourcing with a specialist Global Mobility partner.

New for 2020/21, an additional response was included in the question; a response on trade-offs of roles within the Global Mobility team. 27% saw this likely to happen, for example suppressing headcount by replacing a manager or advisor with a data analyst or a systems specialist.

Fig. 2: How Global Mobility team structure will evolve over the next 24 months (GM—2020 versus 2019 comparison)

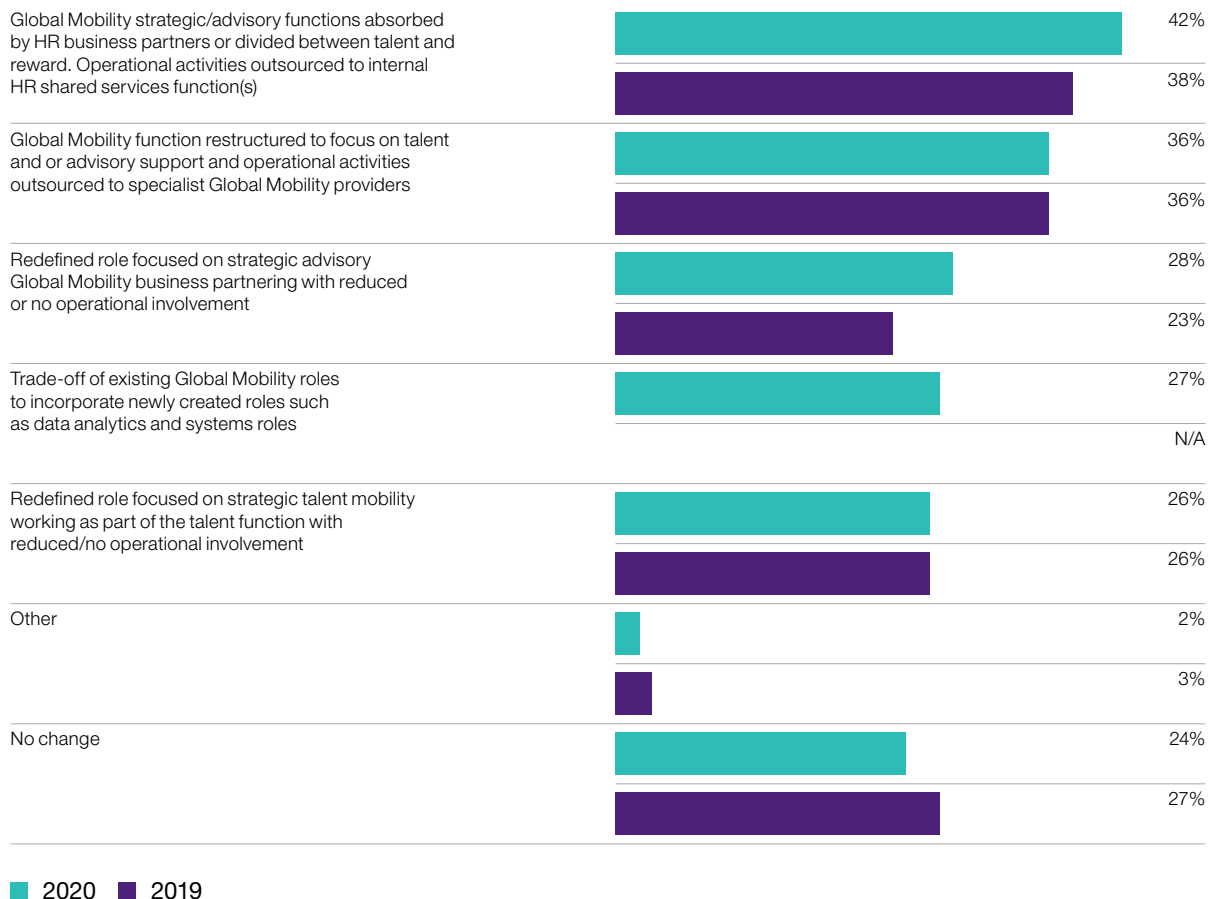
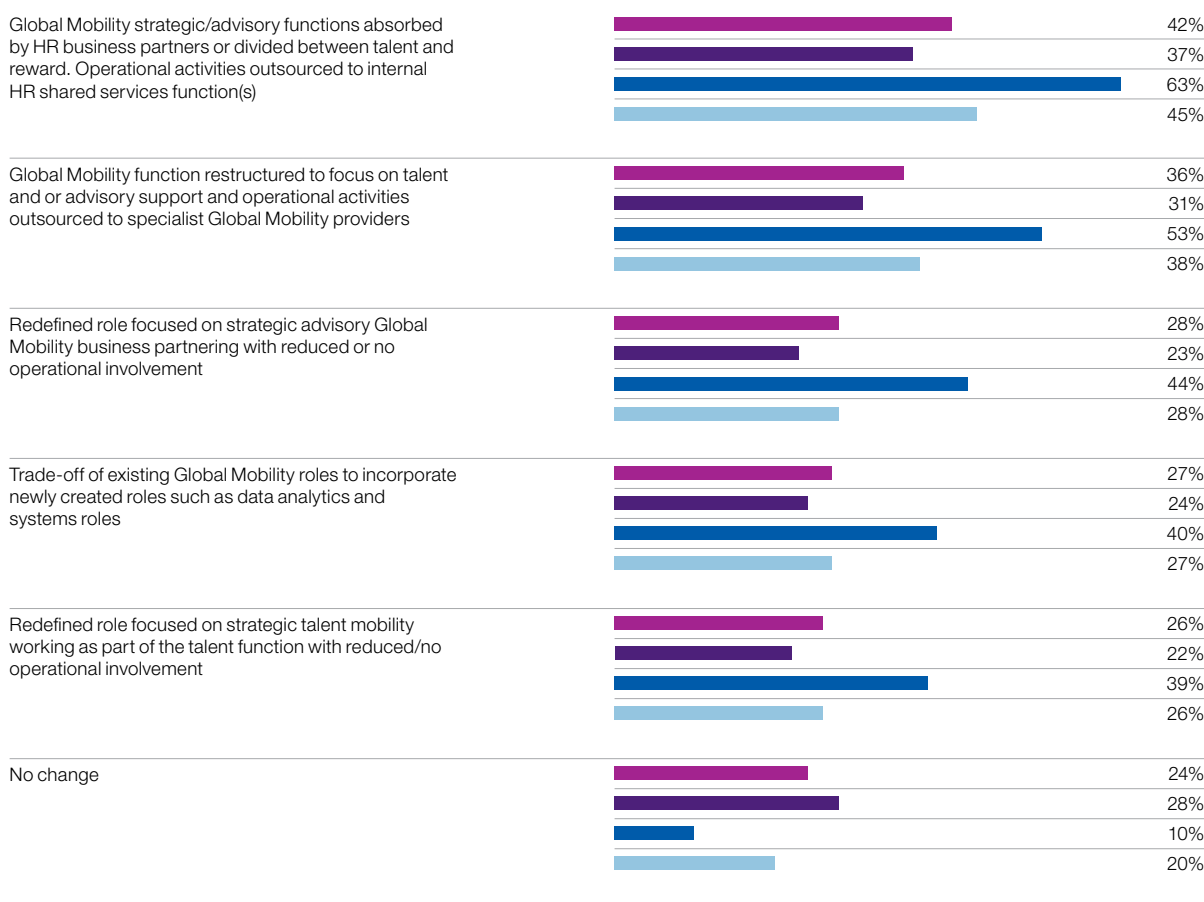


Fig. 3 provides a regional perspective on the potential restructuring of Global Mobility teams. Consistent with 2019, North America leads the way in re-purposing their Global Mobility function. 63% compared with 42% overall see their team re-organised into strategic/advisory and with transactional work reallocated to internal shared services.

- + Equally, 53% in North America see outsourcing transactional work to an external mobility company as a different model. This compares with an overall 36% and interestingly 38% in Asia reporting a higher percentage of those who see this as a solution (Europe 31%).
- + The Asian Global Mobility profession has significantly evolved over the past five years, reflecting the growth of Asian headquartered organisations being the senders of talent within Asia and other continents and the evolving nature of Global Mobility team roles and responsibilities.
- + The question for Europe—has transformation occurred, unknown or in the process of being evaluated, especially in view of COVID-19? One of the key outcomes from the report is to equip Global Mobility professionals with objective data to engage leadership on how mobility should be structured, reflecting the unique circumstances within each organisation.

Fig. 3: How Global Mobility team structure will evolve over the next 24 months (GM—Regional comparison)



- Overall
- Europe
- North America
- Asia

17



Transformation is on the agenda

Organisations will have a preferred transformation structure—either in-house shared services or outsourced services to an external mobility solutions specialist such as a Relocation Management Company (RMC).

This is not solely reliant on the HR or Business Leaders' cultural preference over each solution:

- + Post COVID-19 there are many more considerations and complexities; reflecting on what is core value contribution from the mobility team, what can be better delivered through a partner (with access to bespoke mobility technology without capital investment) and what enhanced flexibility and agility can achieve greater competitive advantage.
- + Will increased reliance on technology transform how Global Mobility programmes are delivered? Gaining consensus on the preferred model for the organisation must be a key focus for Global Mobility professionals over the coming months.

Industry examples are highlighted in Fig. 4.

- + The Pharmaceutical and Health and Financial Services sectors clearly stand out as being more progressive in their expectation of Global Mobility transformation—Financial Services 54% and Pharmaceutical and Health 51% devolve to in-house shared services and Financial Services 41% and Pharmaceutical and Health 43% to an external RMC.
- + The desire to create a defined division of roles between advisory and operational is very clear. Equally, the identification of the need for new roles as a trade-off of full-time equivalent headcount (FTE) for data and systems analysts also points to a more data driven mobility contribution.
- + Technology and Communications also report a higher expectation of transformation, but not such a high-level of trade-off in mobility for systems/data roles—which may suggest that they have already established strong data analytics.
- + Manufacturing reports an expected increase in replacing traditional roles with systems and data specialists.

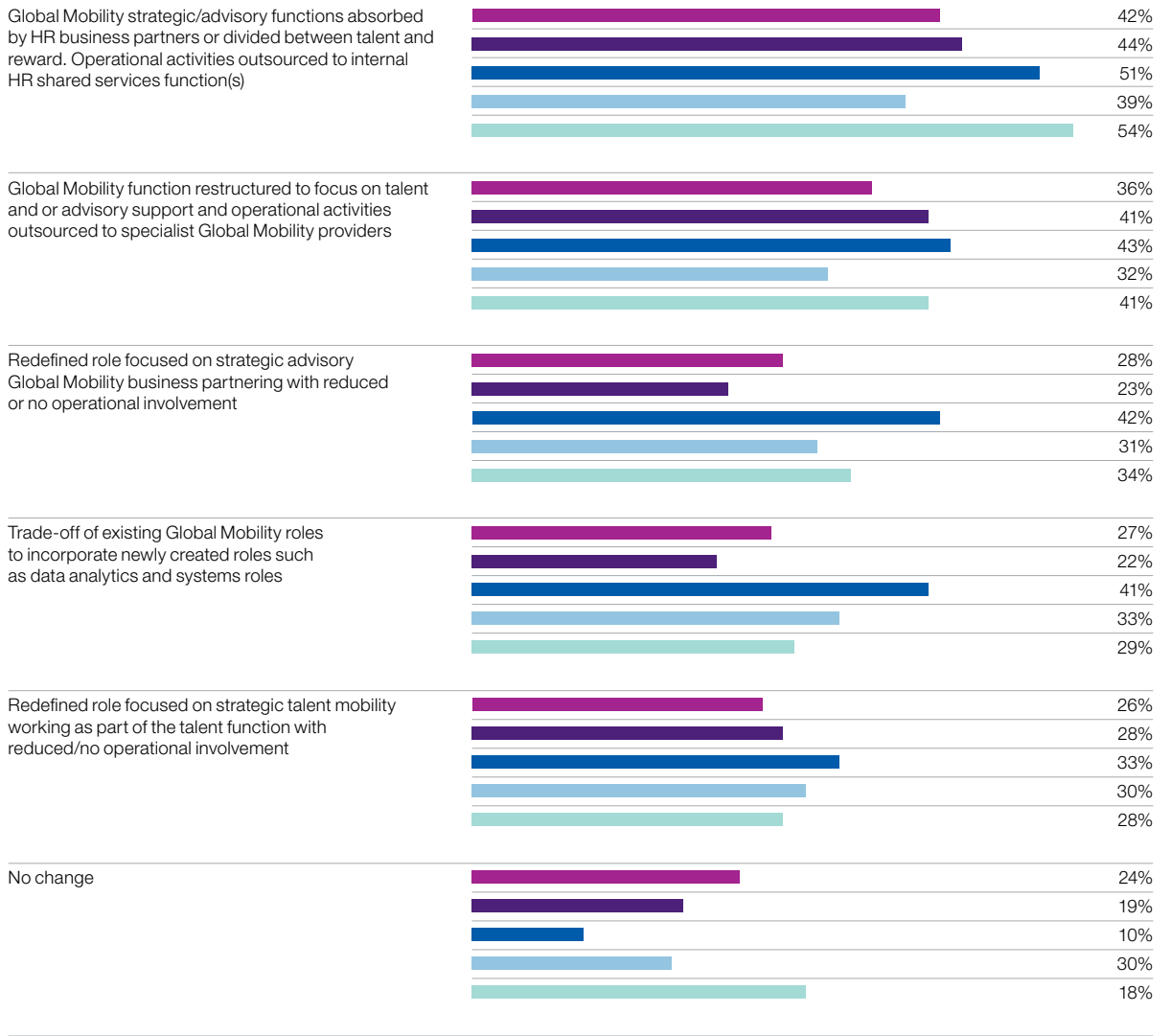
Considering the nature of manufacturing—where capital expenditure and production timescales are often longer—having better planning and analysis tools to track return on investment (ROI) of internationally mobile employees can support the commercial viability of a project.

As in the case of all Global Mobility teams, and particularly in manufacturing, being engaged at early planning stages once a location has been identified can ensure leadership has full awareness of the talent implications of choosing that location, for example:

- Quality of life, cost of living.
- International assignment/local hire compensation packages.
- Compliance.
- Availability of accommodation and education.

Once operational, having the necessary tools and analytics to track and share insightful talent mobility data can support further investment decisions in that location, or indeed the need to select other locations based on the experience acquired in establishing plant and deployment of manpower.

Fig. 4: How Global Mobility team structure will evolve over the next 24 months (GM—Industry comparison)



- Overall
- Technology and Communication
- Pharmaceuticals and Health
- Manufacturing
- Financial

Evolution of Global Mobility team roles

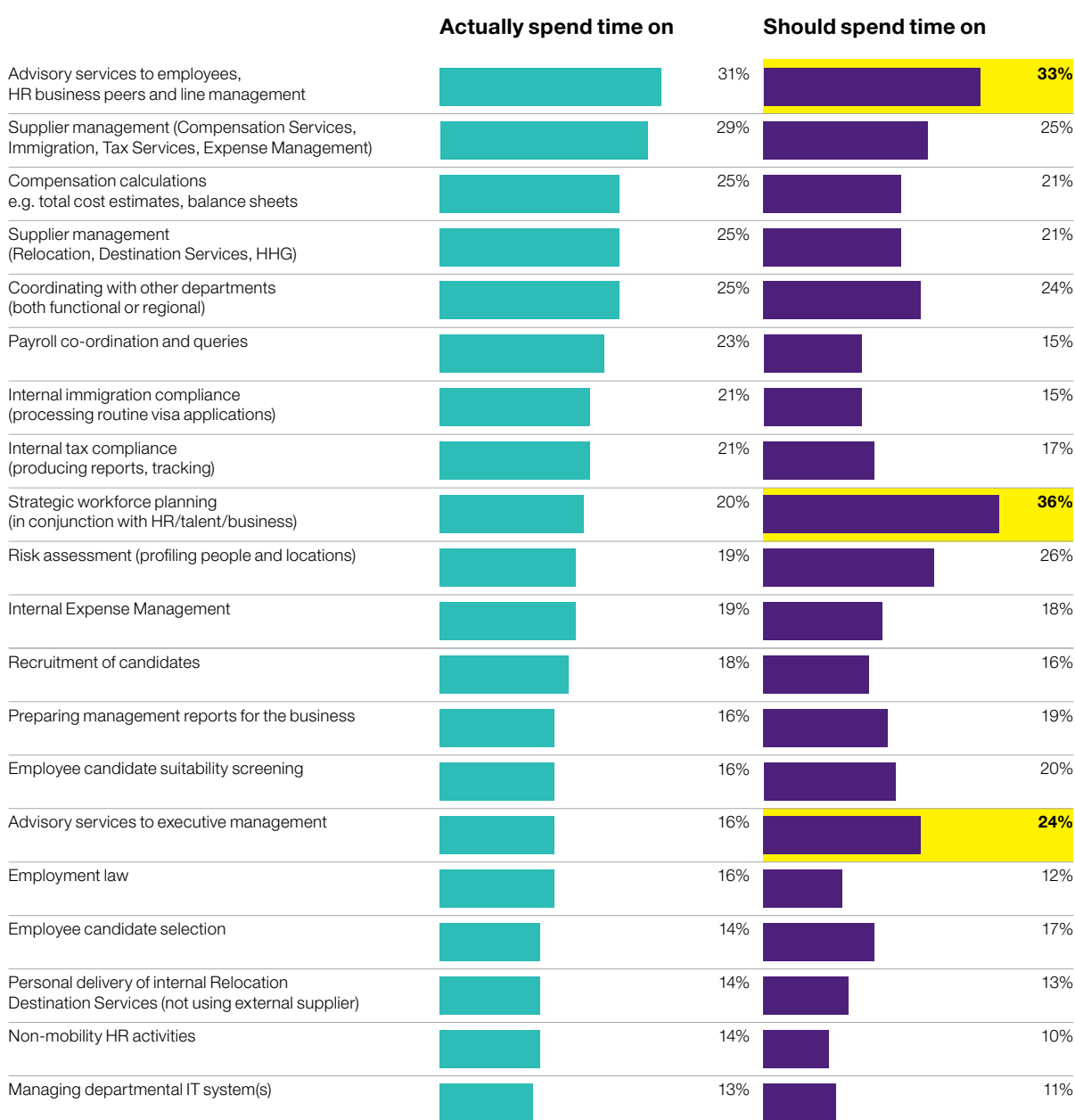
In line with the 2019 findings, both Global Mobility professionals and Business Leaders agree that Global Mobility teams need to focus on value added activities such as strategic workforce planning.

Fig. 5 highlights Global Mobility teams' current work activities versus what they should be focusing on. It highlights that mobility professionals do understand the need to deliver strategic and advisory value within all the activities associated with mobility, and in particular strategic workforce planning (36%), risk assessment (26%), advisory services to executive management (24%) and advisory services to the broader business, employees and HR stakeholders (33%).

Global Mobility professionals also report a desire to reduce the amount of time spent on managing the often numerous external partners in their supply chain. Our industry experience over recent months suggests that consolidating supply chain is becoming a higher priority for many organisations as they seek to optimise their Global Mobility programmes. Thus simplifying operating structures in order to reduce complexity and focus on key business and talent outcomes for the organisation is key.

Equally, the impact of COVID-19 has seen mobility teams strengthen their collaboration with external Global Mobility partners. This has become increasingly essential in managing operational demands such as tracking the whereabouts of international workers and their families, keeping abreast of daily changes in immigration and travel, resolving difficult supply-demand pressures on temporary accommodation markets and negotiations with landlords regarding extensions and renegotiations for longer-term properties.

Fig. 5: Where Global Mobility spend most time versus should be spending their time (GM)



In Fig. 6 Business Leaders are broadly in agreement with Global Mobility professionals that they spend much of their time on supplier management—and they also agree that their teams should ideally be spending the most time on strategic workforce planning—so there is a clear mandate for change.

While change may form part of a broader HR leadership programme in some organisations, for those where there is a lack of awareness of change readiness, these findings provide substantial support from both Global Mobility and Business Leaders to highlight opportunities to focus on less transaction-based activities.

However, Business Leaders also appear to have some misconceptions about where Global Mobility professionals are currently spending their time. They would like to see more time spent on advisory services (to employees, HR business peers and line management) (31%) as well as compensation calculations (31%)—even though both activities are in the top three for where Global Mobility professionals do in fact currently spend their time. This suggests that Global Mobility teams may need to improve the visibility of their services, to help demonstrate the value they are already providing.

Furthermore, as cost management becomes more critical post COVID-19, cost estimates and tracking become more important but as part of a broader transformation, compensation services could also be delivered by external partners.

Fig. 6: Business Leaders' view of where GM spend most time and should spend most time (BL)

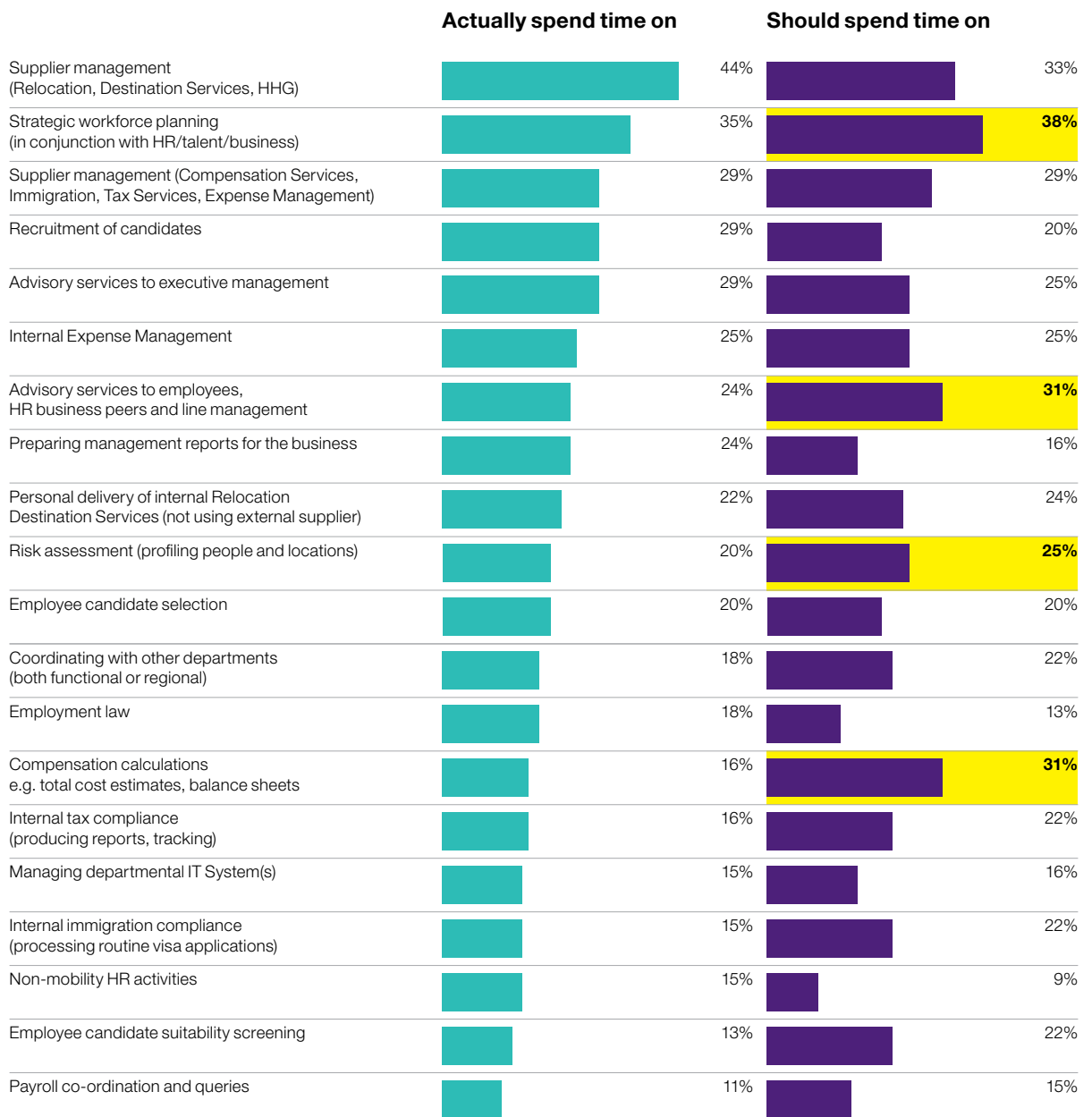


Fig. 7 Business Leaders' view of where Global Mobility should spend most time (BL—2020 versus 2019 comparison)



■ 2020 ■ 2019

Ultimately, the principal contribution for all support functions is to support the organisation in its competitive advantage and **Fig. 7** provides a route map of what is at the forefront of Business Leaders' agendas.

We can see in **Fig. 7** that there is broadly a consistent view from Business Leaders of their priorities, as we described in **Fig. 6**

- + The comparison (with different Business Leader participants in 2019 and 2020) possibly highlights the impact of the pandemic, with greater emphasis on working closely with mobility supply chain, tighter internal focus on compliance and the financial aspects of the mobility programme, highlighted by the increased expectation of cost estimates and forecasting.

International hires and enhanced support to enable employees to relocate

- + The data shows that since 2019, Global Mobility professionals are less involved in candidate selection and are more involved in recruitment. This suggests that their efforts are in providing information on packages and the initial value proposition (for example in the case of international hires) and slightly less in engagement on candidate selection.
- + Many organisations invest in intercultural adaptability assessments and other psychometrics as part of the hire process. They work together with Global Mobility representatives to address potential risk areas or contraindications in talent jargon. Post COVID-19 this will be key in allaying any concerns or misinformed perceptions of the prospective arrival (existing internationals) or host country (international hires).

Fig. 8: Where Global Mobility should be spending their time (GM—2020 versus 2019 comparison)

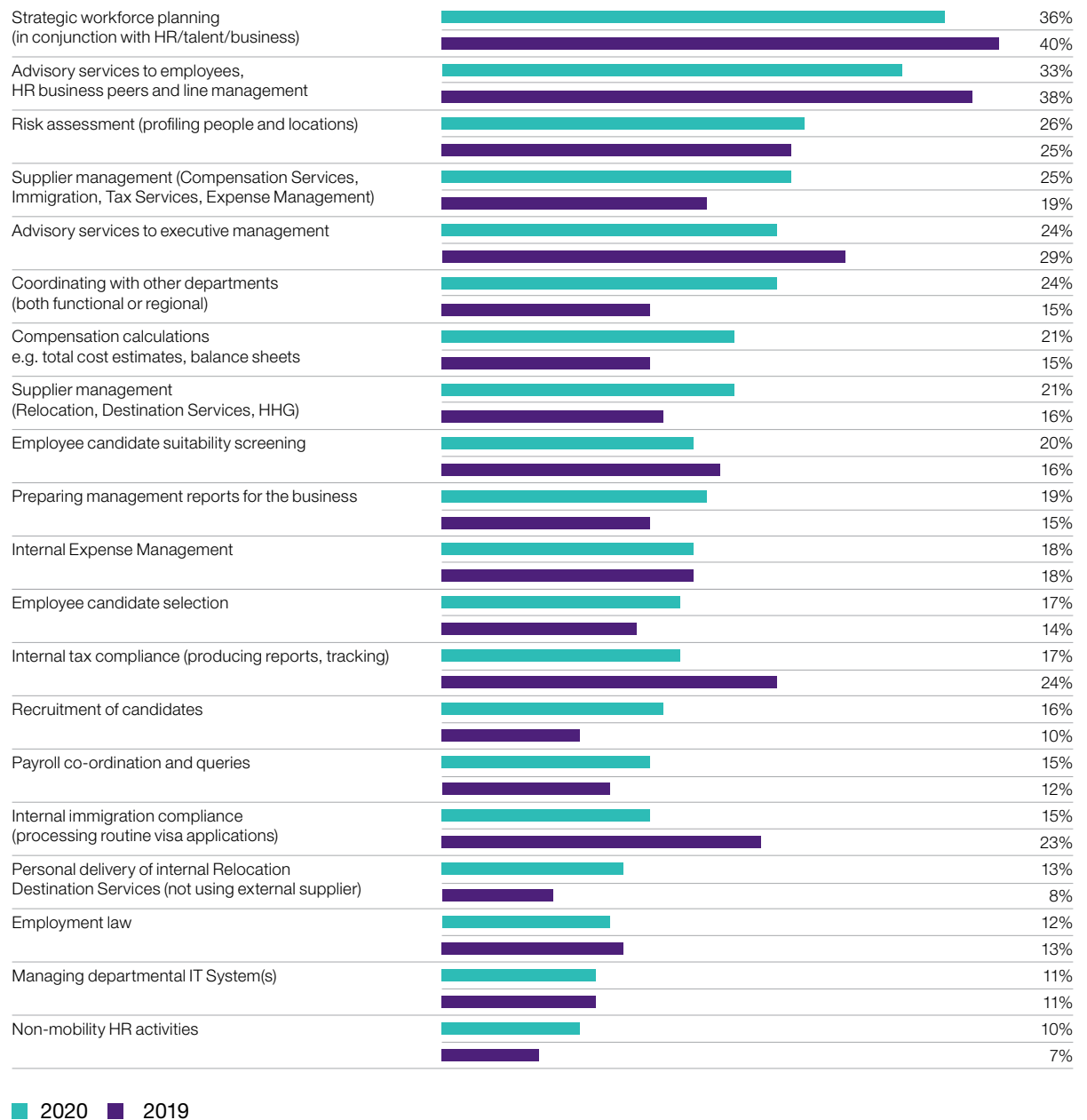


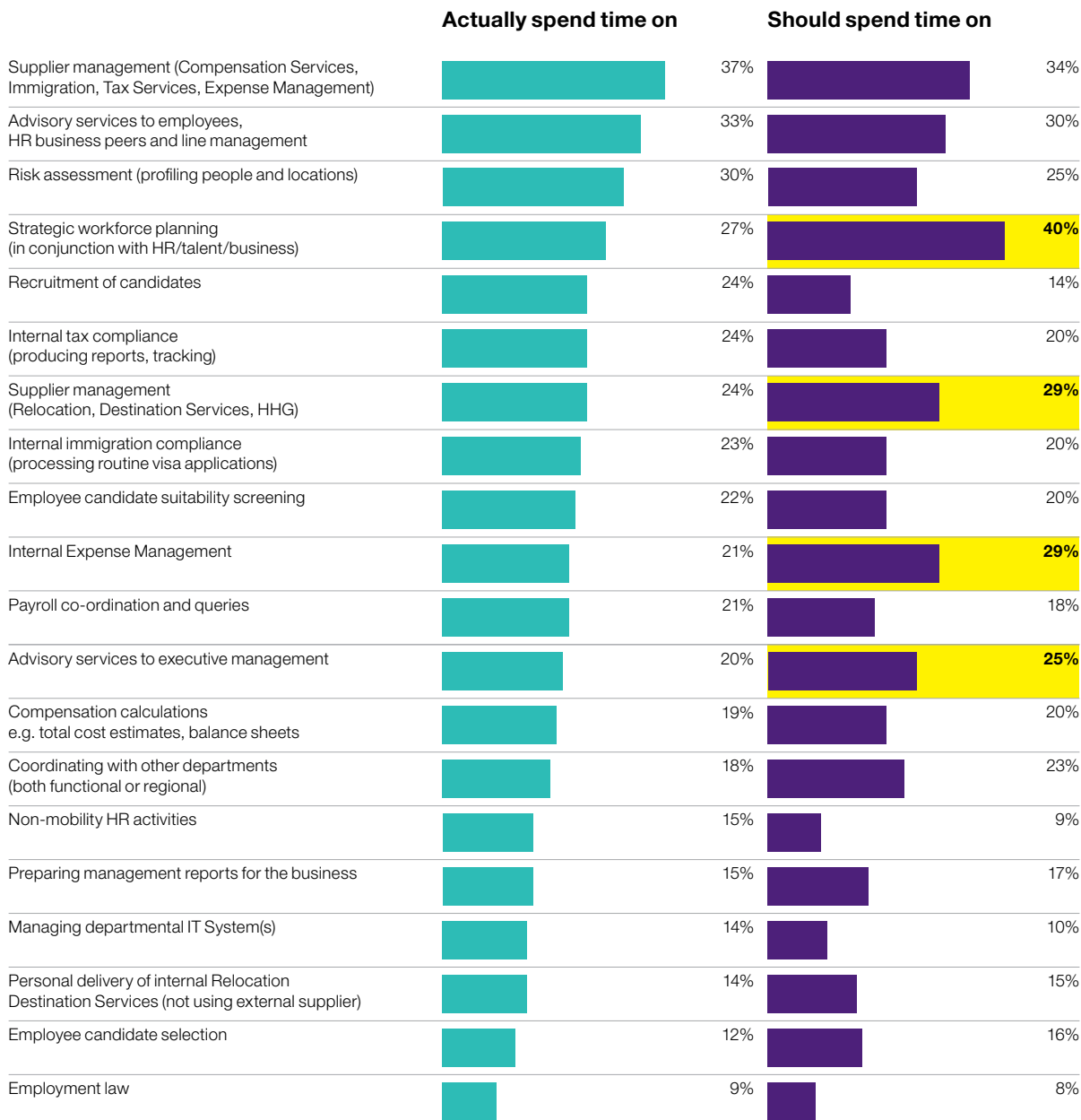
Fig. 8 provides Global Mobility’s 2019/2020 comparison and 2020 demonstrates a very similar set of findings to those of 2019, which validates the strategy and advisory focus as a consistently reported trend and not an exceptional spike.

- + One particular data point of interest is the desired time spent on internal immigration compliance, down from 23% in 2019 to 15% in 2020 and internal tax compliance, reporting and tracking down from 24% in 2019 to 17% in 2020.
- + This is the opposite of what Business Leaders were describing in **Fig. 7**. This indicates that mobility teams need to better manage their stakeholders’ expectations and ensure that whether delivered internally or via an external supplier, determining the purpose of compliance reporting and updates is critical as organisations repurpose themselves for further growth or recovery from the pandemic.
- + Being strategic is important but also ensuring operational mobility requirements are achieved is a balancing act that enables Global Mobility teams to have more influence on longer-term planning priorities.

North America Global Mobility teams lead the way in wanting to focus on strategic workforce planning and advisory services.

As we looked at regional differences in Global Mobility transformation we provide in **Fig. 9** the North American perspective which aligns with the overall Global Mobility viewpoint. Indeed there is an even greater emphasis of engaging in strategic workforce planning, advisory services and interestingly, a slightly higher desire to engage with supply chain. This could also infer the need for greater engagement in view of the pandemic and for greater cost control over validating suppliers' invoicing, with a need for overall greater cost controls. This may account for the increase in focus on internal Expense Management from 21% to 29%. The decrease in involvement in recruitment of candidates from 24% to 14% may also reflect that while international hires are still occurring in some sectors, for example in the pharmaceutical sector, many organisations are re-grouping and taking a inventory talent assessment of the competencies within the workforce today and those required over the next 24 months and beyond, rather than engaging in active recruitment at this time.

Fig. 9: Where Global Mobility spend most time versus should be spending their time (GM—North America)

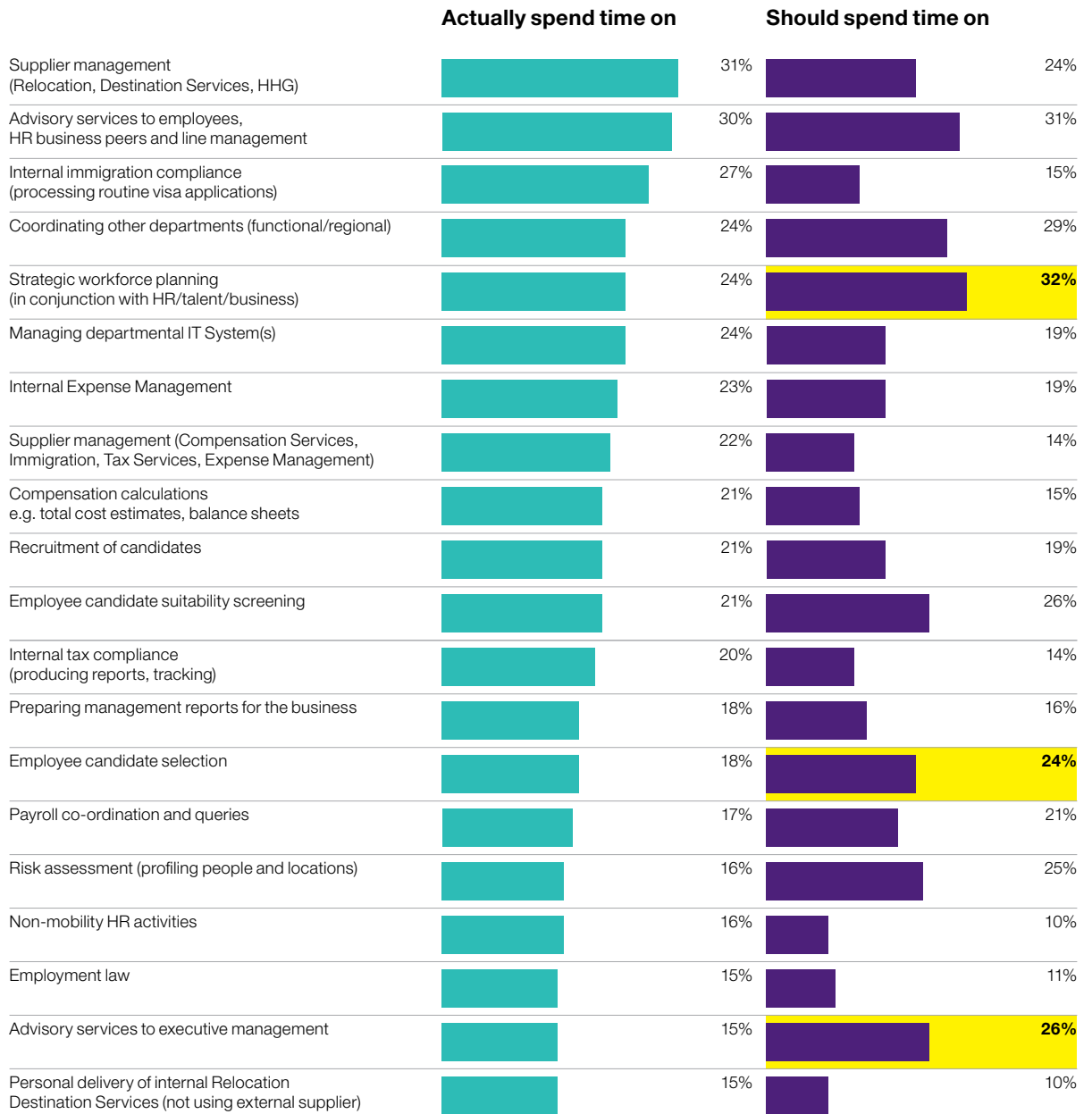


Lastly in this section, in Fig. 10 we provide an example of a vertical (industry sector), Technology, to identify any particular differences from the reported trends.

Worthy of note is the desired increase in strategic planning, risk management, advisory support to executive management and greater involvement in employee candidate suitability screening. As we saw in Fig. 1, McKinsey, technology is a growth sector and the rate of change in terms of technological advancement is exceptional.

Ensuring that the right candidates, policies and conditions are optimised are an excellent opportunity for Global Mobility professionals to demonstrate value. For those in sectors which are not in growth mode, this is likely to be more challenging as their leadership focuses more on cost controls and headcount and seeks ways to shift resources from fixed to variable overheads.

Fig. 10: Where Global Mobility spend most time versus should be spending their time (GM—Technology)



Practical illustration—Manufacturing

As an example, a leadership group that decides on a new manufacturing site in a country, unaware of immigration and living condition challenges, may rely on the intelligence gathered by their project teams without involving Global Mobility. The new project location may also require much higher allowances (quality of life, cost of living, availability of local accommodation, schools), which can set challenges in attracting talent to undertake secondments or rotational assignments, as well as in substantially increasing the project costs allocated for capital expenditure. As indicated, Global Mobility's involvement in such a scenario could ensure a successful outcome for all and mitigate risk.

In summary, Global Mobility teams are well placed to demonstrate their value, supported by Business Leaders. As a consequence of the pandemic they have increased visibility by their executive teams and an opportunity to provide both technical compliance and duty of care insights in the use of internationally mobile employees. In terms of looking forward over the next 24 months, Global Mobility teams can contribute to the talent and cost profiling agenda, especially during these uncertain times.

In achieving transformation, engagement with and involvement of internal customers—business management may clarify any differences in perception of what Global Mobility actually does and potentially could deliver through analytics and specialist advisory support.

Interventions and trends likely to impact the Global Mobility function

There are no more easy moves, whether domestic or international, all moves need a lot more consideration, a lot more interaction with mobility and vendors than in the past.

COVID-19 has a big impact, from the challenges around supporting Global Mobility safely and from a business requirement viewpoint.

It is impossible to tell what impact COVID-19 will have over the next 12 months.

Limitation of movement around the world due to COVID-19 is impacting our Global Mobility programme.

Decrease in overall assignments due to COVID-19.

Further qualitative remarks from the survey

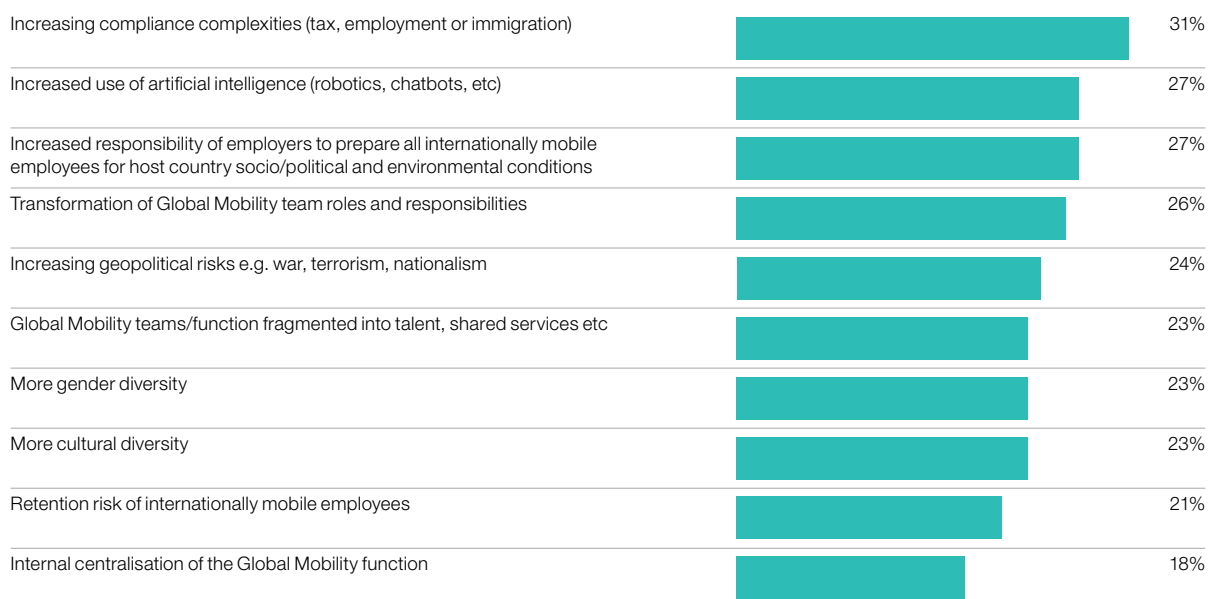
In **Fig. 11** we explore Global Mobility professionals' view of the interventions and trends impacting their function over the next 24 months (through to 2022).

While increasing compliance complexities remain the number one priority, worthy of note are:

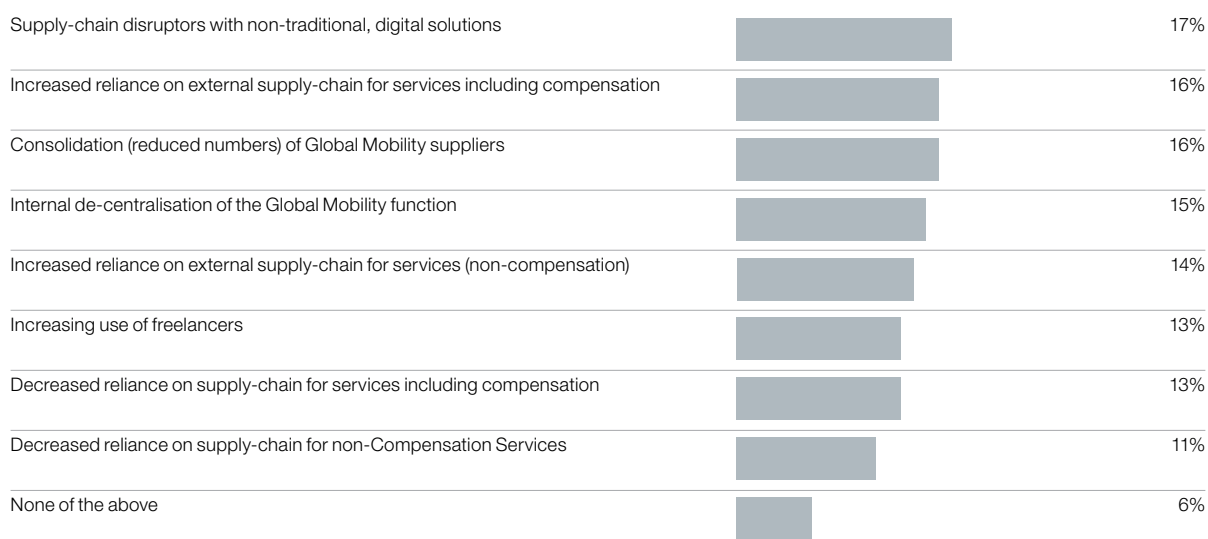
- + That increased use of Artificial Intelligence has leaped from 20% in 2019 to 27% in 2020.
- + That perhaps as a result of the pandemic, duty of care for employees has risen from 20% to 27% (in recent client roundtables conducted by Santa Fe Relocation, reports showed that employees' and their families' health and safety was the number one priority).
- + That in line with **Fig. 2** findings, transformation of Global Mobility roles is also indicated as a top five trend in 2020. Structures are expected to evolve and repurpose over the next 24 months.

Fig. 11: Global Mobility view of interventions and trends having a significant impact on Global Mobility functions over the next 24 months (GM)

Top 10 interventions



Additional interventions



Business Leaders see duty of care as the number one priority in 2020

In Fig. 13 (opposite) the Business Leaders' responses reflect the priority for ensuring duty of care for their employees, an increase from 26% to 38%, likely to be in recognition of the pandemic and increasingly difficult geopolitical relations between the largest nations in the east and west, affecting economic trading relations, foreign investment and thus international talent mobilisation.

Compliance remains an important factor, but the people dimensions are of greater importance. This may also reflect that organisations are aware of potential compliance risks and that they have processes in place to manage this. From a talent perspective it is worthy to note that use of freelancers is likely to drop significantly. This could be related to consolidation of resources in certain sectors, however, having a more contingent workforce during more difficult trading conditions is perhaps an opportunity for a more flexible and agile approach. Lastly, transformation of Global Mobility team roles and structures are also ranked higher on Business Leaders' agenda.

A clear focus on cost for executive management

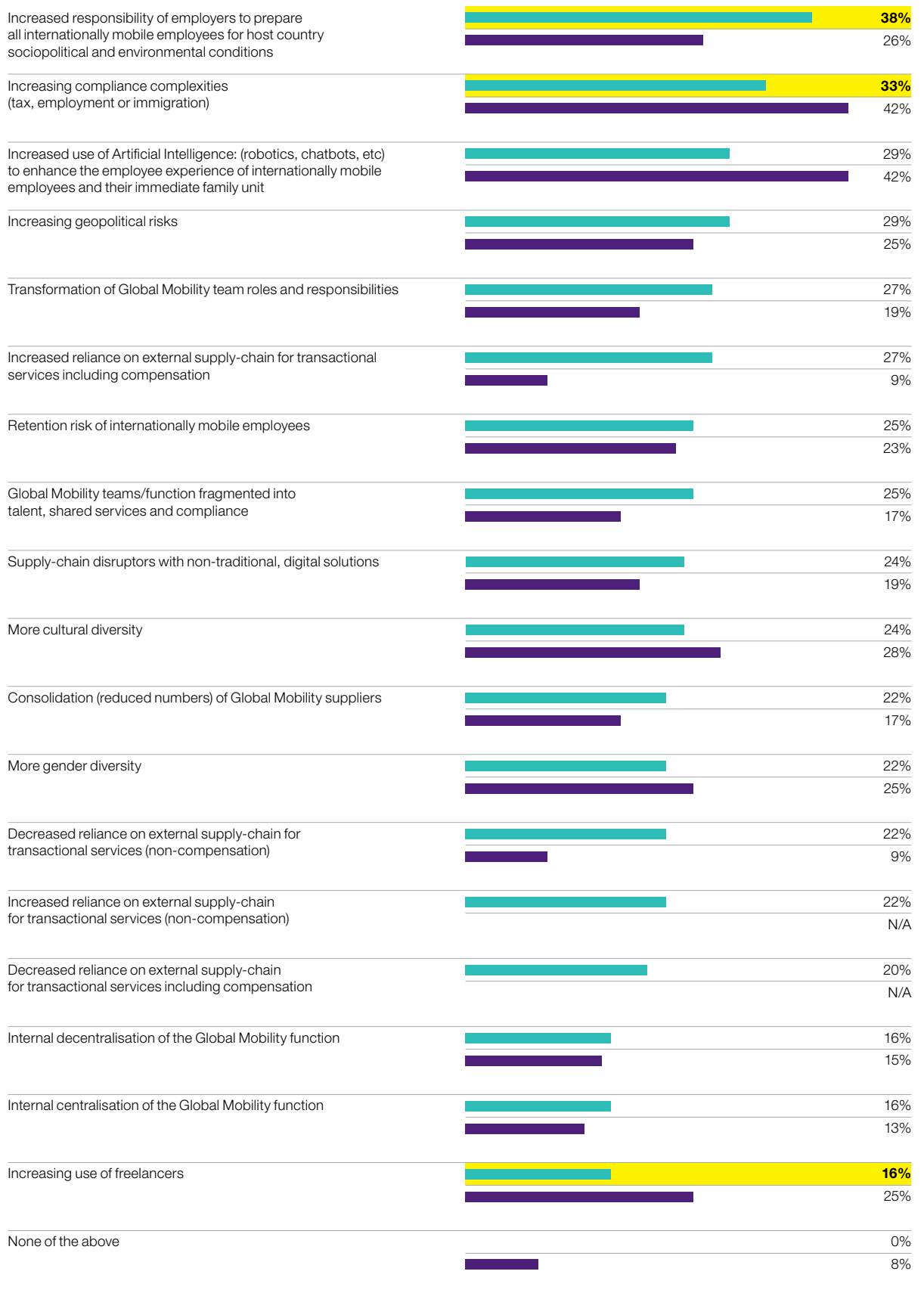
In Fig. 12 there is clear focus on:

- + Cost for executive management (45%), which is not only focused on total cost optimisation, but also on investing in technology.
 - To drive new ways of delivering flexible and agile solutions.
 - Innovation—repurposing Global Mobility team competencies, and policies that enable and not hinder talent and business agendas.
- + Engaging wider stakeholders to stay relevant and aligned is also a key signpost that Global Mobility professionals have to become more consultative and collaborative with their functional and operational leadership.

Fig. 12: Impact of interventions and trends on the Global Mobility function (BL)



Fig. 13: Interventions and trends impacting Global Mobility function over the next 24 months (BL—2020 versus 2019 comparison)

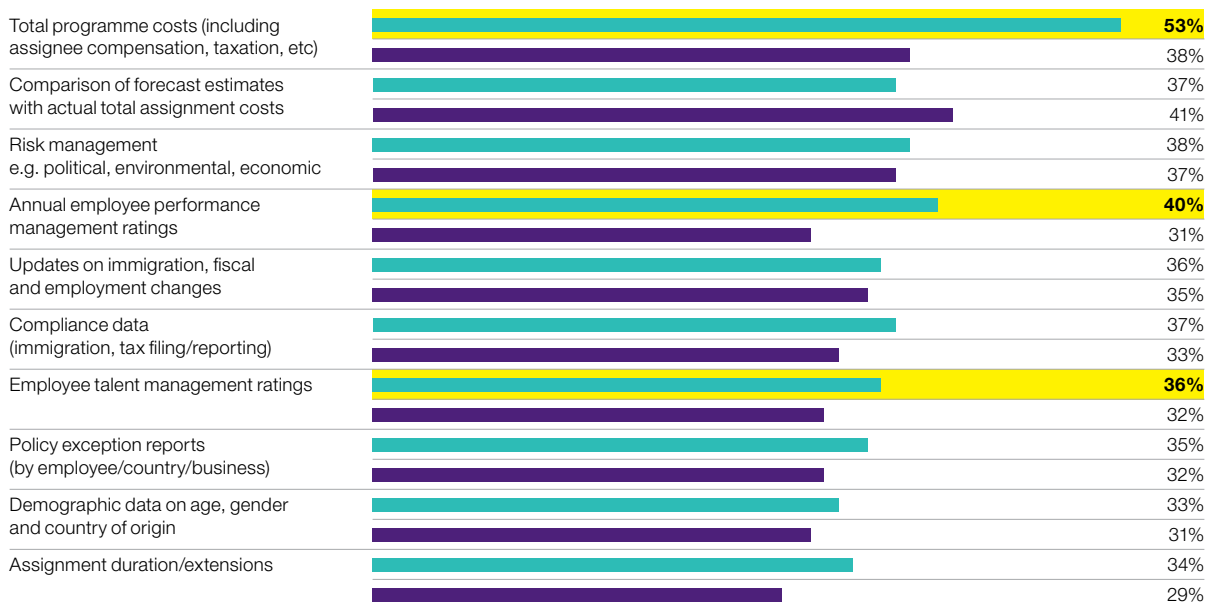


■ 2020 ■ 2019

Analytics—tracking, reporting and advising

Fig. 14 and Fig. 15 show there is positive progress in the provision of commercial, talent and risk data. There is a significant increase in total programme costs and performance ratings and to a slightly lesser extent talent rating, policy exceptions reporting and assignment durations.

Fig. 14: What data should Global Mobility teams be providing to the wider business? (GM—2020 versus 2019 comparison)

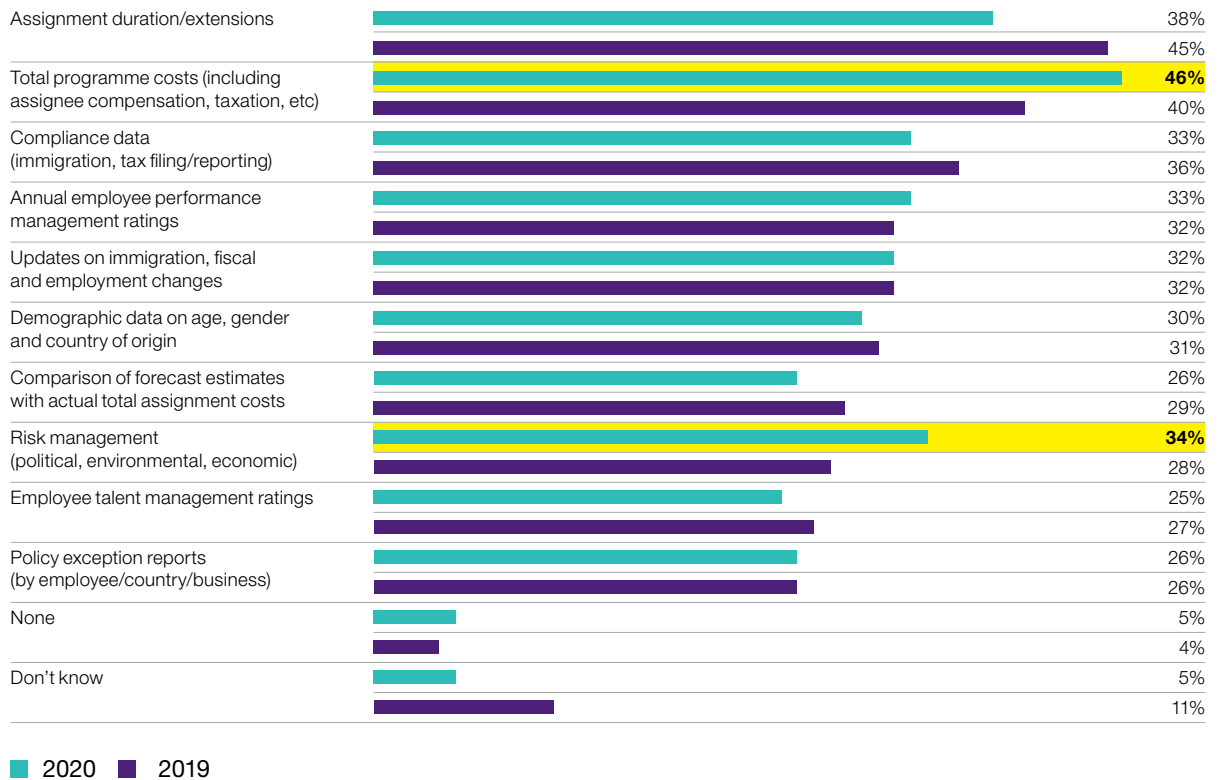


■ 2020 ■ 2019



This 2019/20 comparison suggests an aspiration to report on more value-based elements of Global Mobility programmes.

Fig. 15: What data do Global Mobility teams provide to the wider business? (GM—2020 versus 2019 comparison)























Risk analytics are becoming increasingly popular with our members. Usage will only increase as mobility seeks to track employees and provide data to enable HR and talent to make people/business decisions supported and not blocked by Global Mobility teams not being prepared or ready.

Managing Director, Corporate Industry Forum

In **Fig. 16**, North America, we provide a 2020 view of mobility/talent data currently provided and what should be provided to give a regional perspective. There appears to be a greater emphasis on and awareness of what the organisation requires to drive growth and planning processes. In particular, there is a strong alignment with the Business Leaders' views in **Fig. 17**.

- + In line with the more strategic vision indicated in **Fig. 3**, the execution on measures that matter are more advanced in North America, which suggests that such analytics have been adopted over a longer period of time and perhaps a reflection of the alignment of Global Mobility with broader HR and business stakeholders.
- + There is a marked expectation of providing policy exception requests data in **Fig. 14**, should be 35% versus **Fig. 15** currently providing 26%. For North America **Fig. 16**, should be 40% versus currently providing 29%.
- + Talent management ratings are definitely an area of opportunity to build a profile of total programme costs, performance ratings, talent management ratings to deliver more insightful data to management.
- + Desired increases in risk management, compliance and tracking assignment durations also reflect both the continued complexity of immigration and potential compliance issues, especially associated with a forecast increase in virtual assignments, as we shall see in section two: **TALENT**.

Fig. GM 16: Data Global Mobility teams are currently providing to the wider business versus data they should be providing (GM—North America)

	Currently providing		Should be providing	
Total programme costs (including assignee compensation, taxation, etc)		51%		53%
Annual employee performance management ratings on assignment/international work arrangements		48%		41%
Demographic data on age, gender and country of origin		45%		44%
Risk management		44%		39%
Assignment duration/extensions		39%		30%
Compliance data (immigration, tax filing/reporting)		39%		44%
Updates on immigration, fiscal and employment changes		37%		40%
Comparison of forecast estimates with actual total assignment costs		31%		36%
Policy exception reports (by employee/country/business)		29%		40%
Employee talent management ratings		28%		34%

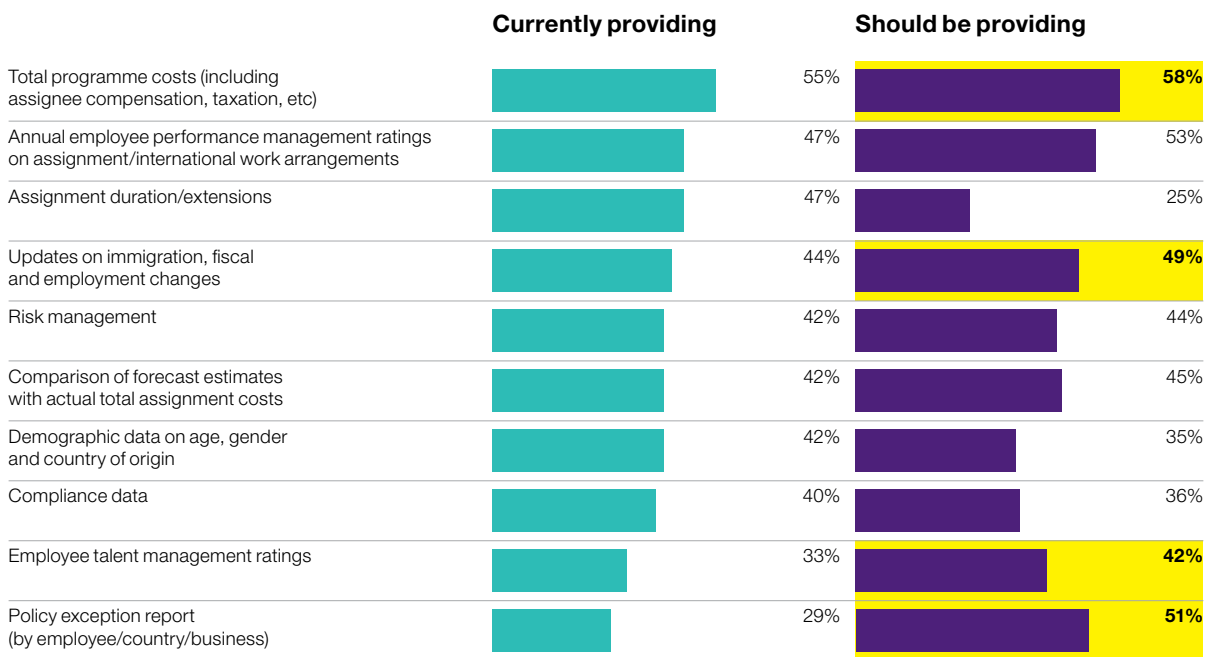
It could infer that COVID-19 has influenced responses, where in fact, it has most likely accelerated the need for change, since crises catalyse action and focus, which can lead to enhanced effectiveness.

Overall, Business Leaders have an even stronger desire to receive key data (apart from assignment durations, which wouldn't be their business focus).

There are two areas of note:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Greater visibility on policy exceptions (requiring more situational, deeper analysis with the business and international deployed employees). |
| 2 | Talent management ratings. Considering the strategy, talent, advisory and risk focus for Global Mobility professionals, these findings support the case for transformation. |

Fig. 17: Data Business Leaders are receiving from Global Mobility teams versus data they would like to receive (BL)

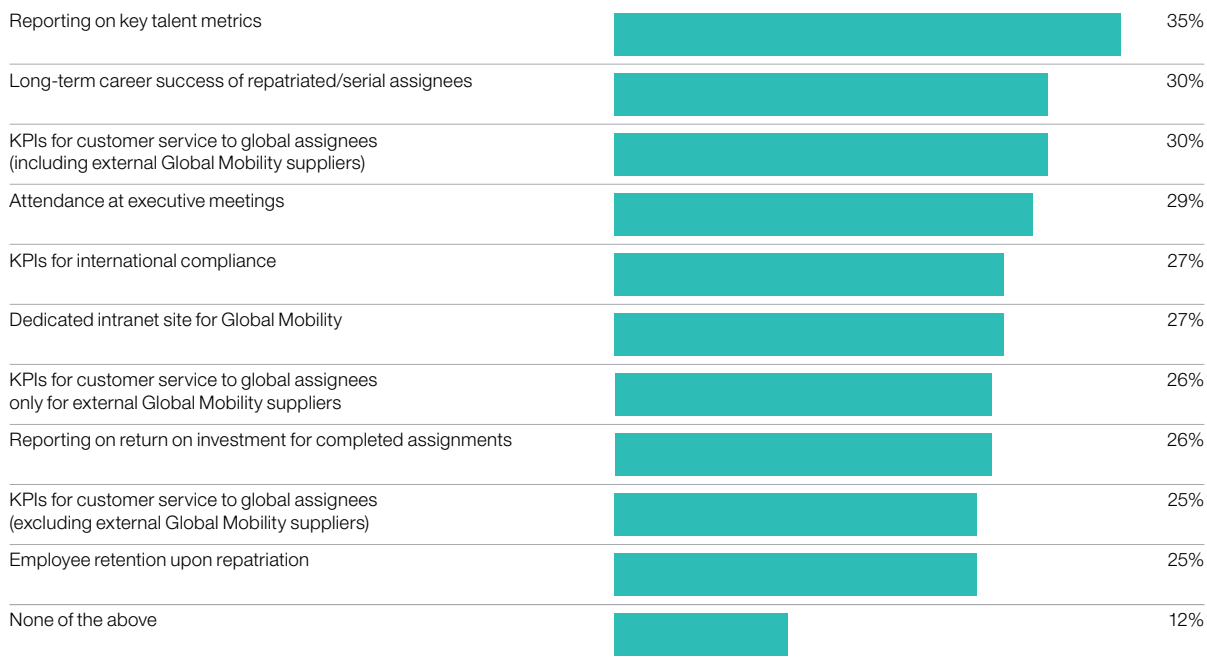


An important way for Global Mobility teams to demonstrate their valuable contribution is via the provision of information and data. Similar to 2019 findings, Global Mobility professionals are prioritising talent-related metrics to demonstrate value to the wider business and this includes tracking talent post international work experience (30% track long-term career success of repatriated/serial assignees). Equally, there is a focus on measuring a positive experience while undertaking forms of international mobility, through key performance indicators both internally and externally with suppliers.

Employee value proposition is a key element of Human Resources' strategy and it is essential that Global Mobility teams ensure that both they and their external partners focus on excellence in operational delivery to ensure existing and new employees "feel the love", paraphrasing Janine Vos's (CHRO, Rabobank) comments who was interviewed for our 2019 GMS report. Janine said, "In the future, we really have to love our employees as we move through digitalisation of roles and transformation and ensure they feel valued".

Fig. 18 reports the operational measures that Global Mobility employ to create value for their organisation.

Fig. 18: Methods used to demonstrate Global Mobility's value to wider business (GM)



Reflecting here on our initial findings, it is evident that the measures can be codified into talent and transactional areas and over the coming 24 months and beyond, we expect these measures to become more sophisticated and tuned into the organisation's talent and competence drivers as they repurpose their business focus.

Part of the challenge and opportunity is to reskill our people to equip them with the capability to be effective in operating and thriving in a new digital world. Over the next decade we need to provide an environment of happiness, and really love and engage with our employees.

Janine Vos, Member of The Managing Board, CHRO, Rabobank

2019 GMS report

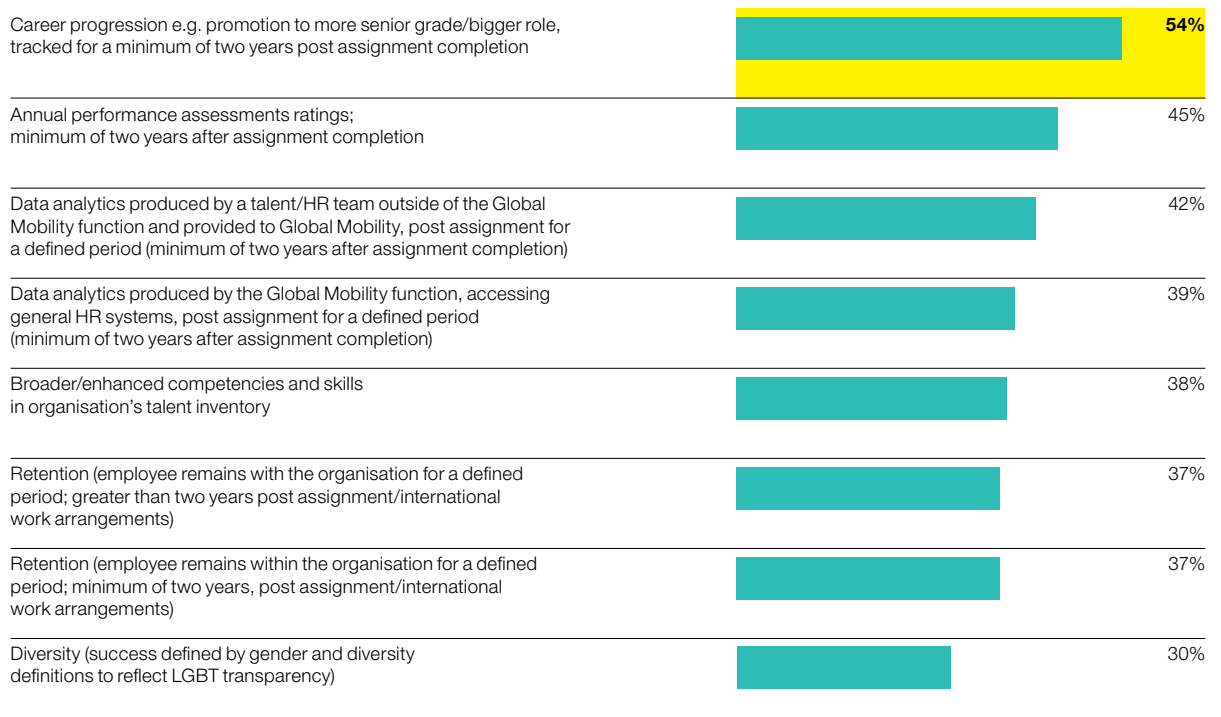
Fig. 19 takes a more in-depth review of all respondents (n. 579—a large sample for this question), who track career progression at the end of international work arrangements. These findings demonstrate that the message of tracking assignees post assignment is an important analytic.

- + Over half of respondents are tracking career progression post assignment and are also looking at the impact of the international assignment experience on performance.
- + We predict that there will be an increasing convergence of data analytics—a collaboration between several overlapping functions including more analysis of macro organisation measures which, for example, has seen a dramatic impact from the decrease in international business travel this year.

This is why Global Mobility must avoid being a silo activity/department—it is integral to the facilitation of global business outcomes.

- + All of these metrics are important in **Fig. 19** but when assessed in isolation, rather than in a connected way with business performance and purpose. It is truly the difference between listening to music in mono rather than stereo.
- + Lastly, diversity and inclusion have been included as a new measure as we believe that organisations recognise the need to become more inclusive of all their talent. Will this become a higher priority for assessment in the future?

Fig. GM 19: Measures used to track the success of international work arrangements (GM)



So, what is stopping Global Mobility professionals from delivering the data that their business expects?

The responses in **Fig. 20** take us back to the beginning of this section where we saw Global Mobility’s organisation structure over the next 24 months in **Fig. 2**.

A lack of time is not a weakness, it is an opportunity to identify how best to transform the structure.

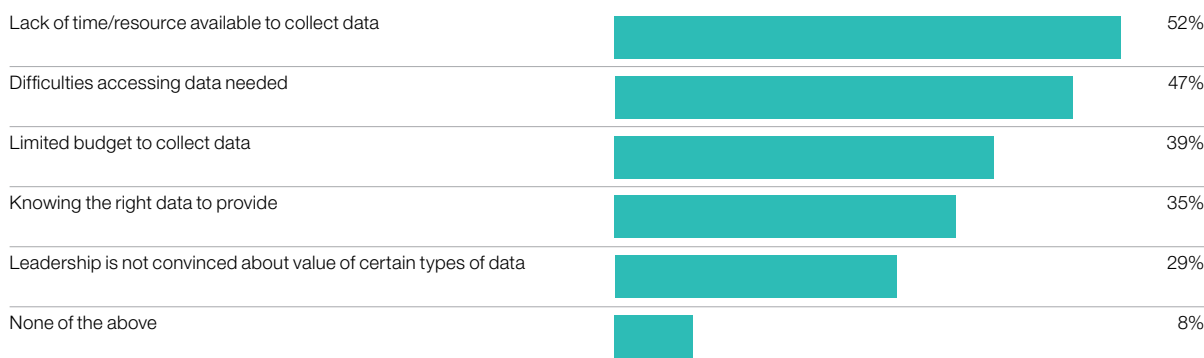
Whether it is making a strong business case to invest a six-figure sum in purchasing technology (and deciding what activities need to be delivered in a different way) or gaining access to technology through a broader outsourcing transformation—using the RMC provider’s mobility specific platform—the decision must be made by HR and Business Leadership.

Before any investment in technology goes ahead, the following questions are a good way to determine the right investment path for the organisation.

Six considerations for investment in technology

What	What is the purpose and what are the desired outcomes?
Why	Why is investment in this technology important? Do we know what our stakeholders require now and in the future?
When	When should we make this decision? Does it form part of a broader transformation?
How	How do we assess the right solution? How do we test change readiness for the organisation?
Where	Where should we deploy this technology—internally only or externally as well?
Who	Who do we select—capital investment and budget operational licence costs? Or source through an external RMC?

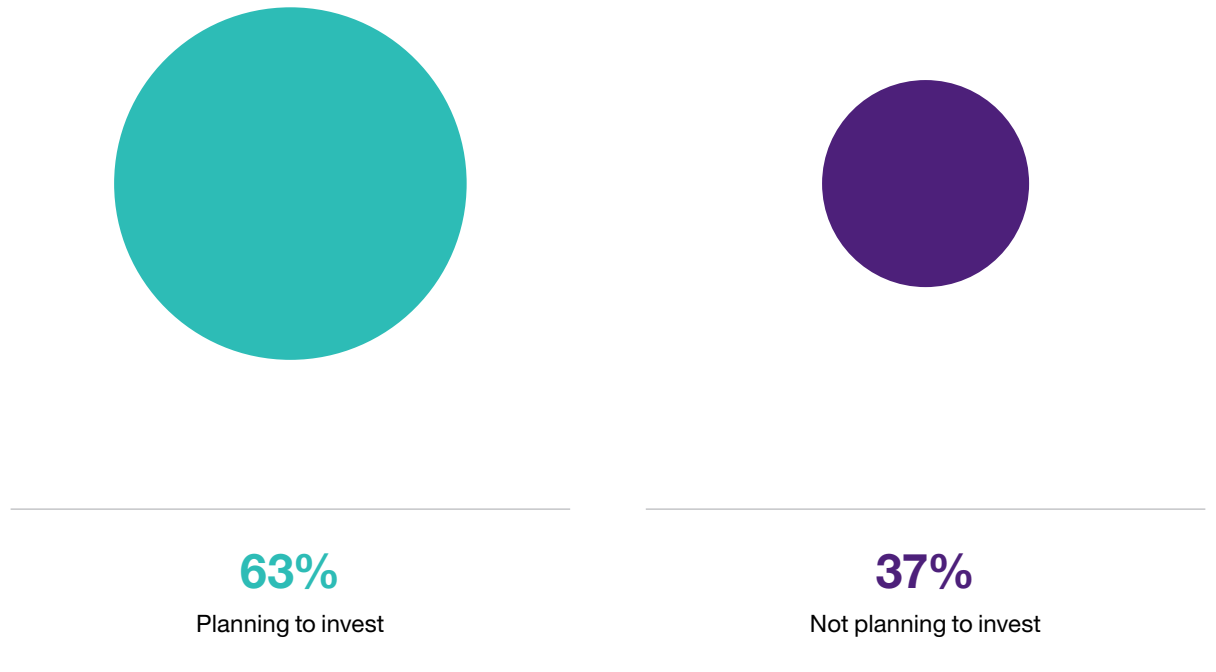
Fig. 20: Barriers to the provision of data to the wider business (GM)



Technology is key to change but it must be applied in line with broader transformation to deliver the value the Business Leaders expect.

In Fig. 21, 63% of participants are planning to invest in technology over the next 24 months. In our 2019 GMS report, Fig. 30, page 45, 52% of respondents had not invested in technology over the past year and before that in 2018's report only 29% said they had invested in technology over the past 18 months.

Fig. 21: Global Mobility teams who are planning to invest in new technology in the next 24 months



Both **Fig. 22** and **Fig. 23** Business Leaders' views on the benefits of investing in technology demonstrate the importance of concentrating on this aspect of Global Mobility over the next 24 months.

+ The top benefit for Global Mobility professionals in **Fig. 22** is 41% enhanced operational agility to modify policies, process and supply chain to align with variable business environments.

+ The top benefit for Business Leaders in **Fig. 23** is 60% better forecast versus actual cost tracking.

Together the data forms the basis for the organisation to assess the priorities and requirements in acquiring a new technology solution (either bought or via an RMC).

Fig. 22: Global Mobility's awareness of digital innovation (GM)

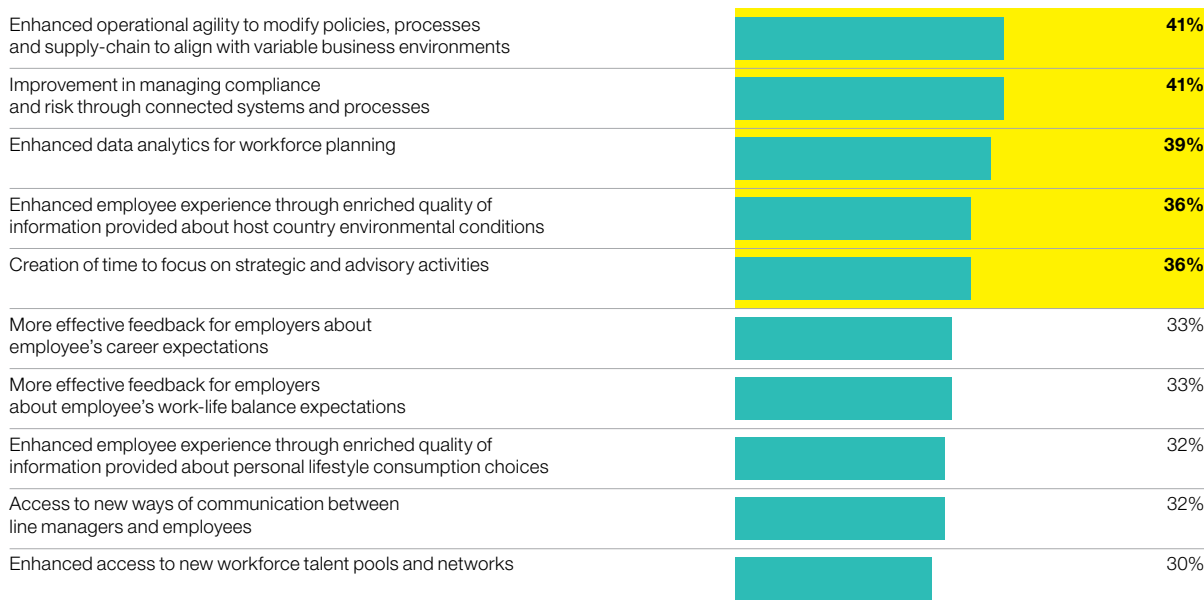
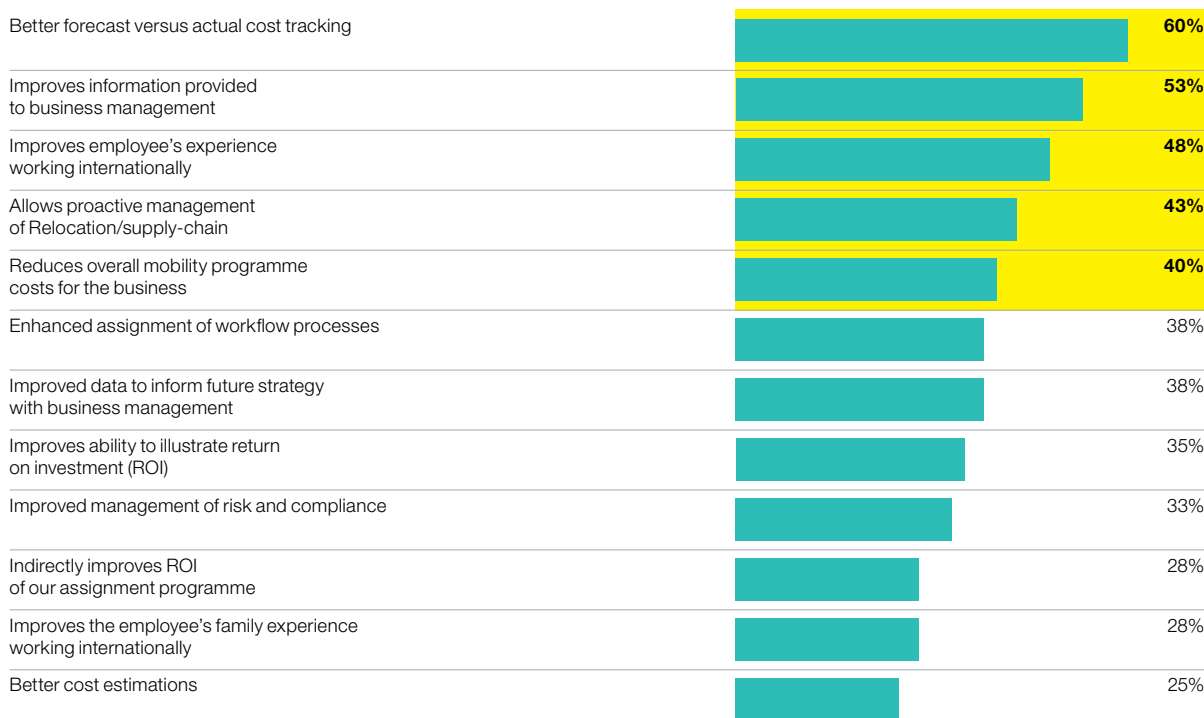


Fig. 23: Benefits of investing in new technology (BL)



The background is a technical drawing of a mechanical part, possibly a bracket or a housing, rendered in a light gray color. The drawing shows various lines, curves, and dimensions. A specific path is highlighted with thick black lines, starting from a small rectangular feature on the left, moving right, then up, then right again, and finally down to a circular feature. The number '39' is printed in a large, bold, white font in the upper right quadrant of the image.

39

Finally, for this section, we include a new question asked in 2020, with the findings reported in Fig. 24. This has been illustrated by a sampling of industry comparisons: Technology and Communications, Pharmaceuticals and Health, Manufacturing and Financial Services.

Overall, 40% use traditional methods of communication with Pharmaceuticals and Health reporting the most traditional methods of communicating with their assignees (52%). In terms of whether it is driven by available communication tools and internal HR Information Systems or through the technology of outsourced RMC partners, there is a broadly even mix.

Interestingly, the least use of traditional methods is in Technology and Communications (32%) and this is also where we find the highest usage of external relocation partner systems (39%). When it comes to flexing communication based on the grade of the assignee, the decision is less likely as a combination of assignment type/grades (19%), as the industry focuses on the technological and project dimensions and in a less hierarchical way, compared with Pharmaceutical and Health (38%) where it can be based on assignment type/international work arrangements and seniority levels. It is less common for the employee to be given the choice of how they wish to be communicated with, but Pharmaceutical and Health lead the way at 24%.

The vertical business outcomes—whether it is scientists developing new drugs and research, or project technology consultants undertaking multiple client projects—will clearly determine the blend of human and digital support. This serves to support our view in section three: **THRIVE**, that significant due diligence is required before committing to expensive, long-term decisions on technology investment.

Conclusions

The challenge and opportunity for Global Mobility teams is their ability to engage at an advisory level with their leadership, while also ensuring that transactional work is delivered in the face of an uncertain future.

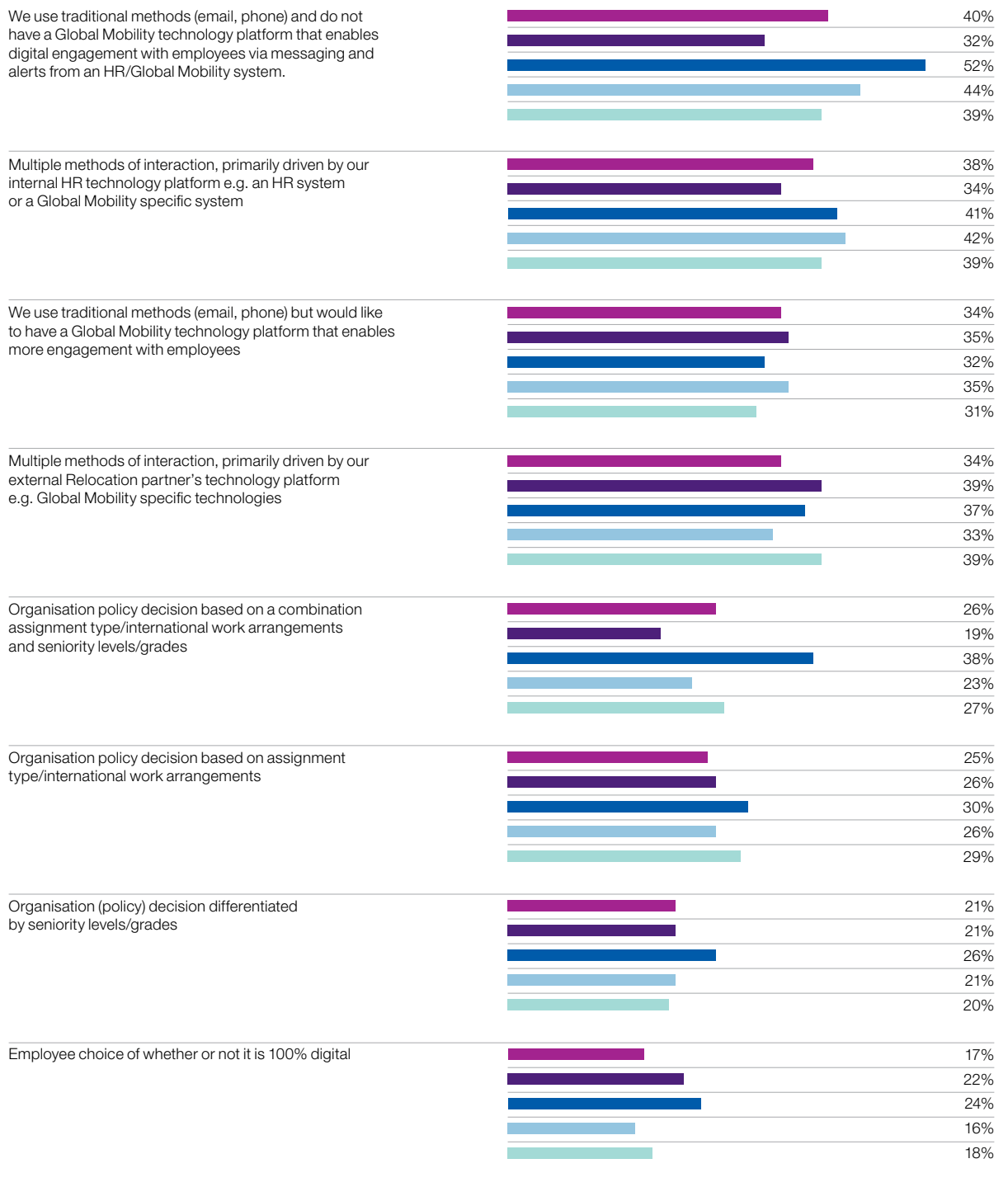
The challenges of COVID-19 have accelerated closer collaboration between corporate Global Mobility teams and their supply chain partners to ensure that both parties can provide mobilising employees with accurate, timely support in their home and host locations.

Technology is critical to track internationally mobile employees and provide better reporting and analytics.

Both Global Mobility and Business Leaders are focused on commercial analytics, principally total cost focus.

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) has become an additional remit of Global Mobility teams.

Fig. 24: Managing the balance between digital and human support to diverse assignee/international work arrangements population (GM—Industry comparison)



- Overall
- Technology and Communication
- Pharmaceuticals and Health
- Manufacturing
- Financial

Strategic and advisory

Global Mobility's role in talent and reward over the next 24 months?

Technology: Buy and self-manage or leverage technology via RMC supply-chain?



Analytics

What data analytics will drive competitive advantage?

Employee experience

Operation model: In-house shared services or outsource to RMC?

Increased fluidity assignments: Hybrid or virtual? How do we effectively track and trace employees?

Will Global Mobility manage international business travellers? What systems and processes?

Compliance



43

TRANSFORM

Cassi Bauer

Director, Global Mobility

Oceaneering

Transformation...a key term for many Global Mobility teams in 2019. We were asked to be strategic, utilising analytics and talent mobility planning to enhance the contribution to the business. As we came into 2020, many things became apparent—tracking of employees became significant, technology played a key role, and customer focused policies made the mobility leadership and their supply-chain partners an even greater asset to business continuity.

In the current state of pandemic and in the future, the survey shows the need to transform the Global Mobility role to present a business partner that can show fluidity and think strategically on how, when and why we are moving people regionally, virtually or globally. Tracking and analytics are becoming the increasingly utilised buzz words in all industries, but especially Global Mobility. Knowing where people are and tracking the compliance around these movements will be paramount in the success or failure of the function.

David Carmichael

Director, Global Mobility, COE

CGI

To understand the challenge for Global Mobility professionals in the context of transformation you also need to think about the position of Global Mobility in the organisation but while taking the impact of the pandemic into account.

Transformation is a requirement—in the current climate it is almost an imperative—but as always, Global Mobility professionals find themselves dealing with the here and now. Couple that with the fact that in some organisations Global Mobility professionals and their teams could be under headcount constraints where the perception is that Global Mobility isn't required due to border restrictions etc. The reality is that transformation is needed now more than ever but now more than ever that transformation could in fact be even more challenging to implement. Global Mobility professionals need to reinvent themselves with the current climate in mind, but the challenge will be finding the resource available to meet operational needs while separating out others who can focus solely on more cerebral driven change and transformation.

Erik Mathys

Group Compensation & Benefits International

Mobility & Executive Pay Manager

Etex

Recent developments with COVID-19 entail additional agility for all business leaders and Global Mobility professionals. Transformation will be needed in order to make sure that our teams can cope with the renewed VUCA* world we are waking up in.

Needless to say, that this will increase the challenges for all of us. Expectations and pressure on Global Mobility teams will increase. Only a very organised and structured way of working can help Global Mobility teams to bring value to the business which will make these teams 'shine' towards their Business Leaders. Easy and fast reporting of facts and figures are key and are there to stay. The choice of the right IT tools will have never been so important as now to achieve these goals.

*VUCA = Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous.

Ernst Steltenpohl

Co-founder

Expatriate Academy

No one will have missed it: Global Mobility activities have rapidly become more complicated in recent years. A complexity that has given the position of Global Mobility specialist a critical role in being vital between the various parties in the Global Mobility process. Such a role requires extensive business knowledge combined with technical knowledge of the various components of the Global Mobility practice. Also, on the side of the providers, knowledge of and experience with the Global Mobility process is becoming increasingly important. It is no longer enough to know their internal processes only. We see that companies and their providers have increased their profit targets over the years. This development has led to processes with a shorter lead time, higher service level for the customers, and a reduction in costs. As a result, the Global Mobility-processes become critical in all aspects and vulnerable to the slightest disruption. Disruptions, which as incomplete or not correct data, wrong, preliminary techniques, or insufficient knowledge and experience of the Global Mobility specialist (his provider).

ATION

Ernst Steltenpohl continued

The pandemic has taught us that companies and providers who have invested in the education of their specialists were able to respond to the new challenges. They could act much faster and more adequately to the COVID-19 situation. Moreover, they saved a lot of time and money than their peers, dependent on external Global Mobility specialists. Well-educated Global Mobility specialists and their providers have the skills and knowledge to ask the right question in new circumstances and to see and find new opportunities and solutions.

It is the expertise of Global Mobility specialists to ask these questions in the new world of Global Mobility. It is the difference between focusing on what is no longer possible and focusing on the new possibilities and challenges.

The pandemic has made it unequivocally clear that, while automated processes save costs, these processes cannot withstand small and more massive disruptions. At the time of these appearances, a well-trained Global Mobility expert is indispensable. However, only companies that had invested in it could have access to it. Also for the Global Mobility tasks, the just-in-time principle will change into the just-in-case principle.

Dr Phil Renshaw

Visiting Fellow

Cranfield University

Director

Coaching On the Go

The findings suggest that business leaders are okay with the current level of strategic input they receive from Global Mobility. Nonetheless, COVID-19 offers an opportunity for Global Mobility professionals simply through their increased visibility. We can see the demands for greater clarity on the costs of their work. This is normal in economic crises and we can anticipate this is affecting every business area.

The opportunity for Global Mobility, however, is to draw attention to the value gained from international assignments at the same time as providing this increased focus on costs. From a Talent perspective, there is always the question as to whether Global Mobility professionals have the necessary strategic skills to achieve this and hence COVID-19 may be the event that finally determines whether they do or not.

Raquel Tovar

Manager Employee Mobility

CommScope

COVID-19 has brought challenges at a level never seen before, the pandemic has struck globally and in different ways. Due to the restrictions, organisations have been struggling on how to best support the health and safety of international assignees while ensuring business continuity.

We need to look beyond at what we are already doing, what measures need to be implemented i.e. the need to invest on technology or leverage on vendor's technology to improve efficiency, compliance, cost control and risk management.

Véronique Smets

Head of International Mobility

Engie

In today's context, we witness trends, starting and evolving over recent years, being accelerated through the current world-wide context.

The collaboration with Safety and Security teams/lines has definitely boosted this year. In this perspective also, automation, analytics and power of AI will enable Global Mobility teams to perform their regular job more efficiently, to be able to better anticipate needs and expectations of HR line, international assignees and management and ensure better visibility on international assignments as well as better compliance.

Deploying technological solutions within our Global Mobility team in the last 24 months allows us to position our activities and perspective as a key player in the HR line, within C&B function and towards talent teams.

TALENT

47

Julia Palmer

Chief Operating Officer (COO), Relocation

Santa Fe Relocation

2



The way we deploy and manage mobile talent has shifted as businesses have had to respond quickly to support talent already on assignment whilst also managing the pipeline of roles for mobile employees.

Leveraging alternative assignment types and broadening the mobile talent pool will be critical to ensuring business and talent objectives are met in very challenging economic, public health and political circumstances. Employee health and wellbeing became the immediate priority for organisations as the pandemic hit. Looking forward, as business starts up again, the health and wellbeing of mobile employees will have an impact on business outcomes, and mobility programmes will need to adapt to ensure roles are filled and talent developed for success.

Diversity, career development and cultural integration are all core business drivers for the use of global mobility to resource the roles. To achieve this in an environment where mobility is not as straightforward as it was—some employees don't want to be far from home, borders are closed, unreliable healthcare standards in some locations, immigration has become more difficult—companies will need flexibility and agility in their approach to global talent selection and deployment.

More varied policy types, with purpose-led mobility has been a trend for many years. This is just one area that needs rethinking in order to be agile in talent deployment and development. Consideration of the employee's personal circumstances beyond their immediate dependents will now be needed in more cases than previously. Who do they want to remain physically close to, what other health issues and risks need to be considered for the employee and family to relocate? Businesses will need to have new sources of talent, whilst still finding opportunities to develop internal talent with international experience. Managing costs along with employee circumstances adds another dimension in the talent agenda, which virtual work arrangements may address, but this is not always the right solution.

TALENT key themes

▶ **Rethinking the approach to mobility—a trend accelerated?**

▶ **Mobility as a strategic business and talent imperative**

▶ **Flexibility—whose choice is it?**

Rethinking the approach to mobility—a trend accelerated?

Our 2019 GMS report, **REVISION** reported the first year that short-term assignments overtook the more traditional long-term assignment types. This was an indication of a shift towards a more thoughtful approach to mobility, selecting and sending employees abroad for a specific project, supported by a more rigorous business case process. Then came 2020 and, along with it, a global pandemic shutting down borders and airports thus calling for a new way of working. What was an emerging trend in 2019 is suddenly the most prominent growth area for mobility—the virtual work arrangement. This concept isn't new, but it has been spurred on by necessity and enabled by technology innovation since COVID-19 hit the world.

Fig. 25: Businesses undertaking assignment/relocation types over last 12 months and expected growth in each type of assignment/relocation for next 24 months (GM)

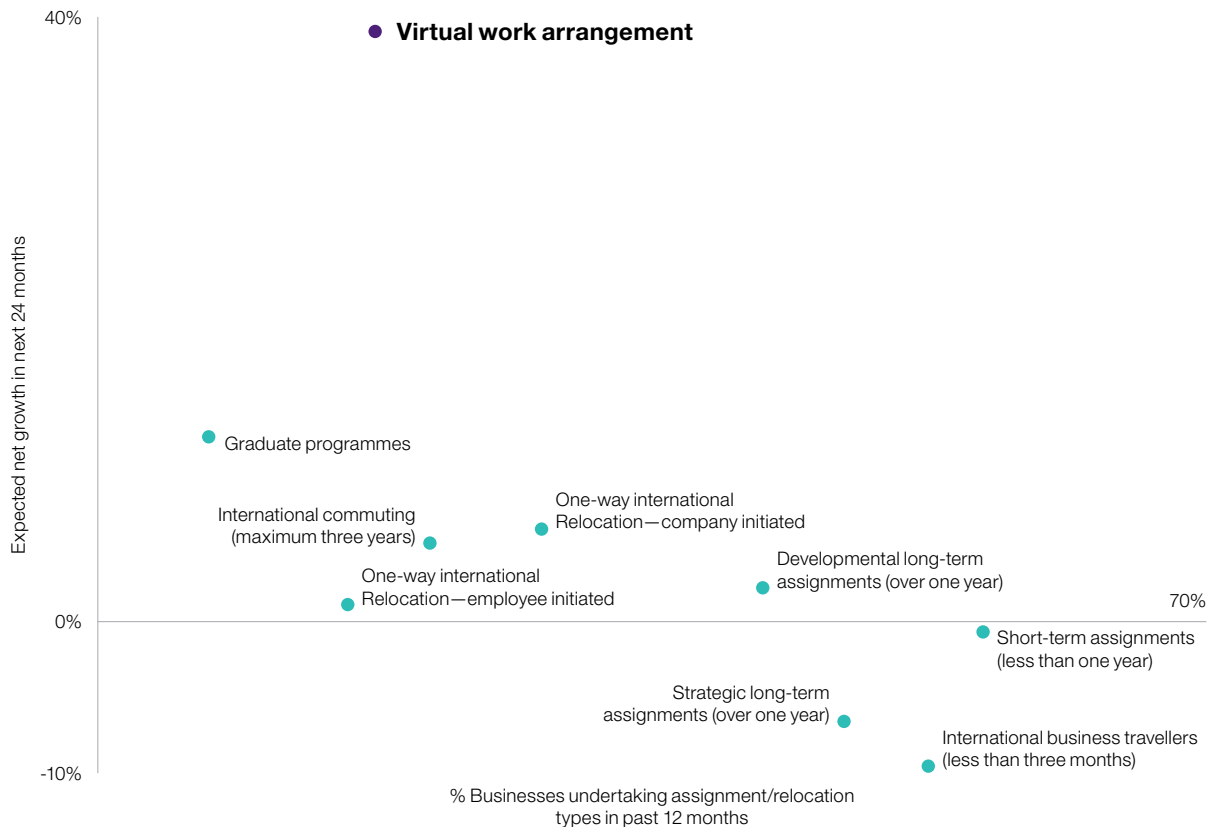


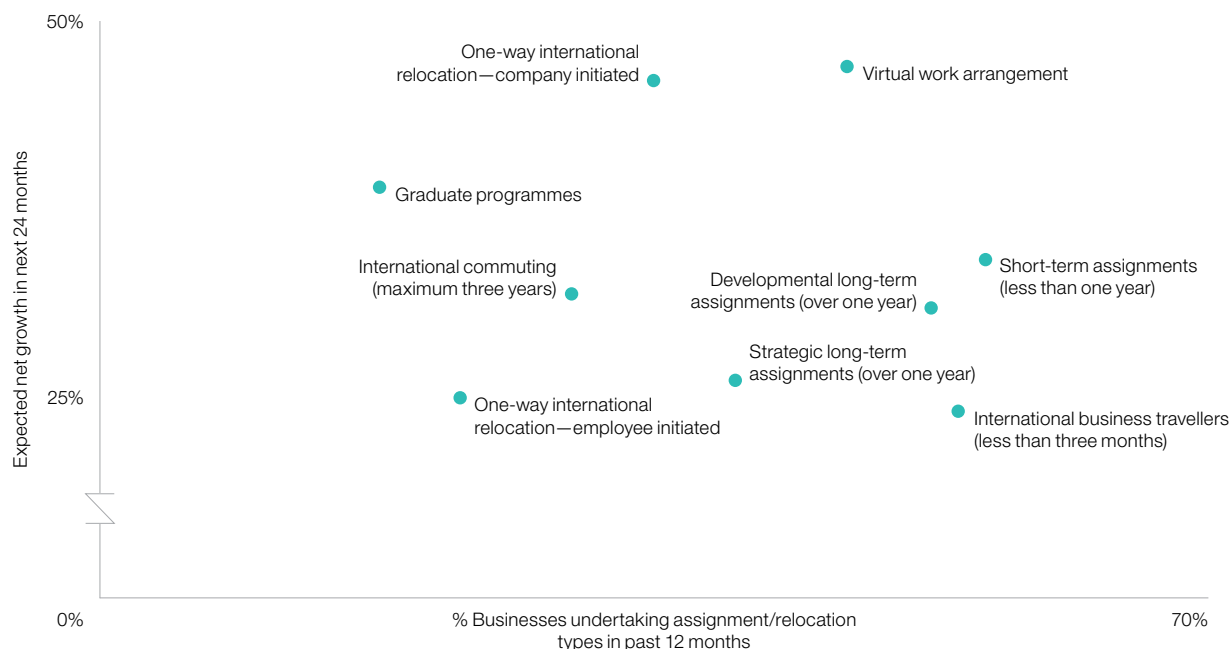
Fig. 25 confirms that true to last year's prediction short-term assignments and business travellers were the most common types of mobility. However, these types of assignments are now predicted to decline along with strategic long-term assignments. There are a number of possible reasons for this, as business grapples with resourcing critical roles whilst managing costs in a challenging economy, addressing duty of care and dealing with lockdowns.

The only real growth prediction is for virtual work arrangements. This had been only a slowly growing trend up until 2020. The pandemic has shown us that virtual working is easier and more effective than previously thought. This gives organisations a cost-effective alternative to business travel and short-term assignments as well as means to address closed borders, tightening of immigration and employee reluctance to move. The compliance risks of virtual working are covered in section three: **THRIVE**.

Interestingly Fig. 26 shows a very different, more optimistic picture in North America, with growth expected across all assignment types. Virtual work arrangements are in line with global predictions, although seem to have been adopted earlier than the rest of the world.

An increase in one-way moves and graduate programmes compared to the past 12 months indicates a move away from more traditional long-term assignments to lower cost mobility, possibly as a lever to resource needed roles with cost constraints, and to continue to develop talent, which is important to future-proof business.

Fig. 26: Businesses undertaking assignment/relocation types over last 12 months and expected growth in each type of assignment/relocation for next 24 months (North America)

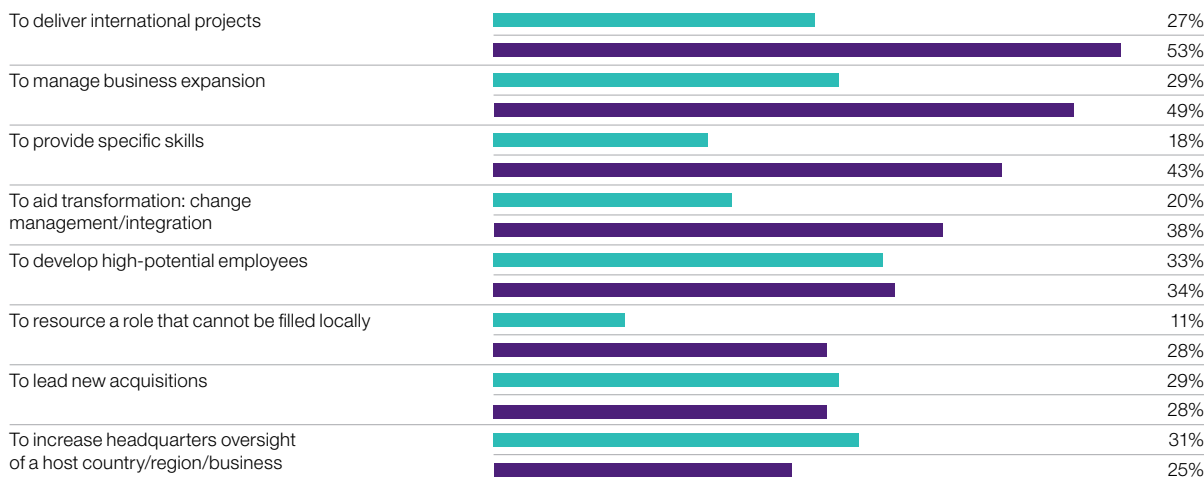


Whilst mobility remains a strategic priority, financial and political pressure will mean business is forced to build broader and deeper mobile talent pools to deliver results. Being very clear on the purpose and objectives of each mobile work arrangement will be key to achieving a return on investment.

+ Fig. 27 shows a stark change from 2019 for the key drivers in sending employees on assignments. Developing employees continues to be important, however the objectives of business expansion, integration, projects and skills transfer have significantly dropped.

+ The strategic objectives of leading acquisitions and increasing oversight is more important this year, indicating Business Leaders are focused on maintaining and growing business quickly, as they manage the economic impact of the pandemic.

Fig. 27: Key drivers for sending employees on international assignments—2019 versus 2020 (BL)



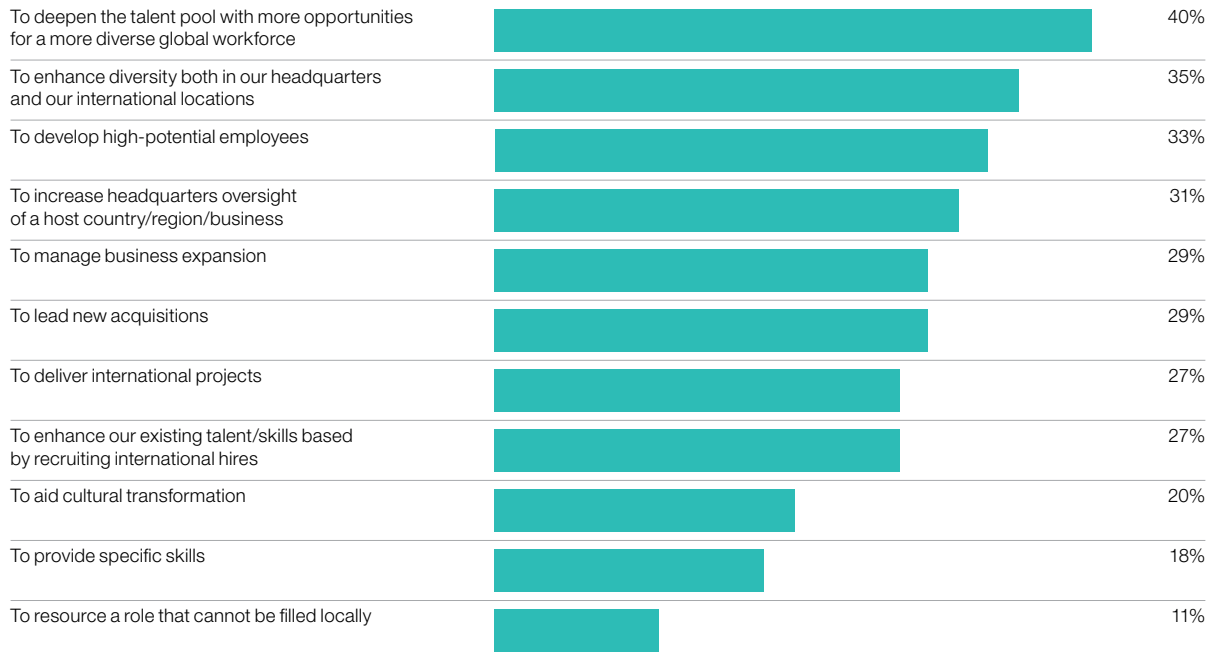
■ 2020 ■ 2019

In Fig. 28 we compare the drivers behind businesses wanting to send employees on assignments and employees accepting an assignment.

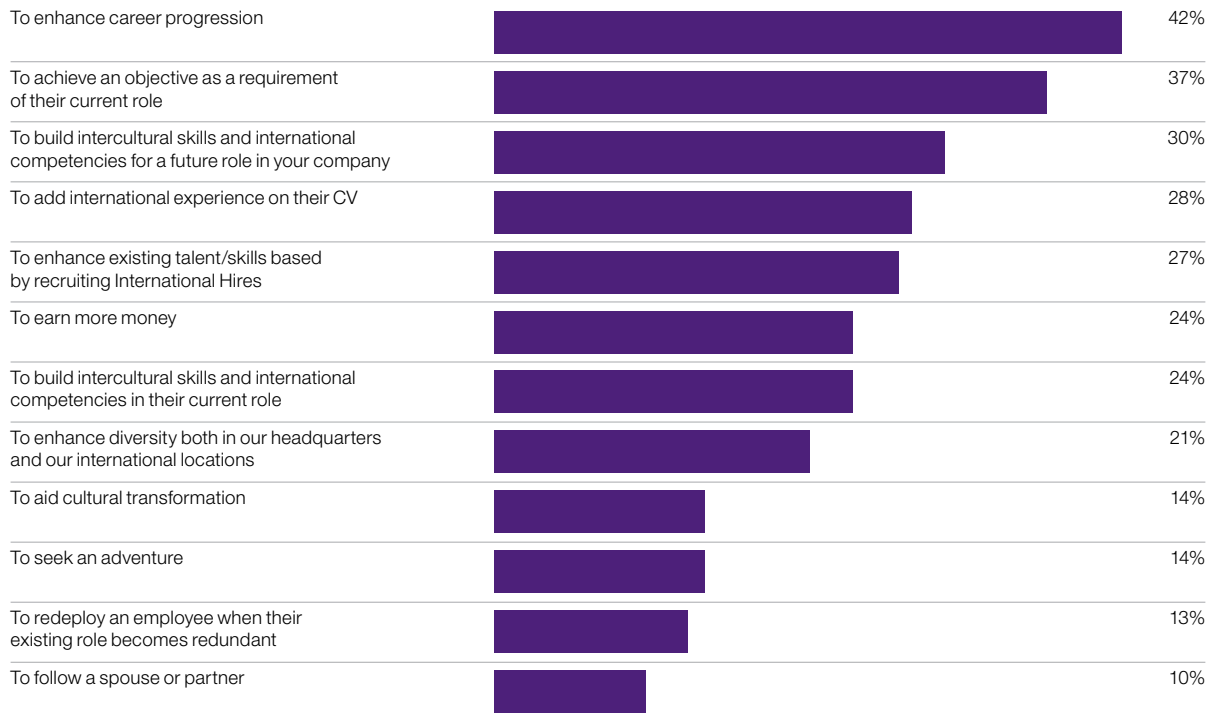
Perhaps not surprisingly, employees tend to take assignments largely for personal career development, suggesting they believe in the longer-term value rather than the short-time financial proposition. Business could foster this and assess if there are opportunities to create a broader motivated talent pool willing to take on assignments, particularly in these more challenging times. This value proposition changes the negotiation between employee and employer, but there needs to be evidence the career advancement occurs.

Fig. 28: Key drivers for sending employees on international assignments

Business Leaders



Global Mobility

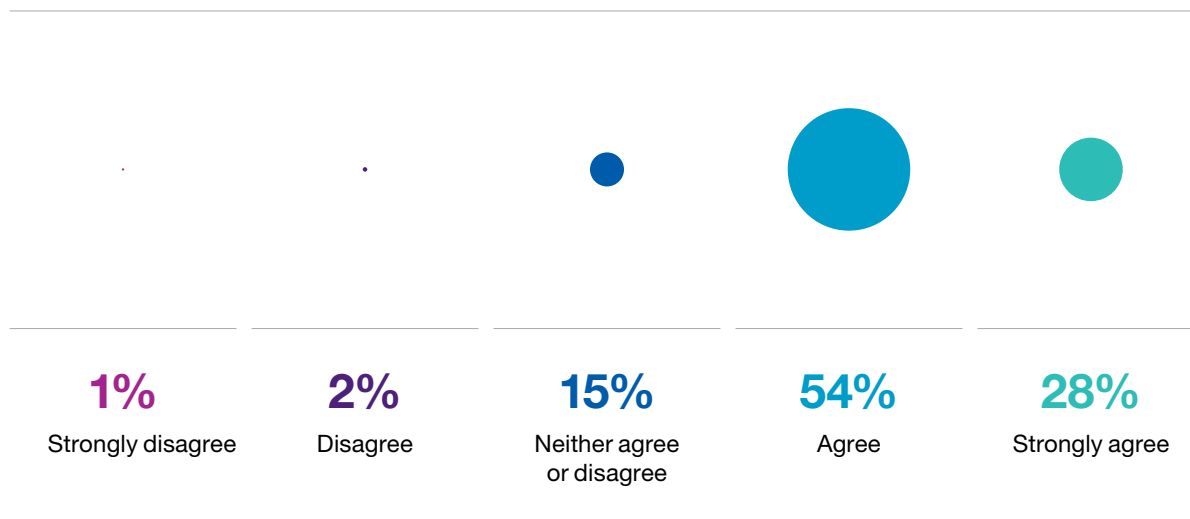


Business Leaders are prioritising the value of diversity and believe assignments to be important for developing high potential employees, which correlates with the results in Fig. 29 where Business Leaders unanimously recognise the value of assignments to career progression.

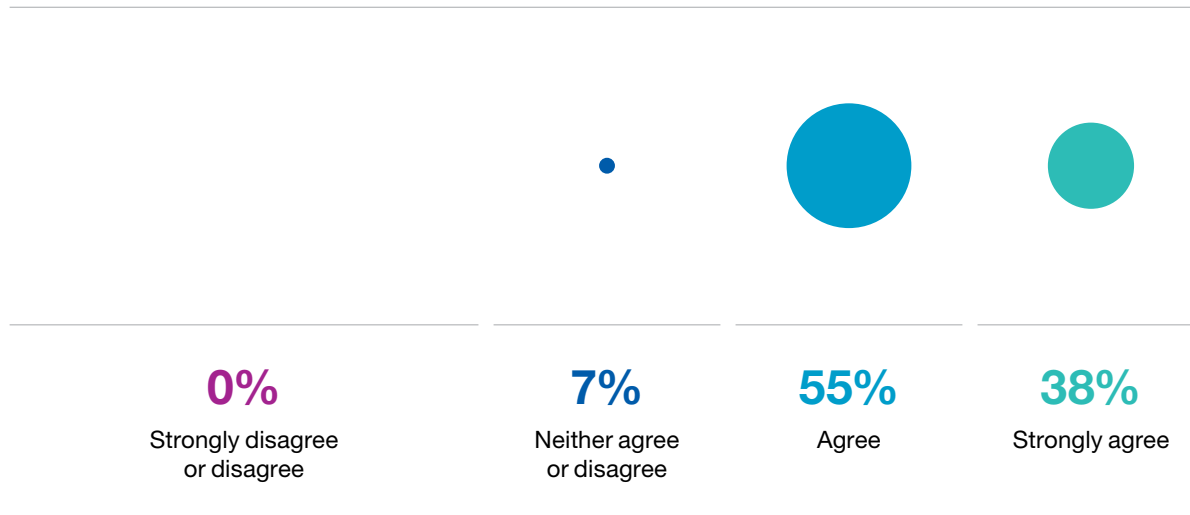
Balancing this objective with an increased use of virtual assignments will be important, particularly if geographical experience is important in the development of employees. Cultural and personal development is also compromised without face-to-face interaction and living away from one's home country. Diversity and employee development will be something to measure and review over the coming 12 to 24 months, to assess what is achievable with reduced physical mobility.

Fig. 29: Do employees who have undertaken international assignments achieve greater career progression? (Business Leaders versus Global Mobility comparison)

Global Mobility professionals



Business Leaders

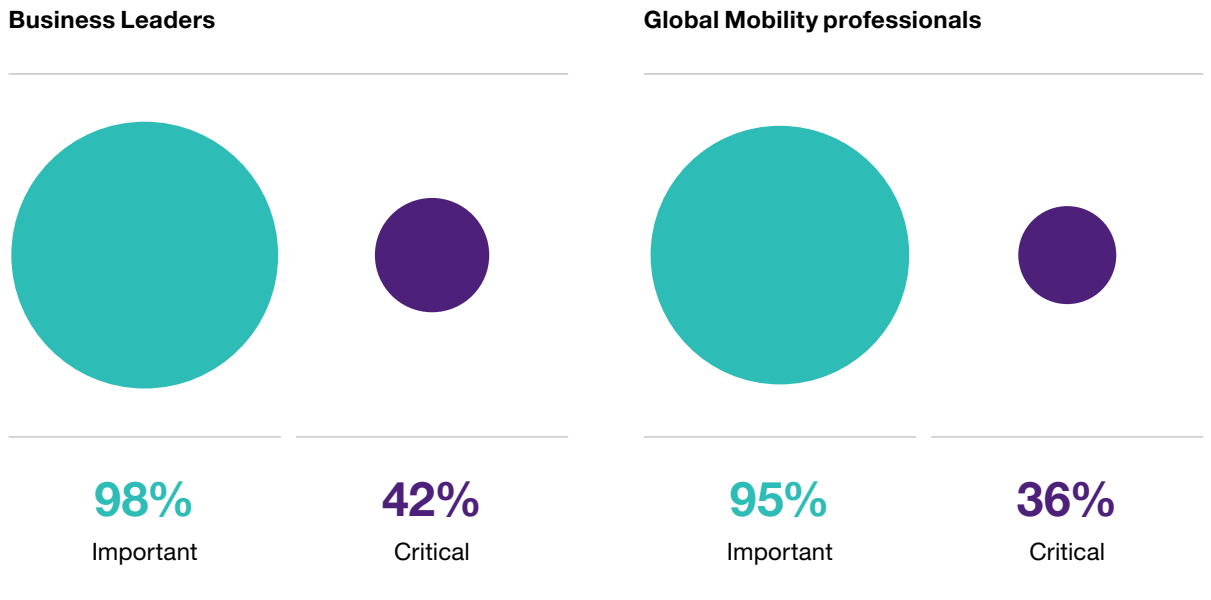


Mobility as a strategic business and talent imperative

The careful selection and deployment of talent with the right skills at the right cost is going to be essential for business continuity. Forward planning of the roles that need to be filled, a clear business case, and visibility of the talent profile within the organisation, or external but locally available talent with international experience will be needed.

Fig. 30 shows that in spite of, or perhaps because of, the difficult economic headwinds Business Leaders recognise the importance of a mobile workforce for the success of their business strategy.

Fig. 30: Business Leaders view of how important internationally mobile workforces are to businesses being able to meet their strategic objectives (BL)

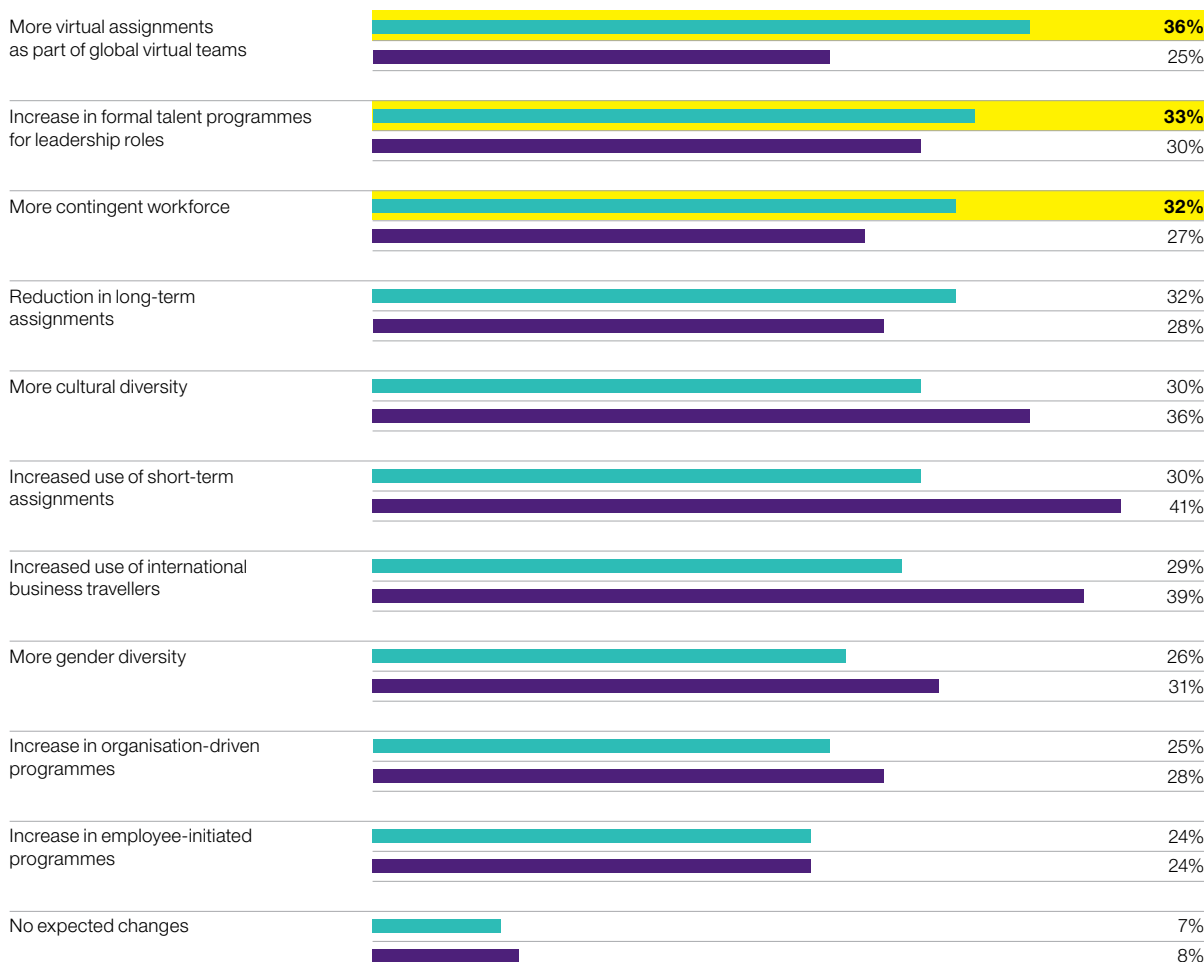


To balance this strategic need with the economic challenges, including perhaps less flexibility in cross-border movement, over the next 12 months we can expect to see a different profile of mobile talent than we would have predicted 12 months ago, as seen in **Fig. 31**.

Virtual assignments and virtual teams will top the charts as previously stated. Also high on the agenda is implementing more formal talent programmes for leadership roles. Using a contingent workforce may reduce the need for some assignments, resulting in the reduction of some fixed-term assignment types.

The reduction in cross-border mobility may be the reason why more cultural and gender diversity will be slower than predicted in 2019. Businesses will need to monitor this, given one of the key drivers for mobility is to increase diversity, **Fig. 28**.

Fig. 31: Changes expected amongst internationally mobile workforces over the next 24 months (GM)

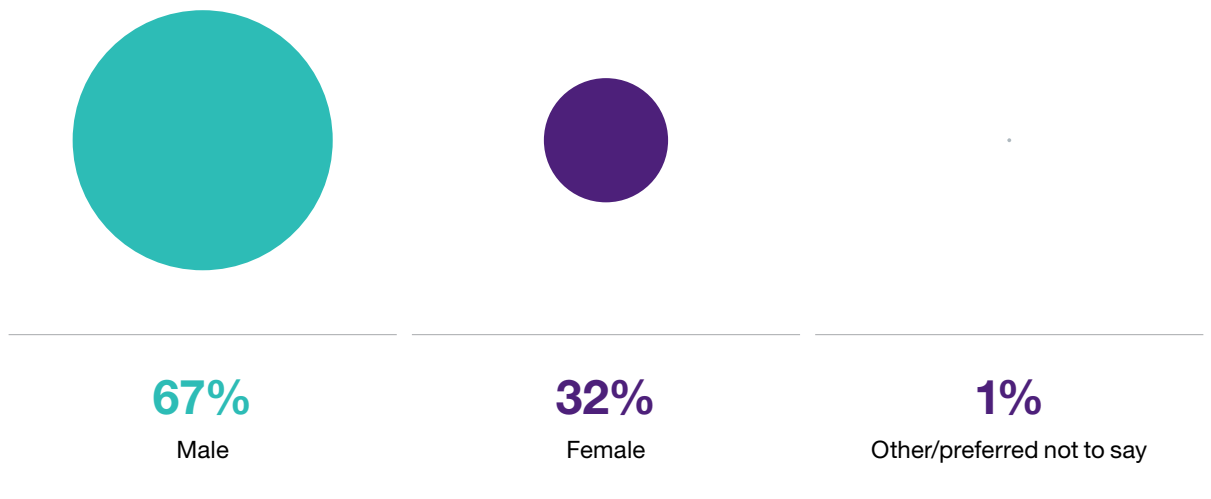


■ 2020 ■ 2019

A survey of FTSE 350 companies by gender diversity firm The Pipeline found that companies with no women on their executive committees recorded a net profit margin of 1.5 per cent, while those with at least a third of female executives recorded an average margin of 15.2 per cent. The Pipeline said that if the companies with no women on their executive committees matched the performance of those with at least a third on their boards, an additional £47 billion could have been made in pre-tax profits.

Relocate Magazine³

Fig. 32: Percentage of internationally mobile employees who are male and female (GM)



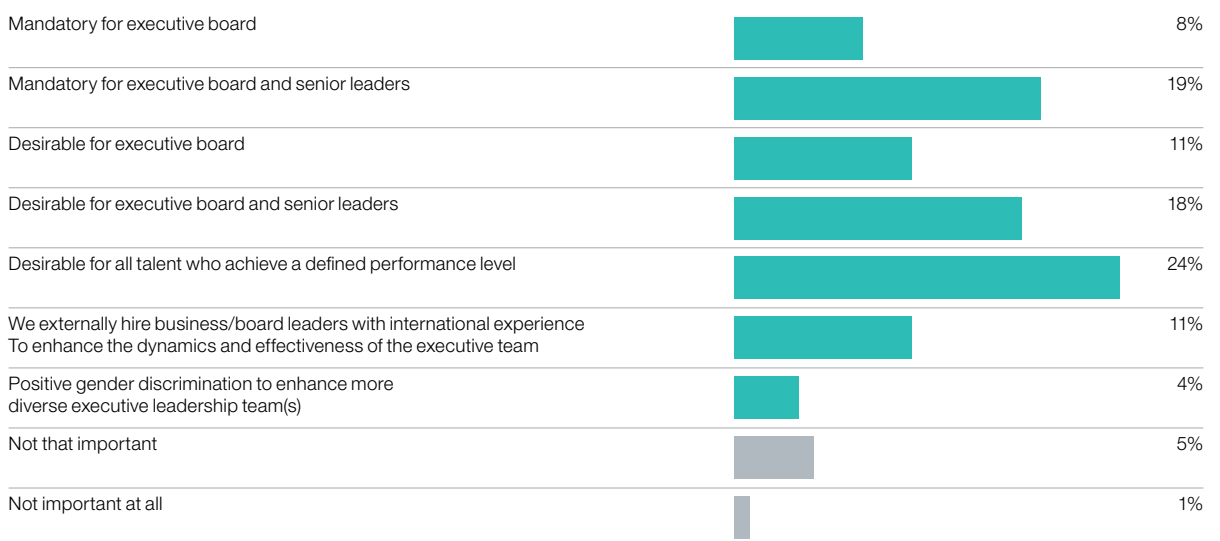
With diversity high on the agenda, it is interesting that the gender profile of internationally mobile employees is exactly as we reported in 2019, Fig. 32. Professional Services and Pharmaceutical and Health are leading the way, but all industries are still far from an even split.

Much has been written about the economic benefits of gender diversity. In 2019 we saw a promising increase in diversity which seems to have stalled in 2020. Possibly this is due to assignments being on hold for much of 2020. But with Business Leaders keeping diversity a priority on their agenda, we could hope to see this improve in the coming years.

Talent and leadership strategies will need to focus not only on internal talent development, but on increasing diversity through external hires, Fig. 33.

- + Not only is mobility important for business strategy, it is still considered essential or highly valued for key leadership roles. This has been the case for some time now, but with a predicted reduction in mobility over the next couple of years, external hires may be a solution.
- + Finding good external talent may become easier as organisations restructure, and senior talent becomes available with international experience, in the locations where organisations need them.
- + Hiring externally can also help address the diversity profile of the organisation, particularly if Global Mobility is more challenging in the near future.

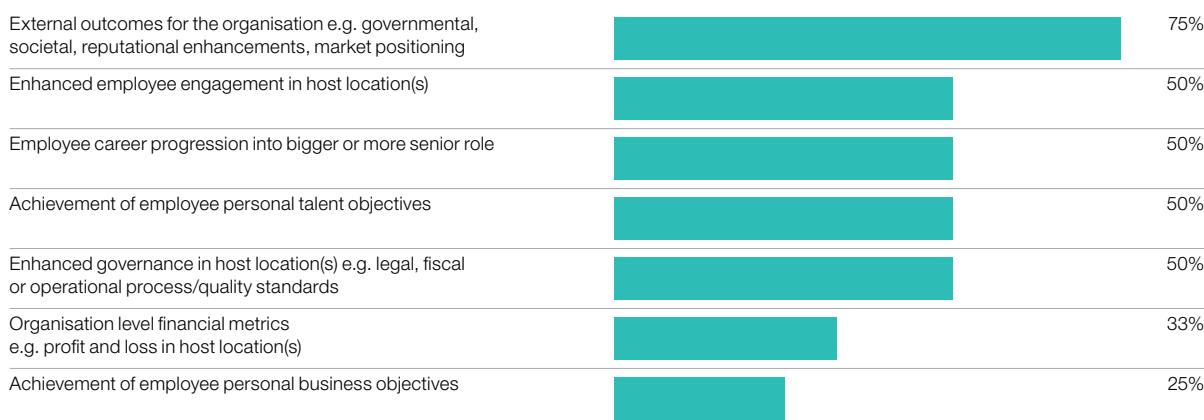
Fig. 33: Talent strategy for using international assignments (GM)



The economic climate means businesses need to be more careful about where they invest to deliver on their business objectives and develop the right talent. Understanding where the value is delivered becomes more important than ever, see Fig. 34.

- + Being able to assess the success and therefore the value of an assignment has always been a challenge. Agreeing the key metrics is important, as well as how to measure performance against the metrics.
- + Business leaders consider immediate value to be measured by external outcomes, including reputational enhancements and market positioning. How to attribute this to an assignment to understand the personal performance and impact of an individual assignee on a particular outcome will depend on their role. Perhaps assessing the overall cost/investment into mobility within certain markets is the first metric, then drill into personal contribution.
- + The expectation on assignments to impact market positioning makes strong candidate selection and a positive experience for the assignee will be critical. Resourcing roles with mobile talent just because that's what has always been done is no longer an option. A business case with clear outcomes can help to evaluate how to fill the role for the best return.

Fig. 34: How Business Leaders evaluate the immediate post assignment ROI (BL)



Flexibility—whose choice is it?

Flexibility has been discussed for some time now, mostly in relation to having a more flexible policy suite.

Since the global pandemic we have seen organisations be more flexible in how they manage assignments and fill critical roles. Flexibility of where and how people work is evolving quickly, along with updating policies to facilitate mobility choices. Virtual Assignments are not new and have been on the rise. Working in a location of choice (location flexibility), for an entity in a different location offers employees flexibility to enhance their career experience and still live where they wish or need to. For businesses, it can widen the talent pool for certain roles, providing flexibility of choice where talent isn't necessarily mobile.

- + The year 2020 has forced everyone to think differently about virtual working, with a significant proportion of the workforce forced to work from home, alone in lockdown. **Fig. 35** shows that over two thirds of companies are considering or enabling this model for the future too.
- + Technology has rapidly adapted, as have the workforce, to facilitate this remote working. The increased ability to work remotely, combined with potential resistance or inability of assignees to move to another country has forced many organisations to consider virtual assignments more closely.
- + Location flexibility isn't always as easy as it seems—these arrangements can create some tax and immigration compliance challenges that need to be understood and addressed—see **THRIVE**. Other arguments against these arrangements have been the effectiveness of virtual teaming versus physical presence.
- + Not all industries are able to allow virtual working, possibly because the job simply can't be done without physical presence, or because of local licenses that might be required. This could explain the difference in results for Financial Services compared to Technology and Communications, and Pharmaceutical and Health, **Fig. 36**.

Fig. 35: Flexibility of virtual assignments (GM)



Fig. 36: Flexibility of virtual assignments (GM— Industry comparisons)

If a key talent hire refuses to relocate, will you allow them to remain in their home country as part of a virtual team, with some agreed Business Travel?



If someone wants to be on a virtual team, they are transferred to the location of that team, and work from home in their original location.



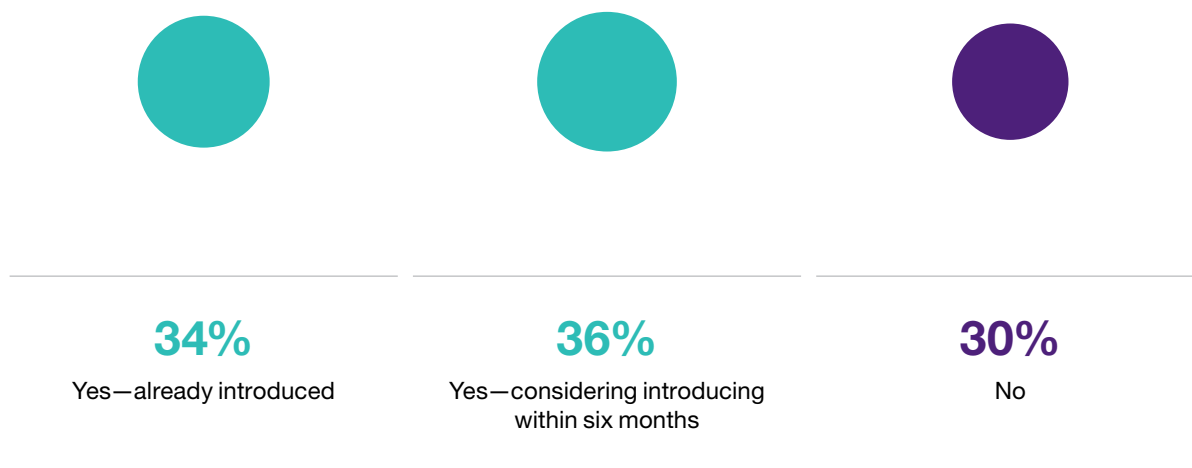
We are reviewing virtual assignments within HR or executive board level.



- Overall
- Technology and Communication
- Pharmaceuticals and Health
- Financial

Virtual assignments allow a level of flexibility for employees but we are also seeing an increase of flexible policies being implemented across the more traditional mobility types, Fig. 37. Flexible policies come in several shapes and sizes depending upon the type of flexibility an organisation is trying to achieve, and the key driver for flexibility.

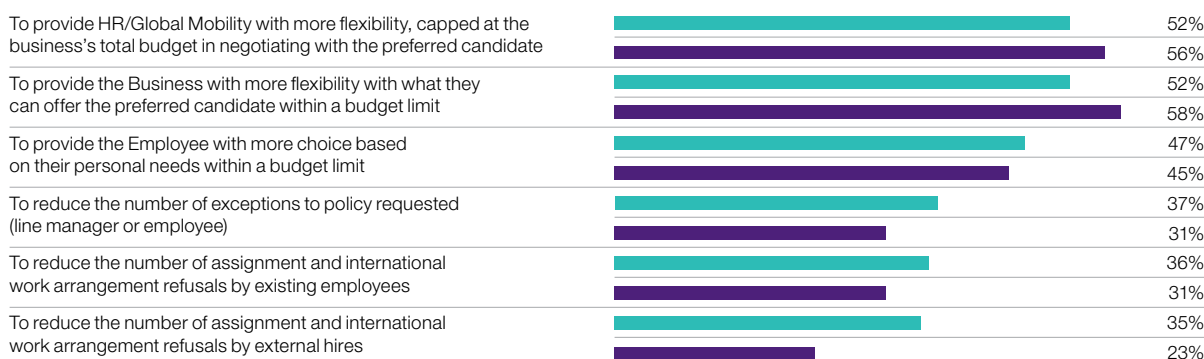
Fig. 37: Introduction of new policies to provide more flexible arrangements within a mandatory/flex (Core/Flex) policy framework (GM)



Understanding what you are trying to solve by introducing flexibility is important, as well as the administrative impact of the flexibility. Does it add more burden to the business, to Global Mobility, or to the assignee to make choices and explain these choices?

- + The most common reasons for implementing some flexibility are weighted towards allowing more flexible choices for the business, rather than giving more flexibility to the employee, Fig. 38. The flexibility for Global Mobility professionals or for the business allows a more pragmatic approach to better matching business needs (and cost profile), while considering the varying circumstances of the employee.
- + Employee budgets are also relatively popular for those that have already introduced flexibility, but less so for companies only starting to consider flexible policies. The employee budget approach does need careful management to guide the employee to make decisions they will be happy with once they undertake the relocation. Seasoned assignees may find this easier, but others will possibly spend a lot of time trying to maximise the use of the budget and make choices that they regret.

Fig. 38: Reasons for implementing/considering Core/Flex policy framework



- Already introduced
- Considering introducing

Fig. 39: Impact or success seen from new Core/Flex policy framework (GM)



As we can see in Fig. 39, the benefits of a flexible policy arrangement are focused around greater acceptance of an assignment, and less negotiation all around. This reduces the time and effort for all stakeholders and can have a positive impact on speed to deploy, as well as cost of the assignment and stakeholder satisfaction.

Exception requests are reduced by both business and the employee due to more careful consideration of what is provided, based not only on business needs but on employee needs too. Being clear on these needs and why certain choices are made helps to address any inequity a flexible approach can result in.

Conclusions

Global deployment of talent is still considered important to achieve business and talent objectives. Physical mobility will continue where possible, with the use of more varied assignment types.

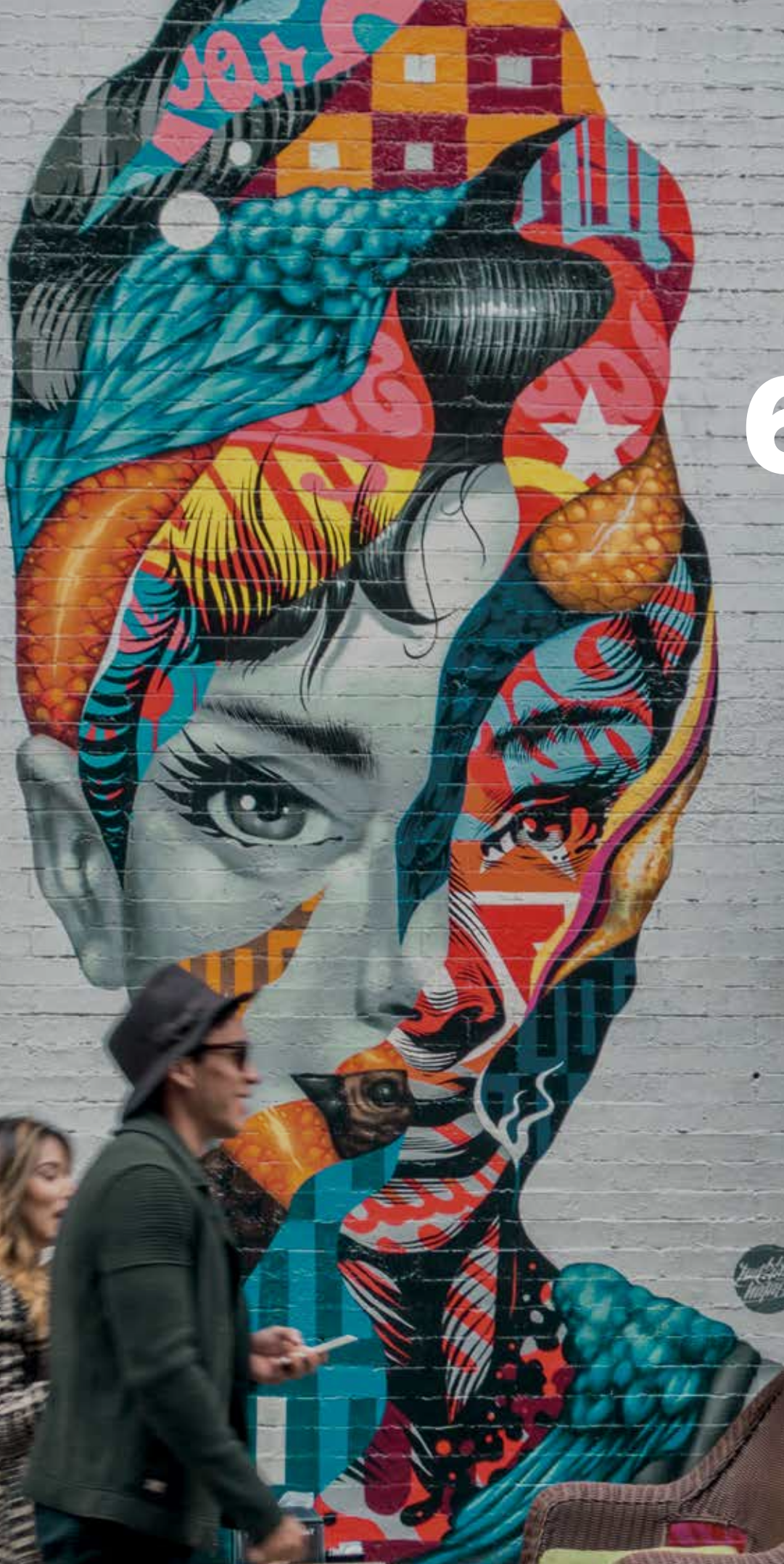
Virtual working will become a lever to manage the barriers to mobility but may not achieve some of the core business objectives such as diversity and cultural integration.

Flexibility not only in policy provisions, but also in the way talent is mobilised is a tool that business and Global Mobility teams can use to manage faster decision making, assignee acceptance and costs.

Business leaders consider immediate value to be measured by external outcomes, including reputational enhancements and market positioning. A business case with clear outcomes can help to evaluate how to fill the role for the best return.

Diversity in international work arrangements seems to have stalled in 2020. As talent pools become more competitive to attract the right candidates, there is a great opportunity to enable access to a wider talent pool by rethinking policies and processes that reflect evolving work/life expectations over the next 24 months.

This requires a broader re-think on the use of all internal and external resources; greater awareness of latent talent within the organisation through enhanced digital connectivity between business and HR teams and through the use of external suppliers who can support the employee value proposition to take the plunge into an international assignment, even if they may be uncertain uncharted waters.



61

Handwritten signature or logo in a circular stamp.



TALENT

Cassi Bauer

Director, Global Mobility

Oceaneering

The 2020 Santa Fe Relocation Mobility survey is a leading example of how in a noticeably short period the commentary can be changed to not only how we move talent by why we move talent. In previous years, the discussion would have been around costs, career progression and business growth and the selection of talent would have been easier. In 2020 with the pandemic, not only do you have less participants ready for the challenge, but you must also have greater considerations around immigration, health/safety and the direction the business may be heading.

The Pandemic has pushed companies into a new normal with virtual work arrangements. I believe it not only shocked the industries, but it also shocked the mobility world how easily and effectively that virtual work has become the norm. As the survey shows, for most businesses it is no longer necessary to have the number of business travellers, short-term assignments, and/or global meetings as it was previously thought. With the ability to work anywhere in the world, what does this mean for real estate, immigration, and compliance? The responses have shown flexibility in policies, internal resources, and the value-added principle will need to be considered. Global mobility will always be necessary but the purpose for the utilisation of talent mobility will see a shift in the coming years to a more sustainable program.

David Carmichael

Director, Global Mobility, COE

CGI

The position of Global Mobility within a business has been a point of discussion for years. Many organisations still align Global Mobility to Reward but organisations really need to ask themselves more “why” they are moving people versus “how”—only by understanding the rationale for assignment selection can you truly create a set of policies and programmes that meet business needs and only then can you create the right administrative structure that can successfully deliver on those requirements...but, there is also more to it than that...the “traditional” view of Global Mobility has often been restricted to seeing it as a function that is responsible for moving people permanently or temporarily who already work for an organisation—but mobility can be more—it should be an integral part of the talent decision making process.

David Carmichael continued

For example, if a manager in a global organisation needs a resource in a particular location for a particular period of time they should be able to see clearly what resources they have available to them in their domestic market, in other geographies, virtually etc. Plus, they should easily be able to see what those resources might cost and what the time frame would be to deploy. They should also be able to balance the risk of taking one approach to filling that resource gap versus another. The challenge for Global Mobility professionals with the pandemic in mind will be finding the right way to reinvent themselves bearing in mind that traditional mobility is likely to remain threatened for some time.

Erik Mathys

Group Compensation & Benefits International
Mobility & Executive Pay Manager

Etex

Preparing for a “new normal” also makes clear that some of the measurements taken will be there to stay. Remote working and flexibility will be part of our new way of working. Other elements will be there to stay or will become even more important: managing talent and development of talent will become ever more crucial to lead the business to success. New ways of working and diversity will be key in order to be able to push business leaders to success. Measurement of success will strongly depend on the reporting the Global Mobility and talent teams will be able to bring to their business leaders. Being able to show “return on investment” will have never been more important!

Dr Phil Renshaw

Visiting Fellow

Cranfield University

Director

Coaching On the Go

There is value in looking at international assignments in terms of optionality. For example, if an assignment increases the skills and capabilities of an individual this provides the employer with more options or choices in how to deploy this individual to greater effect. Whilst the underlying financial dynamics of optionality are complex, what we can learn from thinking this way is, in fact, surprisingly simple. For example, increasing the flexibility of the workforce through shorter term assignments, commuter assignments and business travel arrangements, rather than using long-term traditional assignments should generate greater value for businesses in highly volatile environments. Optionality guides us away from long-term traditional assignments in these situations and supports their use in more stable contexts.

Dr Phil Renshaw continued

The significant increase in recognising the employer's duty of care over assignees can only be positive. The question is, what will be the long-term effect? It would be a tragedy if in three years' time this increased awareness has not changed anything to the benefit of the employee—nor indeed, to the employer. Given the increasing attention on the usefulness of Core/Flex packages, this provides Global Mobility professionals with an opportunity to argue for the inclusion into these packages of items known to have value to employees and the business and yet are insufficiently provided/used. Examples could include coaching support and cultural awareness support both for the assignees and their families.

The significant increase in virtual work assignments presents an opportunity to focus on the underlying value of international assignments. A real-life experiment has been created in which organisations can determine whether virtual assignments achieve the same net value as traditional assignments. Calculations will be tough given complex factors such as tax and immigration, yet this complexity allows Global Mobility to explain the true value of effective international assignments. I would encourage Global Mobility leaders to shout loudly about this opportunity.

The uneven impact on different sectors of COVID-19 offers opportunity for those working in talent management and able to act quickly. We have known for some years that employers can take advantage of the international assignment experience that people gain working elsewhere. Many of the benefits to an employee are transferable. Global Mobility professionals in the stronger sectors need to draw attention to this opportunity.

Raquel Tovar

Manager Employee Mobility
CommScope

The outlook on mobility is a complex picture to paint, however, international assignments will not stop, we do expect new challenges, we expect to receive an increase on requests for work arrangements flexibility, cross-border arrangements, remote working and virtual assignments (employees relocate to host location but work from home). We may need to implement remote work policies.

Véronique Smets

Head of International Mobility
Engie

This analysis shows that less than a third of international mobilities are driven by operational needs while the major motivator is driven by governance and/or talent. Hence Talent policy continues to be the driver to International Mobility rules.

Virtual working will of course be a booming trend and the number of virtual workers will grow beyond more conservative international assignee populations. It does provide employees with autonomy and freedom to exercise their professional activity from anywhere, which in turn will increase employee engagement, a positive business driver. While challenging to Global Mobility teams, we have to trust that current context will also bring authorities around the globe to ease compliancy on this type of mobilities.

THRIVE

3

John Rason

Group Head of Consulting

Santa Fe Relocation

Dinesh Jangra

Global Practice Leader, Global Mobility Services

Crowe

Peter Graham

Group Director Relocation, Immigration

Santa Fe Relocation

In this final section, we explore the different dimensions of risks and opportunities for organisations. We have seen throughout the report that a holistic approach is required to ensure that internationally mobile employees can thrive and enjoy their work. Doing so in a compliant way ensures that the organisation can flourish and focus on positive outcomes rather than defensive interventions. This section highlights that risks can be people and compliance related.

Digital connectivity, data, cost transparency, clarity on roles, rules and responsibilities create a positive forward-looking culture to ensure a competitive position within the organisation's industry.

THRIVE key themes

▶ <u>Implications of fluid mobility patterns—virtual assignments</u>
▶ <u>Changes in the top five challenging destinations</u>
▶ <u>Why do GM teams perceive these destinations to be challenging?</u>
▶ <u>Challenges facing GM in achieving their objectives</u>
▶ <u>International business travellers</u>

Plus two special features

- ▶ **Implications of increasingly fluid mobility patterns—virtual assignments**
- ▶ **It's not all about the money**

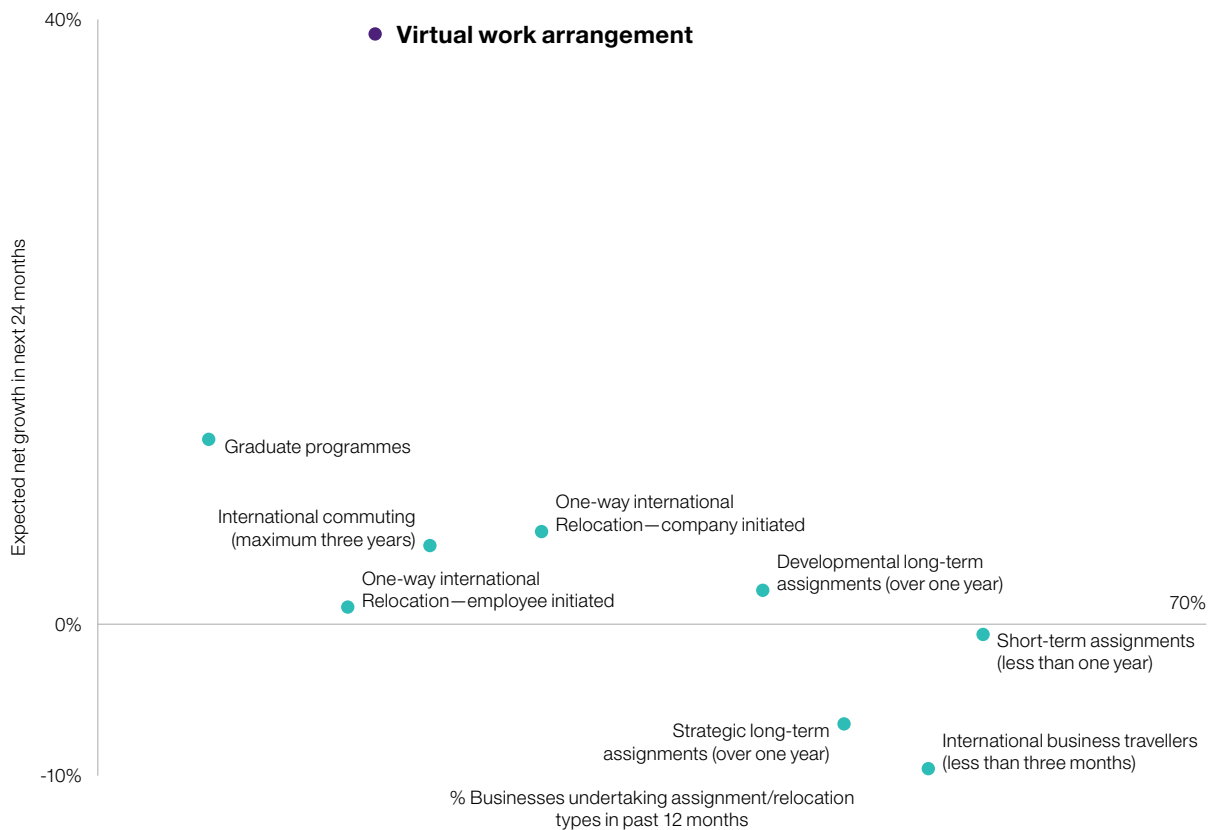
Implications of fluid mobility patterns—virtual assignments

We saw in the section two: **TALENT** (Fig. 25 repeated below), that the highest predicted growth for the next 24 months is to be virtual work arrangements. Throughout 2019, based on increasing client discussions on these trends, Santa Fe Relocation produced a **White Paper: Managing the risk of virtual assignments, April 2020**. This theme continues in this section.

As work patterns migrate towards more flexible, fluid arrangements, virtual assignments have increasingly become recognised as a more frequently adopted option, bearing in mind that the employer/employee deal has, for certain skills, become more negotiable. In 2018, the Santa Fe Relocation White Paper: The future of work and the impact on Global Mobility, part 2 of 2, reflected on the trends in assignments over more recent years and concluded that organisations were moving people in a different manner to how they had done 10-20 years previously, with a decline in traditional long-term assignments, and increasing usage of short-term and commuter assignments.

Compliance perspectives

Fig. 25: Businesses undertaking assignment/relocation types over last 12 months and expected growth in each type of assignment/relocation for next 24 months (GM)



In many ways what we are seeing is mobility happening to the work and not the worker. Doing nothing will lead to compliance and legal risks with resulting cost and compliance surprises.

- + The survey responses clearly indicate that virtual and remote working are a stand out growth area.
- + The pace of adoption due to COVID-19 is, however, game changing. Businesses need to be clear that remote and virtual workers create compliance risks that need methodical and systematic review.
- + Risks like permanent establishment, payroll, income taxes, social security or labour law are just some of the headline issues that require review.
- + Key for HR and Mobility teams will be the identification of these arrangements and the introduction of a structured and consistent risk assessment process. In many ways this is not dissimilar to the growing business traveller compliance risk that many organisations have been grappling with—the processes and structures required may be similar even if the context is different. Enterprise experience and corporate memory about business travellers can really help.

Defining virtual assignments

- + With the rise of video conferencing technologies and the increasing acceptance of working from home, there is not always the need to physically relocate as there has been previously. Someone working on one of these international teams may be working in a way that, years ago, would have required an assignment but no longer does today.
- + However, just because an employee remains in their home country office and doesn't physically move, there may still be issues encountered that are similar to those that would have been if they had been sent on an assignment. In particular, these international projects may require cross-border travel or frequent business trips to another office in another country, which potentially include a regular work pattern of two or three days a week akin to a commuter assignment, but in the other direction.
- + This means that it remains important to track immigration, tax, social security and labour law requirements in the same way as if that person had been physically relocated. The assignment may be virtual, the compliance remains real.

Virtual assignments may be different to business travel or commuter assignments because of the way the cost is potentially allocated or charged internally in the organisation.

- + It may be common for the assignee's cost to be recharged back to the central project team which means that the cost may be being borne in the country where despite being employed, they are physically working only occasionally. This combination of employment and cost allocation may, however, trigger taxability for the employee (and related payroll for the employer).
- + Compliance can also be triggered in the country in which the employee lives and usually works despite it not being the employment location. Payroll, income taxes and social security can be triggered. As compliance is triggered it will get ever more complex for the employer to understand tax and payroll cost outflows and timings. The employee too will get into an ever more complex scenario in which to understand their net after tax pay in, tax reimbursement support in the guise of tax equalisation may be necessary.
- + The implications of this could mean the business expects a low touch, low cost Virtual Assignment. What they really get is a potentially costly and complex arrangement to deliver. Upfront analysis before working arrangements are sanctioned will be critical.

Immigration perspectives on virtual assignments

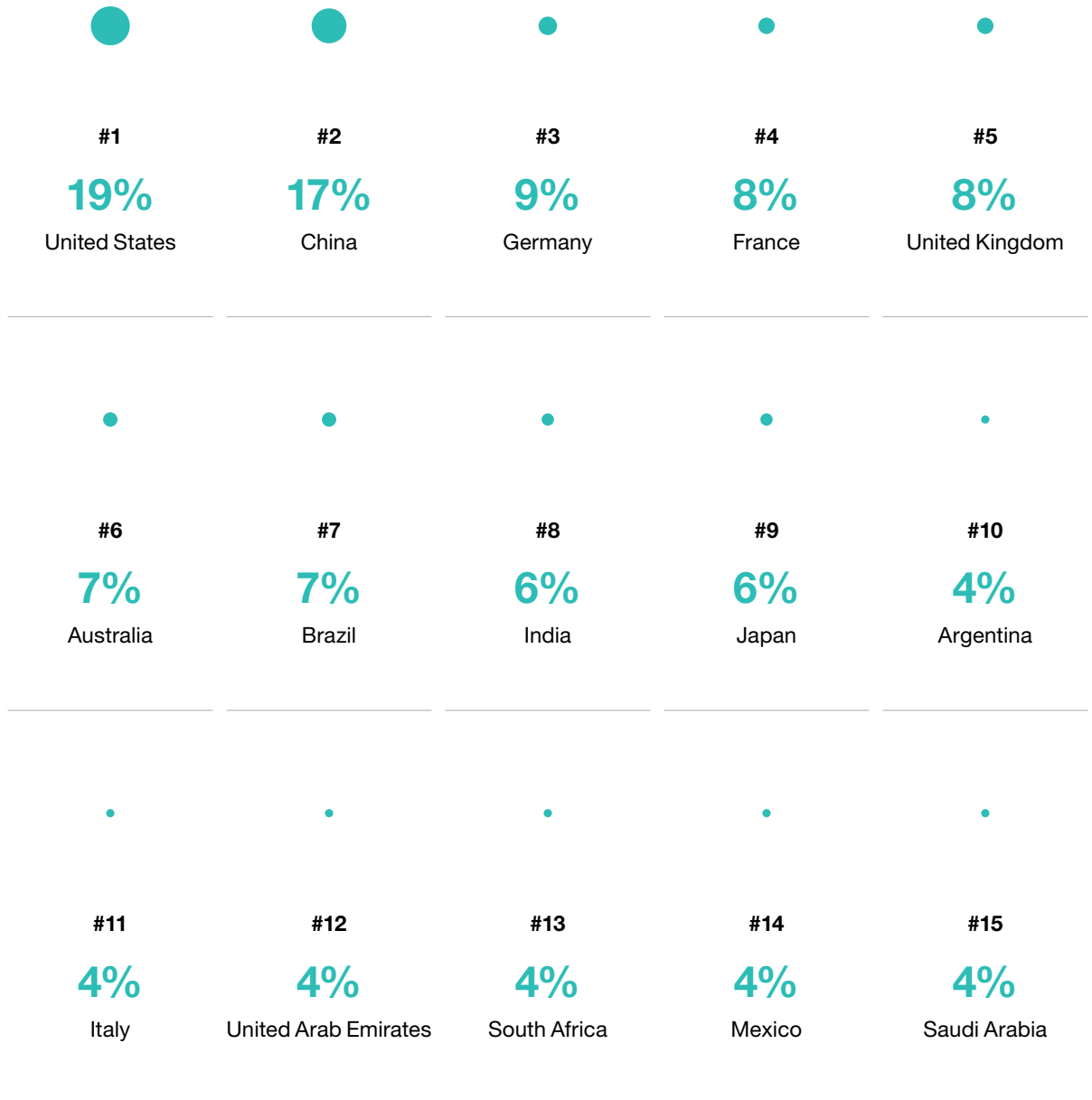
From an immigration perspective, virtual assignments have not been an issue since immigration laws normally only apply to people physically entering or planning to enter the country. However, a Virtual Assignment may include some short trips to the host/employment location.

Short trips may in the past have been treated as business trips as a default, so a work permit may not be required. However, with different reporting lines in a Virtual Assignment, these are more likely to be viewed as work.

Peter Graham, Group Director Relocation, Immigration, Santa Fe Relocation

Changes in the top five challenging destinations

Fig. 40 Most challenging destinations for international business travellers and relocating employees (all mentions)

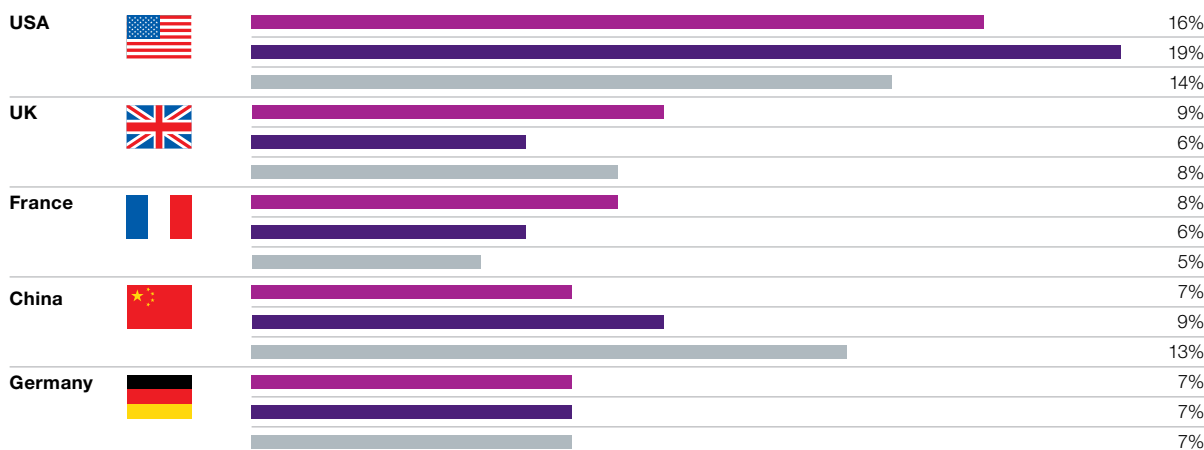


Immigration challenges

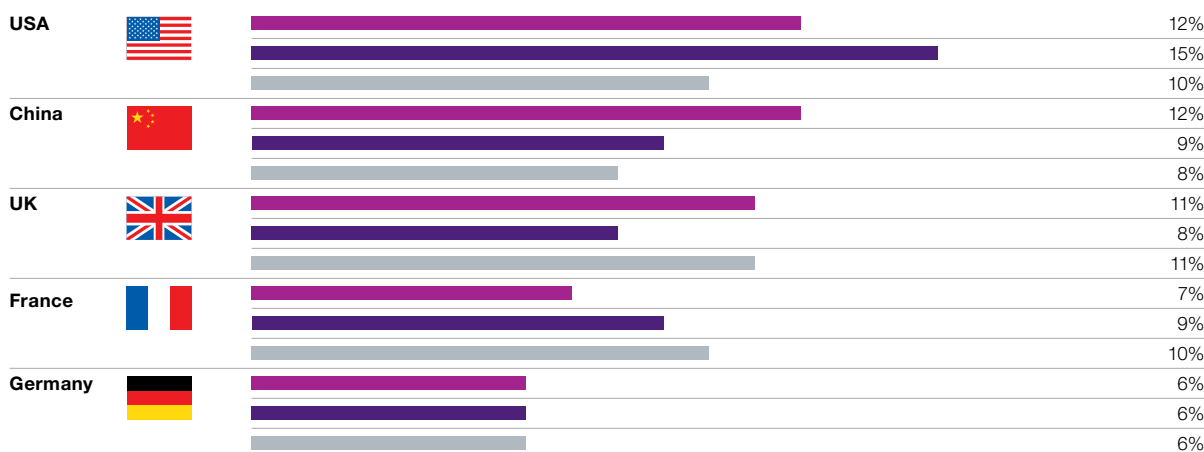
It will be interesting to see in the next few years whether large organisations look to build more resilience into their supply chains by not putting all their eggs in one basket, i.e. by focusing on one, maybe two locations and instead, in some cases bringing parts of their supply chain on-shore or near-shore. Will this reinforce the emphasis on a more regional, rather than global, approach?

Fig. 41: Most frequent assignment destinations and most frequent locations employees are sent from

Destinations (% most common)



Sending from (% most sent from)



- 2020
- 2019
- 2018

Why do Global Mobility professionals perceive these destinations to be challenging?

The USA remains the most challenging destination, ahead of China and India (which fell to eighth compared to last year when it was third). As two of the largest countries in the world, it is perhaps unsurprising that these top two have been the same for the past two years.

The impact of COVID-19 and the rapidly changing spikes in reported cases raise health concerns, combined with a continued shift in the political environment and in the case of the USA, increasingly stringent controls on immigration for foreign nationals.

Germany, France and the United Kingdom have been reported as challenging destinations—still fractured discussions on BREXIT, and the potential impact of the EU Posted Workers Directive.

Other factors may include the language requirements, highlighted below in **Fig. 42** Why are these destinations challenging? Cultural differences (38%), and language difficulties (34%) and concerns for personal security/safety (31%) are the top reported challenges.

Fig. 42: Why are these destinations most challenging? (GM)

Cultural differences	38%
Language difficulties	34%
Concerns about personal security/safety	31%
Immigration complications	30%
Political climate	29%
Concerns over pandemics e.g. Coronavirus, Ebola, etc	26%
Differences in legislation	24%
High cost of living	24%
Complicated tax system	23%
Diversity climate e.g. race, sexuality, religion, gender	23%
Insufficient infrastructure e.g. roads, transportation etc	22%
Insufficient/too different medical infrastructure	22%
Lowered quality of living	21%
Unsuitable for accompanying family members	20%
Availability of suitable housing	19%
Country with high levels of tax	19%
Corruption/Insufficient corporate governance	18%
Concerns over climate change	14%

38% Cultural differences + 34% language difficulties

- + Cultural and Language training are the ones I see companies don't always provide support for as core or mandatory. I suspect business and cost centre leaders see these as areas to short cut support to save money but if they do that it's not really preparing the person for host location success so potentially putting the return at risk.
- + To really get your arms around the top three issues here—tracking employees is key. It's now more important than ever for a host of reasons to know where your employees are. The pandemic may lead to the workforce being more receptive to the implementation of a tracing and tracking system or process.

Dinesh Jangra, Crowe

30% immigration complications

- + Business travel is increasingly becoming an area that Global Mobility practitioners are having to deal with on top of their already busy Global Mobility programme portfolios.
- + Immigration has always been a complex area and the dynamic nature of current changes in immigration and border rules as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have made this an even more complicated area.
- + Whereas tax activities are normally conducted after the activity has taken place, immigration is a more real-time challenge that can have the effect of stopping the activity taking place altogether.

Peter Graham, Santa Fe Relocation

26% Concerns over pandemics

- + In the recently published White Paper: Has cultural adaptation ever been so critical?, we make the case about ensuring these provisions are fully supported for both mobilising employees and for those on virtual work arrangements. This becomes critical—from both a duty of care perspective and a necessary investment to create successful assignments.
- + This should also include preparing arrival/host country teams for adapting to their relocating colleagues.

John Rason, Santa fe Relocation

It's not all about the money

Cost optimisation is going to be key for organisations to thrive. The mobilisation of talent to support and drive the rebound of organisations needs to be cost effective. That cost effectiveness will result in a hard and measurable competitive advantage.

We have provided the highest estimated tax gross up costs for key destinations highlighted by the survey. These highlight for the majority of countries, the significant impact of tax and social security costs to these key destinations.

Total cost framework

- + **If organisations are focused on cost optimisation, looking at the whole picture, not the pieces, is key;**
 - Using a traditional long-term assignment total cost model, operational supply chain costs indicatively represent between 1% and 3% of the total Global Mobility programme. These may not necessarily achieve the quantum of savings expected by the executive board.
 - **Taxation costs (gross up taxes on net compensation and employer social security costs) are on average 43% of total costs in the countries the participants highlighted as major home and host locations for employers. It isn't always well understood but taxation is a large cost component of globally mobile employees.**
- + With any cost reduction programme, there is a balancing act between cost effectiveness, duty of care and employee value proposition.
- + It is therefore critical that all stakeholders take a holistic approach, to ensure that their supply chain can thrive, and their organisations can manage their internal and external risks, whether it be talent leakage or compliance breaches.

Refocusing then, on the biggest tax and social security cost areas, the burden is not always fixed; with thoughtful and timely review around structure and set up of the assignment or employment arrangements and the related delivery of compensation and benefits planning can be implemented to significantly bring down the cost. The key is to methodically review structures and plan ahead.

Dinesh Jangra

Global Practice Leader,
Global Mobility Services
Crowe

Key findings of the country tax and social security review

- + **Total estimated annual costs to employer range from €150K (UAE—nil tax) to €414K (Belgium).**
 - Production of example costings, comparing locations is key.
 - There is a huge variance in cost depending on the host location.
 - Consider the location you are hosting employees—is there a more favourable location from a cost perspective?
- + **Taxation costs are on average 43% of total costs.**
Gross up taxes due on net compensation and employer social security costs.
- + **The average gross up tax rate in the countries is 63%.**
Tax on net compensation is payable at grossed up tax rates. The higher the tax rate in a country, the higher the gross up tax rate will be. Effectively, to deliver €100,000 of net compensation to an employee it could cost you an additional €63,000 in taxes.
- + **Knowing what is taxable, what could potentially not be taxable and how to reduce these costs legitimately can be a big win from a cost perspective.**
The taxation costs do not have to be fixed. Tax planning can help reduce costs.
- + **Highest employer social security rates in these countries range from 36.8% (Brazil) to potentially 0% (UAE).**
- + **Check where social security can be payable and what planning is available under international agreements and domestic rules. Significant cost reductions may be possible here.**

Our methodology

1. Source selection: The 20 countries highlighted in Fig. 40 and Fig. 41.
2. Simulate the cost of an expatriate employee working in that country, subject to local social security where a net package of €150K was delivered to the employee.
3. Expatriate tax concessions not factored into this to demonstrate full costs.

Impact of effective tax planning

An employee in the Netherlands on €150K net compensation can cost €872K over three years. By applying available tax concessions, savings of €191K over the same period can be delivered. Similar tax concessions apply in other countries. Another example, in France, a three-year assignment costing €980K could have costs reduced by €108K through tax planning.

So just by looking at two employees in two countries and applying tax planning, total savings of €299K could be achieved over a three-year period.

Talent planning from a commercial perspective

Many countries incentivise employers to locate key talent there through expatriate and related tax breaks. The tax breaks can be accessed with good local technical and procedural understandings and can bring significant cost-savings. Please note that deploying talent into a market (rather than hiring locals) can actually deliver both agility and cost-savings but planning and preparation are key.

Fig. 43: Estimated highest gross up tax rates payable by employer

Portugal	177%
Belgium	150%
Japan	142%
China	124%
India	120%
Canada	115%
Italy	113%
France	106%
Netherlands	98%
United Kingdom	88%
Australia	88%
Germany	88%
United States	83%
Austria	73%
Brazil	70%
Argentina	52%
Taiwan	42%
Singapore	28%
Hong Kong	25%
Saudi Arabia	0%
UAE	0%

Country	Estimated annual costs	Country	Estimated annual costs
Belgium	€413,652	Brazil	€283,491
Italy	€398,065	Canada	€268,657
Portugal	€377,891	Spain	€252,607
France	€326,709	China	€238,545
India	€302,742	Australia	€234,231
Austria	€299,598	Japan	€228,206
Germany	€299,014	Saudi Arabia	€209,565
UK	€293,993	Taiwan	€193,206
Netherlands	€290,705	Hong Kong	€173,788
US	€286,704	Singapore	€171,864
Argentina	€286,273	UAE	€150,000

Netherlands: €290K per year could reduce to €227K per annum.

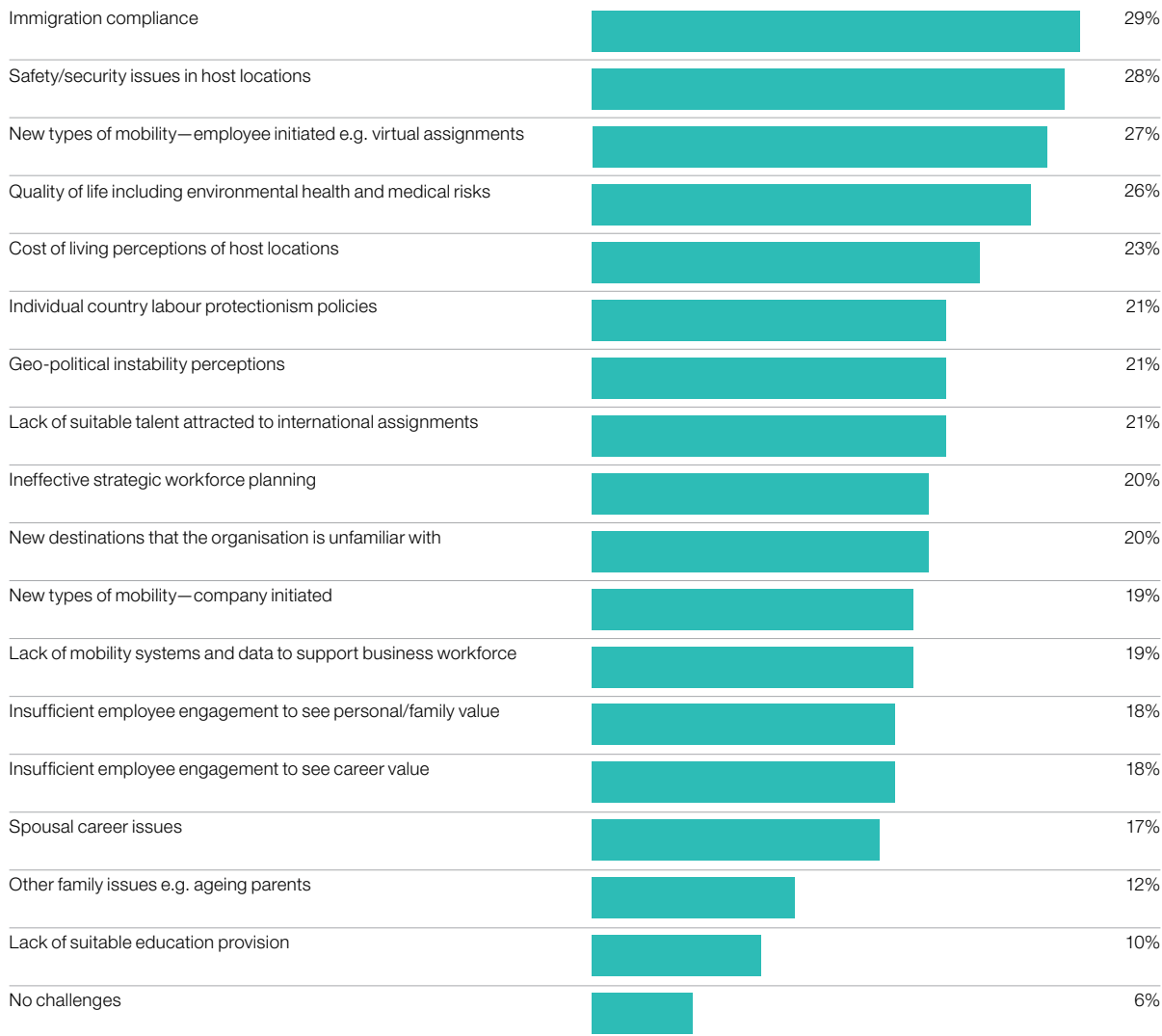
€64K annual (rounded) savings through planning. Similar planning could be achieved in other locations.

A holistic view of total costs is key. As examples, Hong Kong and Singapore do deliver lower tax costs compared to other countries but other environmental factors such as cost of living and cost of accommodation should also be reviewed.

Leaping the hurdles

Challenges facing Global Mobility in achieving their objectives

Fig. 44: Main challenges expected in achieving Global Mobility objectives over the next 24 months (GM)

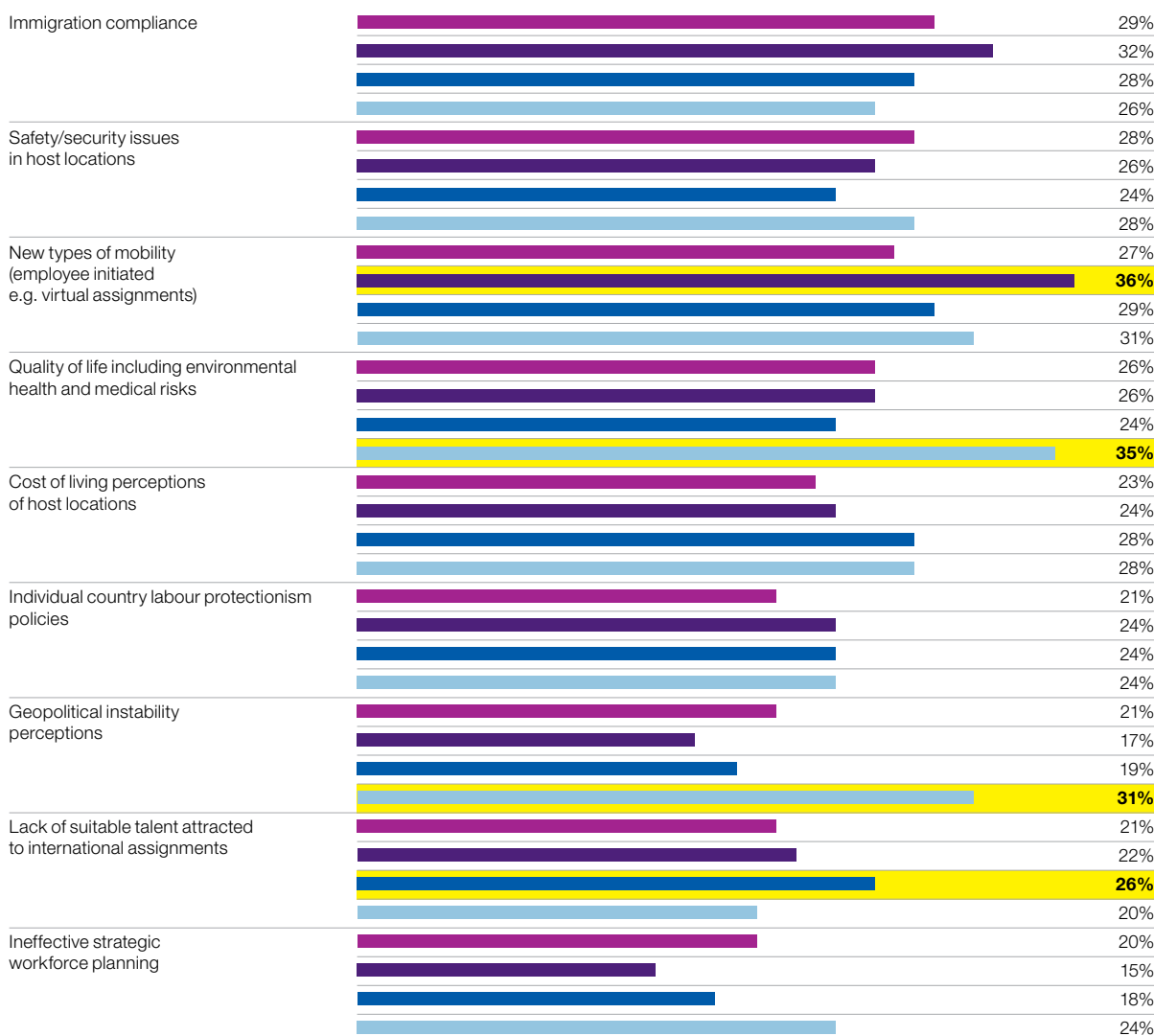


To establish control over the top three issues here, tracking employees is key. It is now more important than ever for a host of reasons to know where your employees are. The pandemic may lead to the workforce being more receptive to the implementation of a tracing and tracking system or process.

75



Fig. 45: Main challenges expected in achieving Global Mobility objectives over the next 24 months (GM— Industry comparisons)



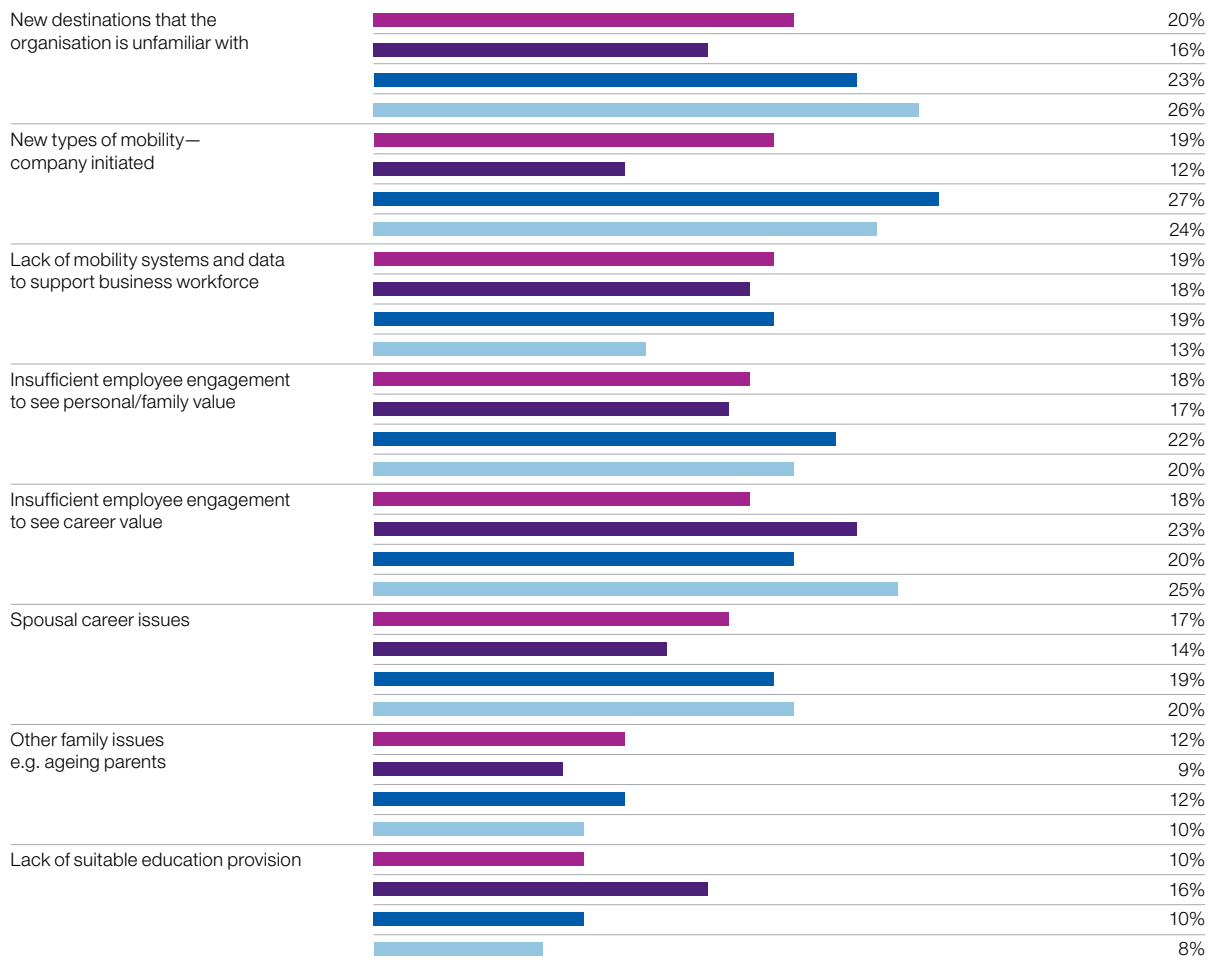
- Overall
- Technology and Communication
- Pharmaceuticals and Health
- Manufacturing

Industry perceptions

Fig. 45 highlights an interesting mix of the highest perceived challenges:

- + **Manufacturing:** Sees new destinations and their associated environmental and social challenges: geopolitical instability, quality of life, cost of living, spousal career issues, security issues. The reality is that manufacturing requires largely physical not virtual presence. This reinforces the need for well supported relocation and international hire processes to be able to attract talent to deploy, especially as there is also a lack of employee engagement to see how it will benefit their career (25%).
- + **Pharmaceuticals:** The challenges are also talent related and the risks here are around not being able to deploy and thus fail to achieve business objectives.
- + **Technology:** On the other hand, technology is the vertical which has the highest percentage of respondents rating virtual assignments as a challenge. Perhaps it's because they are the most able to deliver virtual solutions that they are most aware of the associated challenges which will arise.

► **Fig. 45 continued**



To establish control over the top three issues on **Fig. 46**, tracking employees is key. It is now more important than ever for a host of reasons to know where your employees are. The pandemic may lead to the workforce being more receptive to the implementation of a tracing and tracking system or process.

Fig. 46: Main challenges expected in achieving Global Mobility objectives over the next 24 months (GM)

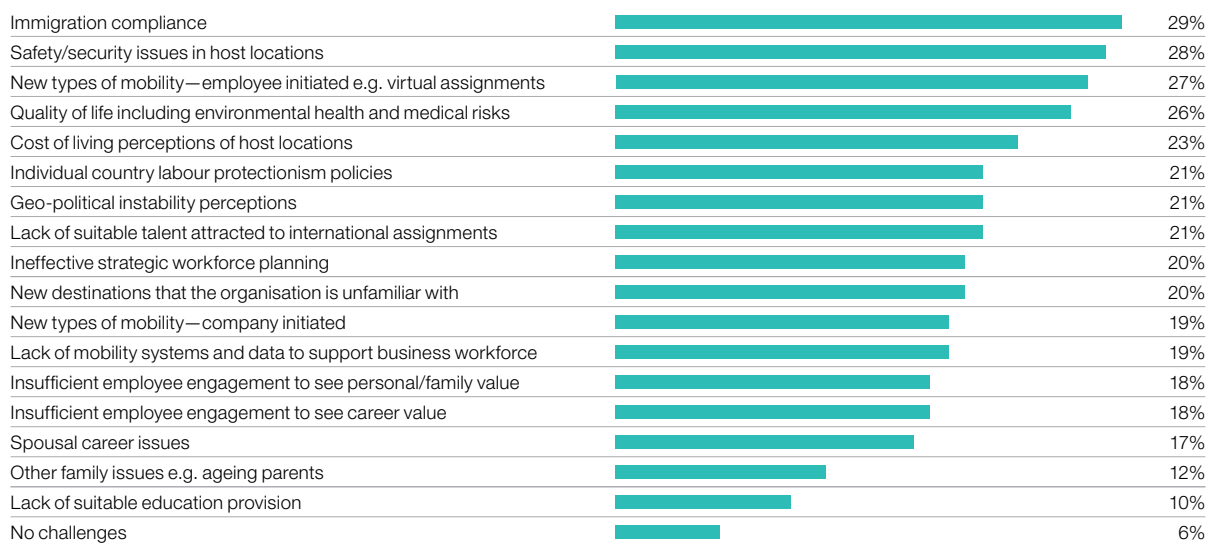
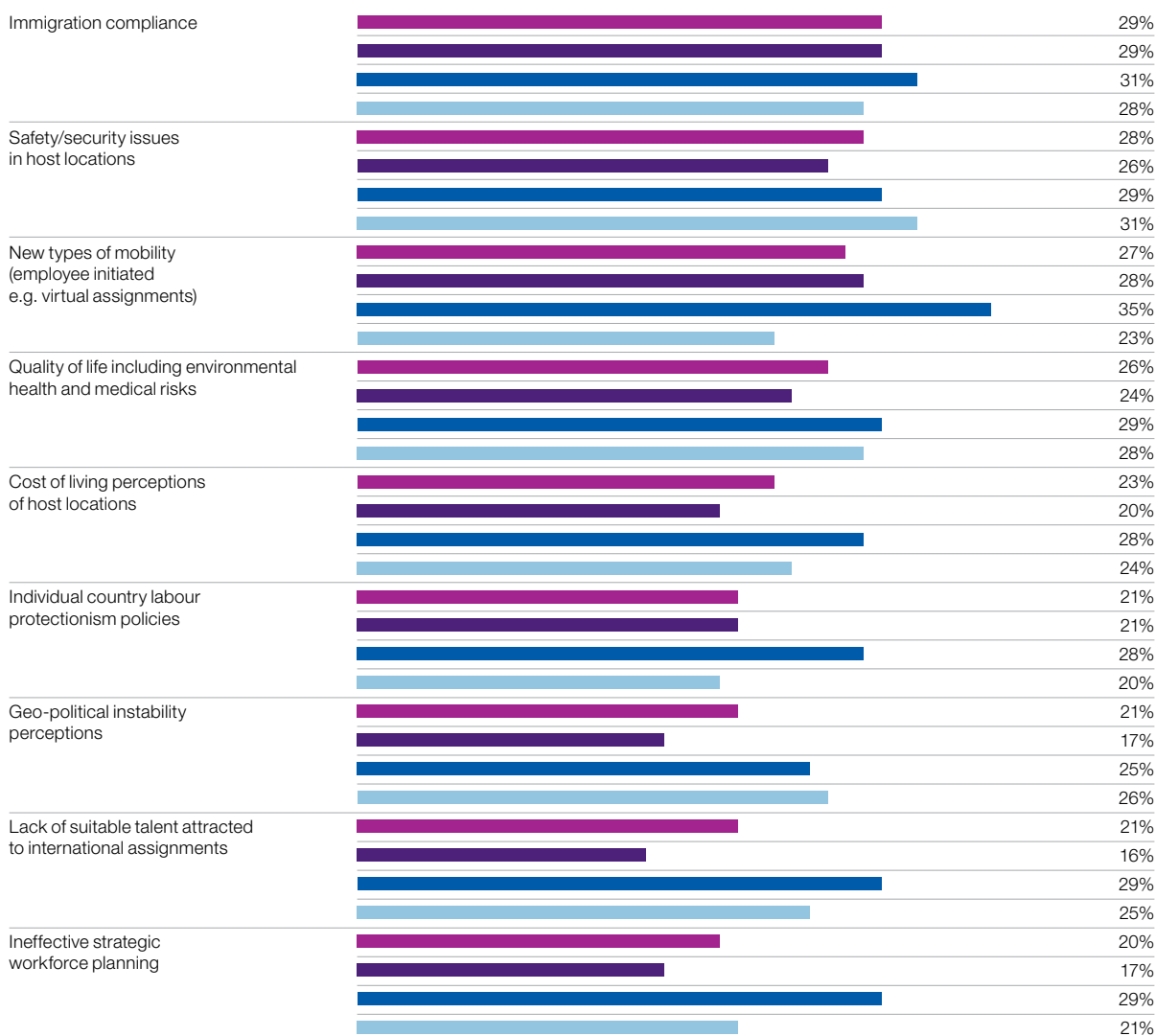


Fig. 47: Main challenges expected in achieving Global Mobility objectives over the next 24 months (Regional comparisons)



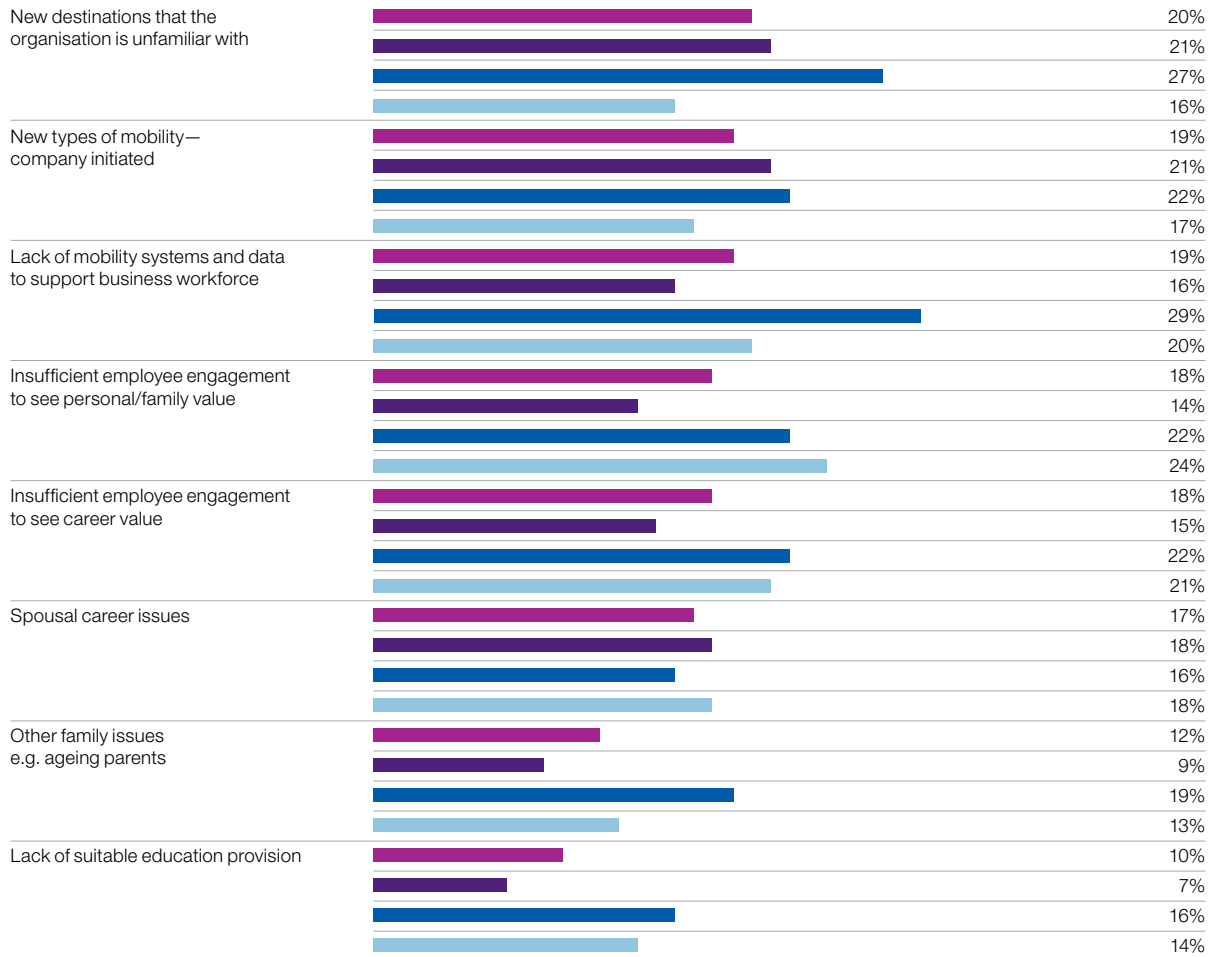
- Overall
- Europe
- North America
- Asia

Regional perspectives

North America in Fig. 47 reports the highest number of perceived challenges in most categories, which connect with the responses in section one: TRANSFORMATION, regarding the expected transformation of roles over the next 24 months.

- + Several of the responses relate to talent management planning, lack of available talent, lack of systems that capture the right data and new work arrangements. Labour protectionism is reported as a significant challenge too (28%) and to some extent, reflects the potential to re-visit their business and talent focus on regional rather than global growth.
- + In conjunction with Fig. 45, Fig. 47 highlights that Global Mobility teams need to have a clear strategy and roles definition, to maximise their contribution and thus value to the organisation and the employees that they support.

► **Fig. 47 continued**



Business Leaders' perspectives

Cost visibility

- + Without doubt, cost visibility is critical to what must be in the top three priorities for all organisations— cost management. No cost reduction conversation should be happening without data being at its core.
- + Data is key to all aspects of mobility including driving cost reductions in areas like tax and social security planning. Data is also key in being able to make suppliers and providers (such as tax advisors) more efficient, which in turn reduces their costs.

Fig. 48: Impact of interventions and trends on the Global Mobility function (BL)



Technology

- + In looking at technology solutions, the starting point is always that technology can do whatever you want it to do. Are you clear what you want technology to do for you?
- + Is somebody else in your organisation also looking at similar data albeit for a different purpose and are you properly synchronising your requirements?

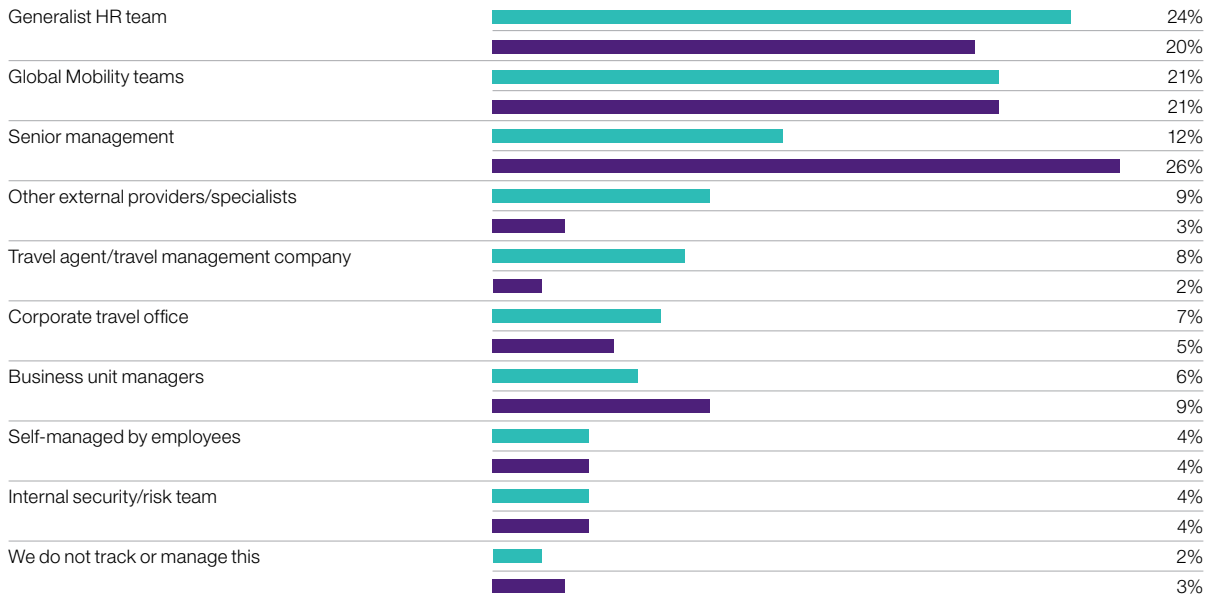
See also **TRANSFORMATION**, Six considerations for investment in technology, page 36.

International business travellers

Don't worry, we've got them covered, or have we?

How do generalist HR understand when a business traveller is truly a business traveller and not on work arrangements that require immigration treatment?

Fig. 49: Who manages the process and is ultimately accountable for compliance? (GM)



■ Manage process

■ Ultimately accountable

There is a significant difference for senior managers between being accountable (26%) and managing the process (12%). In general terms, senior management would not normally be involved in the operational management but should understand the implications of authorising travel, without clarity on the compliance risks.

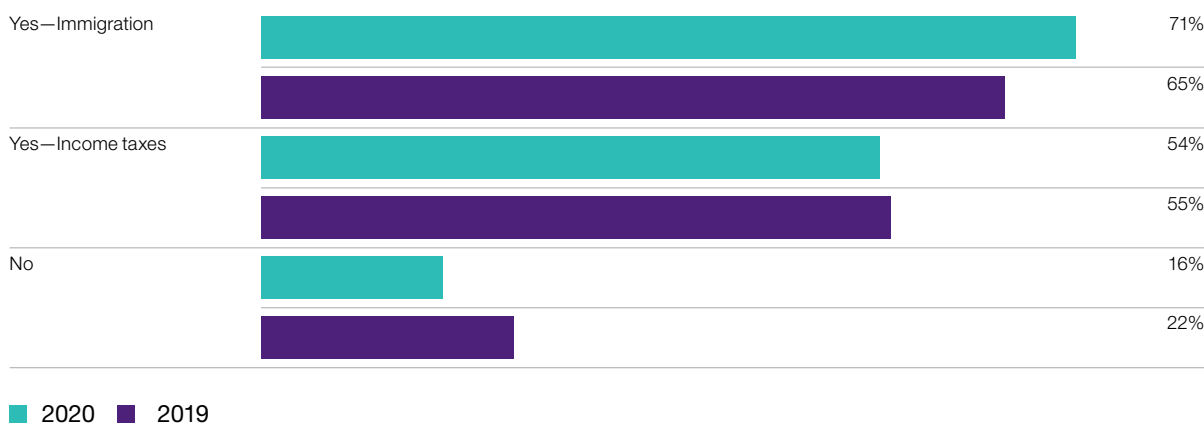
Recent case study

In August 2020 during a recent Global Mobility industry webinar, one global organisation, reported through their Global Mobility panellist that their Executive CEO is personally authorising international business travel— they have more than 100,000 employees worldwide! It was reported that the CEO is currently reviewing 500 applications based on an excel spreadsheet. Could there be a more optimal solution?

While this might be in response to the current COVID-19 situation it does highlight that senior managers need to be fully aware of their accountabilities, informed and educated on business travel definitions.

Having a process, that may exceptionally fail, is likely to be more favourably viewed by governmental departments than ignorance, in the case of an investigative audit revealing mistakes in tax and international compliance.

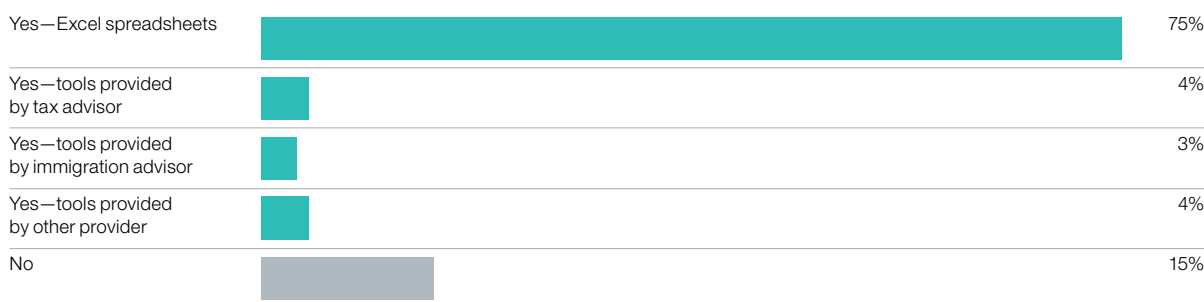
Fig. 50: Do Global Mobility professionals have a programme in place to ensure international Business Travel is compliant? (GM—2020 versus 2019 comparison)



Greater collaboration between different areas of government (e.g. immigration, tax, social security) and the enhanced technology solutions they now have available mean they are ever more able to identify areas of non-compliance in a more focussed and efficient way.

As a result, it has become critical for organisations to have a well-managed business travel programme that is capable of providing consistent data on all aspects of the business, if required.

Fig. 51: Is this programme managed through technology?



Managing immigration, tax and social security compliance with a spreadsheet is challenging for a small group of frequent travellers and tends to only enable post travel analysis.

The reality, in particular for immigration, is that making the right decisions before travel is critical to ensure compliance and we have seen many people refused entry into countries where they do not have the correct visa. This challenge is magnified by the constantly changing immigration rules brought about by the volatility of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Where companies use spreadsheets for business traveller management, they are usually focussed on one jurisdiction—the French team may be very well versed on inbound French requirements but not as knowledgeable on other jurisdictions. With legislation changing so quickly at the country level it is very difficult to manage such risks in a spreadsheet environment. Linking to comprehensive rules engines will increasingly become a requirement in the new normal.

Liam Brennan, CEO & Owner, Tracker Software Technologies

83



COVID-19, mitigating practical relocation risks

Getting up close and personal.

Fig. GM 40, most challenging destinations for international business travellers and relocating employees, highlights challenging countries where geopolitical and pandemic related challenges have heightened the complexity and volatility in mobility and relocation related regulations.

New measures are constantly being introduced and specialist destination support is increasingly becoming a priority, more than ever before.

Here are some considerations:

1. Do not assume that prior experience will apply and that a country has generic regulations for settling in.
2. At the initiation stage of an assignment (irrespective of assignment duration) a tailored risk assessment is required. Rules can vary by region or government administrative unit, for example provinces, states, counties, departments, cantons, territories, and as a result, multiple micro scenarios are often managed within the same country destination.
3. Managing expectations. Local destination consultants should provide real-time support and have destination tools, allowing both Global Mobility teams and the employee to be appraised at all stages of a local real-time status in each location.
4. Organising special preparation is now essential—extra flexibility is required.

What do I need to do?

How will I receive assistance?

Understand the current health situation

- + Coverage of some insurances will have to be adapted to the new needs brought up in 2020: assistance with extensions including Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, quarantine of healthy people not requiring hospitalisation but who have been exposed and require confinement or activating the extension of stay due to convalescence. Local destination specialists should focus on prioritising municipal or social security registration, where these are necessary to access health systems or public school enrolment.

Ensure a briefing session is established.

- + Airport pick-up services, car rental, check-in at temporary apartments with options to quarantine if necessary.
- + Support programmes, such as a basic home essentials/food basket, COVID-19 test after arrival, full briefing information of healthcare services and local Apps to cover all kinds of needs.
- + New virtual or semi-virtual home-search programme in which an initial home search by the relocating employee is conducted from their origin country. The local destination consultants visit properties in real-time with the use web-based visual technology. This allows the employee and family to ask real-time questions which help shape their needs for a reduced list of properties/needs with the real estate agent and the home-search consultant. A hygienic kit is available to visit preferred homes upon arrival.

+ The benefits are:

- Effective use of time and cost.
 - Reduced human contact (during COVID-19).
 - Reality check on the local market.
- + Enhanced Repatriation Services prepare assignees for any new challenges along the way including new airport protocols, travel delays, early lease terminations and check-out negotiations.

Other emerging factors to consider

- + New restrictions that limit the use of accommodation such as hotels or tourist apartments.
- + Fines for not respecting COVID-19 protection measures, these change rapidly and are different depending on the location, even within the same borders.
- + Unfair terms in contracts. In some less regulated markets, owners constantly update conditions in addition to prices, trying to incorporate excessive penalties for early departures or the obligation to maintain payment in any eventuality even in cases of force majeure.
- + Landlord's Rent Guarantee insurance. With the increase in people losing their jobs, some landlords are looking for assured credit ratings and source of employment income. This insurance substantiates that they will still receive their rental income, should the unexpected occur. This method is replacing more traditional protocols, such as guarantors or sponsors. It does, however, increase the annual cost of rent in addition to limiting access to certain assignees. For insurance to be valid the tenant must have passed the references check, probably including a credit history, proof of current earnings in the destination country, all of which of course cannot be supplied by expats who have just arrived! Having relocation specialists who can support in these situations are likely to be more valued than those relocations that have only been supported with digital/technology support. It is a blended balance of both people and technology that is most effective.

Lifestyle changes as a result of COVID-19

- + Changing preferences as a result of COVID-19. There has been an increase in the requests that include a balcony, terrace or garden, with a preference for houses or areas with open spaces.
- + Preference for schools that demonstrate better protection protocols and access to better technologies for remote learning, if necessary.
- + Preferences for a car, motorcycle, battery run mobility devices or bicycle over public transport as safe means of transport.
- + Homes with an extra room, or tailored workspaces and high-speed Internet. Many policies have traditionally seen this as a cost-saving opportunity—what impact will it have on policy exception requests?
- + Talent impact on international hires. As international hires, assess international career experience opportunities and the locations, those with “smart cities” are likely to become more favoured by those cities with more capacity to offer greater well-being access to health and safety systems.

In summary, the key message is real-time home/host knowledge, planning and tactful expectation management with the relocating employee and their family unit. The trick is to keep communications simple, while dealing with emotional, stressful and often ambiguous situations. Leveraging technology with human empathy is key during these challenging times.

Montserrat Lopez, Relocation Director, Santa Fe Relocation

Five considerations

Conclusions

1

Virtual working and assignments require lateral thinking to ensure that the organisation has conscious awareness of their global workforce actions and footprint.

2

Demonstrating that there are processes and procedures in place is more likely to mitigate the potential fines and penalties.

3

In the new normal, employees are taking more control over their work/life choices. Ensure there are no potential disconnects when an employee self-relocates to countries where the organisation is potentially exposed to corporate and employment related fiscal and immigration risks.

4

It is mission critical to have technology and processes that facilitate tracking and tracing, full cost visibility and the provision of meaningful, real-time data.

5

Talent attraction and retention: Creating competitive advantage through quality of support.

<p>1</p>	<p>Virtual working and assignments require lateral thinking to ensure that the organisation has conscious awareness of their global workforce actions and footprint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + How many employees are likely to have moved to their country of origin or a second home in another country to continue their virtual working? + Does that virtual employee interact with external customers in a way that creates a permanent establishment for their original country employer? If the company already has a separate legal entity for conducting business in that country, is that part of a potential solution to mitigate those risks or to simplify the administration? 										
<p>2</p>	<p>Demonstrating that there are processes and procedures in place is more likely to mitigate the potential fines and penalties.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="437 577 1519 1402"> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 577 558 743"> <p>C</p> </td> <td data-bbox="558 577 1519 743"> <p>Creation of a virtual working committee—with key internal stakeholders and external advisors.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 743 558 909"> <p>L</p> </td> <td data-bbox="558 743 1519 909"> <p>Leverage any learning from recent working from home initiatives, to identify practical steps to monitor where it takes place.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 909 558 1075"> <p>E</p> </td> <td data-bbox="558 909 1519 1075"> <p>Education and guidelines for business management and HR on the permanent establishment (organisation) corporate tax and VAT issues and the employment issues for the employee (immigration and fiscal).</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 1075 558 1240"> <p>A</p> </td> <td data-bbox="558 1075 1519 1240"> <p>Align internal and external specialist partners to identify processes, tools and accountabilities to be an extension of the Global Mobility and HR teams to better track potential virtual cross-border work arrangements.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 1240 558 1402"> <p>R</p> </td> <td data-bbox="558 1240 1519 1402"> <p>Recognised process for the cross-over between international business travel and work arrangements that require immigration and tax assessments.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>C</p>	<p>Creation of a virtual working committee—with key internal stakeholders and external advisors.</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Leverage any learning from recent working from home initiatives, to identify practical steps to monitor where it takes place.</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>Education and guidelines for business management and HR on the permanent establishment (organisation) corporate tax and VAT issues and the employment issues for the employee (immigration and fiscal).</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Align internal and external specialist partners to identify processes, tools and accountabilities to be an extension of the Global Mobility and HR teams to better track potential virtual cross-border work arrangements.</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>Recognised process for the cross-over between international business travel and work arrangements that require immigration and tax assessments.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>In the new normal, employees are taking more control over their work/life choices. Ensure there are no potential disconnects when an employee self-relocates to countries where the organisation is potentially exposed to corporate and employment related fiscal and immigration risks.</p>										
<p>4</p>	<p>It is mission critical to have technology and processes that facilitate tracking and tracing, full cost visibility and the provision of meaningful, real-time data.</p> <p>These will ensure that the organisation makes the right resource investments in training, operational relocation support for those on the move and clarity over roles, accountabilities, ethical and compliant behaviour and the right employee experience.</p>										
<p>5</p>	<p>Talent attraction and retention: Creating competitive advantage through quality of support.</p> <p>Thriving in challenging destinations is not a new phenomenon but how employees are treated and supported is often the difference between accepting and rejecting cross-border secondments or international hire roles. Our research highlights those measures that matter for managing risk, enabling opportunity and ultimately thriving in uncertain times.</p>										

THRIVE

David Carmichael

Director, Global Mobility, COE

CGI

Now, perhaps more than ever, Global Mobility has an opportunity to be more than it was in the past. The challenge will be that HR leadership will largely be focused on other initiatives—furloughs, recruitment challenges, layoffs, responding to the pandemic etc. Global Mobility needs to find the path into the HR leadership...this links back to the Talent and Transformation opportunity. Organisations who see Global Mobility as purely transactional will see a contraction of their Global Mobility population with their teams focused solely on responding to demands for increased/decreased numbers of assignees... but those organisations who see Global Mobility as more than “moving expats” and as part of a wider recruitment, resourcing and broader talent strategy will find it easier to respond to and rebound from the impact of the pandemic.

Erik Mathys

Group Compensation & Benefits International
Mobility & Executive Pay Manager

Etex

Becoming compliant definitely belongs to the past, welcome to “being able to keep on track with compliance”! We can only hope that governments and international institutions will see an opportunity to change legislation to the new ways of working in the 21st Century. First signs to do so are not very promising resulting in Global Mobility teams being confronted with even more compliance checks and administrative burden. The choice of the right vendors to assist the Global Mobility teams with these compliance challenges will therefore be key as Global Mobility teams will need to focus on bringing value to the business rather than getting stuck in everlasting compliance dilemmas.

Ernst Steltenpohl

Co-founder

Expatriate Academy

The pandemic made it painfully clear that many organisations were hardly aware of the whereabouts of their employees. Few organisations consistently follow business trips, and it is often unknown whether their actions are carried out in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. The HR database is a combination of several systems, some very outdated, some others are added relatively recently. The biggest flaw is that Global Mobility is still often seen as an administrative process, and, in most cases, the data needed by the Global Mobility specialist is not part of the HR system. The frequently promoted new techniques and tools are, at best, an add on to current HR systems. These are seldom a full HR system with all the data and tools needed. Next to this challenge, organisations do not have a reliable knowledge of the whereabouts of their business travellers and posted workers, and; organisations do not have easy access to information needed to understand potential compliance issues.

We see that many organisations have adapted their recruitment strategy to the recent experience. Now that good experiences have been gained with remote working as a result of the pandemic; it has become attractive to recruit new employees remotely and to have them work remotely. A big change in the way in which organisations meet the growing need for well-trained talent. A change that requires an organisation to collaborate with competent internal and external experts.

The organisation concept as we now know it will disappear in terms of form and content, given that employees are spread worldwide. They have connections with the organisations depending on the duration of the projects and the interests of these people. Organisations will be much more diverse (generations, cultures, gender), which will generate enormous dynamics and flexibility. The structures of the organisations will match these, making other roles and functions and, by definition, flatter. No longer focused on the head offices, but the markets and in particular, the talent they need for these markets. In a nutshell, producers will re-establish a relationship with their customers as it was before the industrial revolution. We already see the growth in the use of social media by large multinationals to build personalised relationships with their customers, wherever they are in the world. Relationships with employees will also take this path.

As the international work patterns of the employees change, so too will the skill set required by Global Mobility professionals—a new generation.

Dr Phil Renshaw

Visiting Fellow

Cranfield University

Director

Coaching On the Go

There has always been a potential conflict between the business drivers and the employees' drivers when implementing international assignments.

Again, I like to think of these differences in terms of optionality: the options or choices that the two parties hold. Most importantly, the employee always has the option to leave the employer unless the employer treats them appropriately.

COVID-19 will put a spotlight on this when the stories of how those currently on assignment are being affected materialise and affect the next generation of assignees. Will assignees benefit as anticipated and will this have been worth the costs? How will assignees, many of whom are truly trapped overseas, believe they have been looked after? What will this do to the employer's brand? COVID-19 appears to be increasing the employee's negotiating position which could increase the costs to the business. Hopefully this will only increase the support provided by employers, such as cultural training and ongoing support, and hence generate a win-win for all sides.

Raquel Tovar

Manager Employee Mobility

CommScope

This crisis also brings an emphasis on the dual responsibility that the employer and employee have together, employees may expect more when it comes to risk analysis, understanding on the possible threats they may be exposed to and have a better understanding on what measures are implemented by the organisations to mitigate as much as possible the risk they may be exposed to and from a transparency standpoint, assignees are expected to comply more and be more willing to adhere to the regulations implemented by the company, i.e. travel policy, centralised tracking tool to ensure that if stranded somewhere the company has the visibility where the employee is located and assist in a fastest way possible.



Authored by Julia Palmer

Chief Operating Officer (COO), Relocation

Santa Fe Relocation

BEYOND 4



Things can only get better

When Global Mobility industry professionals gather at events, they often talk about how things have changed, and the ‘good old days’ in the 1980s and 90s. The fact remains that there are only so many ways to deploy international talent, whether it’s a business trip, a short-term secondment, commuter arrangement or a longer-term arrangement of business or talent development. What the ‘good old days’ refer to is a more consistent, less fluid and variable process for deploying internationally mobile employees.

There is no doubting the fact that not only has global commerce become more complicated, and that people have too. Employment structures, social structures, diversity and gender codification, employee expectations and the communication and attitudinal values of multiple generations in the workforce play into the mix of the simple effort bargain: a business pays its employees to deliver. This complexity has increased rapidly in the 2000s and requires organisations to transform their employee value proposition.

The fourth industrial revolution has already transformed the way organisations are structured and the way in which people want to interact. The boom in online sales and home delivery has exploded since the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the whole globe. Long-established organisations, such as retail giants which are about delivering a physical product are now looking to repurpose their businesses, with a more balanced portfolio of virtual and physical trading.

Returning then to the Global Mobility industry, while the now and tomorrow may not be the ‘good old days’, there are certainly some exciting prospects in the days and months to come. The types of services and solutions that organisations will require—household goods shipments, pre-assignment visits, cultural and language preparation, host country home finding—will become more tailored to the organisation’s purpose, people and preferences. There will be an increased blend of physical and virtual support for international relocations and technology will continue to compete as an alternative solution—but not completely.

Within our own organisation, we often refer to being human and digital and the two shaping the right balance to reflect the client organisation.

Globally, organisations with internationally mobile employees have outstanding, real-time access to information about the countries to which they are being sent to. This enhances employee experience and tangibly demonstrates duty of care by employers. Data and information can truly enhance the human support from Global Mobility teams and their external mobility providers. Technology has also allowed us to openly track employees so that their welfare and safety can be assured in the event of an unforeseen crisis, such as COVID-19. Life is VUCA—volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. In some ways, that has always been the case, especially in unstable geopolitical situations in emerging economies.

Insightful Global Mobility data analytics are also more readily available for business and Human Resources to manage and to navigate the VUCA. Whether it is determining total Global Mobility programme costs, or a deeper cross analysis of performance and talent metrics, they can leverage competitive advantage.

So, while some might say the 80s and 90s were the ‘good old days’—with more predictable patterns of mobility, the support mechanisms for internationals were often considerably less refined than today. Relocation companies were less developed and often worked in silos—household goods moving, destination support, immigration and international tax services. All predominantly using basic communication systems and limited seamless data sharing between providers.

Today and tomorrow, there are increasingly sophisticated global, regional and local mobility supply chain partners, who deliver either niche or integrated relocation and Assignment Management solutions. This has enabled organisations’ corporate HR and Global Mobility teams to streamline communication and collaboration with both human and digital processes and methods. These are driving greater employee satisfaction and a positive impact on employee value proposition.

There is no avoiding the fact that COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on human lives, families, livelihoods, and societies around the world. However, many other risks subsist—other health risks, cyber fraud/attacks, climate-change, war/terrorism and economic/fiscal. These all play into the mix and Business Leaders and Global Mobility professionals recognise this in where they need to invest time in analysis and mitigation.

**We survive, we re-purpose
and we thrive—possibly in new
ways and with a new normal.**

**Global Mobility as an industry
is not in its final stages, it is
simply transforming.**

Transforming lives, careers, the roles within Global Mobility, including the creation of new roles such as data and systems analysts. Data will increasingly play a critical role in the value that Global Mobility teams deliver to their organisations. The Global Mobility function may also fragment to become absorbed into talent, reward or a Global Mobility business partner role, with transactional work re-allocated to an internal shared service team or outsourced to a Global Mobility specialist provider.

**If we are willing to embrace the fact
that the only certain thing in life, apart
from death, is change, then the future
is exciting, challenging and maybe
more so, than the ‘good old days’
in the 1980s and 90s.**

As part of recent, non-survey related additional research, Santa Fe Relocation interviewed industry leaders and the insight below, truly reflect that things can only get better.

**I would note that some of the same
issues and questions about the overall
relocation industry occurred after the
2001 terrorist attacks and after the
2008 financial crisis.**

**Both of those events resulted in
industry modifications and changes.
In both cases, the clients and service
providers adjusted to a new normal
and business continued to adapt, grow
and survive; short-term uncertainty,
smarter, more agile providers adapting
and/or leading clients to better, more
economical and flexible solutions
which actually deliver better
relocation solutions for clients.**

C-Suite Relocation thought leader



The process

We surveyed **838 professionals** responsible for Global Mobility programmes across **45 countries**. In addition, **55 Business Leaders** were surveyed, spanning the UK, the US, France, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Survey respondents represent organisations that in total employ:

5.1m	At least 5.1 million staff globally.
24,578	At least 24,578 full-time and part-time Global Mobility professionals.
556,287	Respondents are globally managing at least 556,287 internationally mobile assignees.

Global Mobility professionals responses by...

Headquarter location

Europe	56%
Asia	21%
North America	20%
Africa	2%
South America	1%
Middle East	0%
Australia/New Zealand	0%

Respondent location

Europe	52%
Asia	30%
North America	15%
Africa	1%
Middle East	1%
South America	0%
Australia/New Zealand	0%

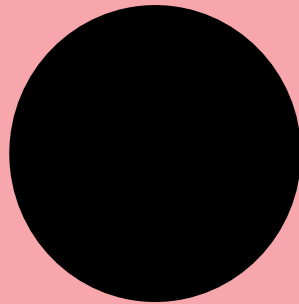
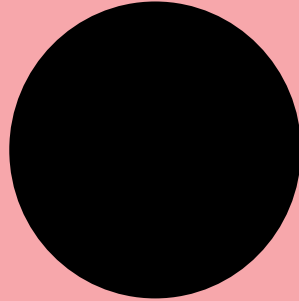
Industry sector

Financial	13%
Technology and Communications	11%
Pharmaceuticals and Health	10%
Manufacturing	8%
Engineering	7%
Construction	7%
Professional Services	5%
Consumer Products (FMCG)	4%
Retail	4%
Transport and Logistics	3%
Automotive	3%
Utilities and Energy	3%
Others	3%

References: **1.** Revision, Mobility through the looking glass, 2019 GMS report, October 2019, Santa Fe Relocation. **2.** Exhibit from “The great acceleration”, July 2020, McKinsey & Company, www.mckinsey.com. Copyright © 2020 McKinsey & Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission. **3.** Extract from Relocate Magazine, July 2020, David Sapsted: “Women Count 2020 Report”, July 2020, Pipeline.

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About Santa Fe Relocation

Santa Fe Relocation is a Global Mobility company specialising in managing and delivering high-quality relocation services worldwide. Our core competence is providing services that help corporations and their employees as well as individuals and their families to relocate and settle in new places. These services are delivered to a consistently high standard, locally and globally, and managed through our own operations around the world. For more information, visit us at santaferelo.com.

We enable people and organisations to work, live and thrive in new places around the world.

We make it easy

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