



# New world. Be brave.

**Part 1: Being a brave  
business advisor**

Global Mobility Services

KPMG International

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The role of global mobility is evolving in today's demanding new world and mobility teams are navigating rapid changes in the way we work. Changes like how businesses are run, technological advancements and shifting regulatory and global developments impose new opportunities and challenges for mobility professionals.

Welcome to "New world. Be brave.", a series of three publications that distill the experience and insights of Global Mobility professionals from KPMG member firms around the world on some of today's most pressing issues — along with innovative ways of addressing them.

Global Mobility's value as a business advisor is in focus for the first of this series. In this publication you will find out brave approaches to:

- positioning Global Mobility as a proactive and strategic business partner.
- supporting the business in achieving a broader spectrum of environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals
- creating and running global mobility programs that motivate people to stay with your organization and grow in line with the business's strategic goals

As you will see in this and upcoming editions focused on technology and the work environment, this series captures a wealth of perception, forward thinking and expertise that will be invaluable to HR and Global Mobility teams seeking new ways to manage their priorities and succeed in an ever more dynamic workplace.



## Marc Burrows

### Head of Global Mobility Services

KPMG International and Partner, KPMG in the UK

# Contents

04



## Positioning Global Mobility:

Who are the heroes  
in the new reality?

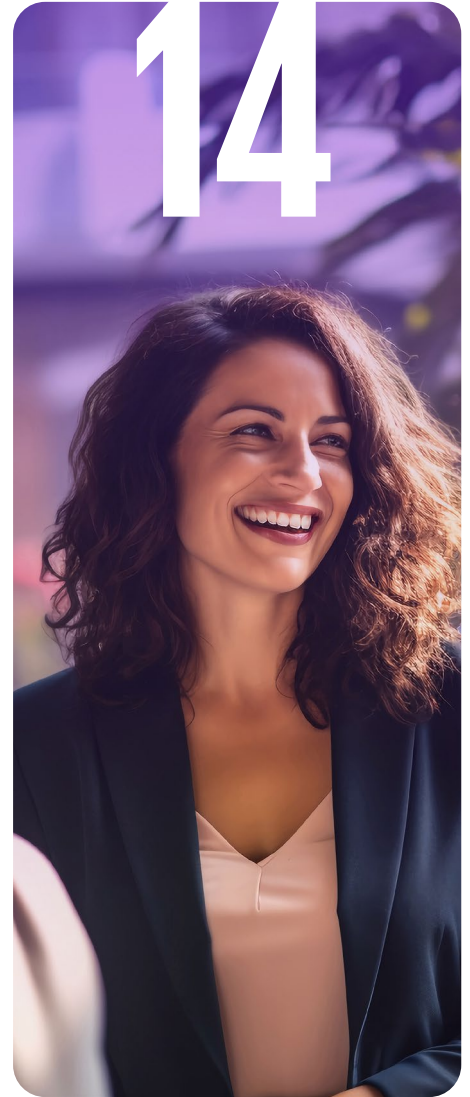
09



## Global Mobility and ESG:

What's in your  
control?

14



## Global Mobility policies:

Have they  
kept up?

# Positioning Global Mobility:

Who are the heroes in  
the new reality?

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- **Barbara Kinle**  
Partner,  
KPMG in Singapore  
bkinle@kpmg.com.sg
- **Mike McCoy**  
Partner,  
KPMG in Switzerland  
mikemccoy@kpmg.com
- **Nupur Rishi**  
Partner,  
KPMG in Canada  
nrishi@kpmg.ca



Global Mobility functions used to be seen as reactive cost centers, delivering tactical and logistical support for employee relocations. Now, Global Mobility teams are going beyond the ins and outs of moving people between countries and asserting their influence on the organization's broader talent strategy.

As demands for their time and attention grow, Global Mobility teams will need to find new ways to allocate their efforts for maximum benefit.

How can Global Mobility set the right priorities and leverage technology to optimize their value to the workers and businesses they support? And how can Global Mobility demonstrate its impact and secure its seat at the table when strategic decisions are being made?

KPMG member firm Global Mobility Services professionals have identified some key steps to help position mobility in the best possible way as a strategic advisor to the business that can deliver value.

A first step is to understand what success means to the different

stakeholder groups involved in employee relocations. For example:

- **Program managers** often work to ensure mobility programs offer employees good quality experiences, smooth transitions and career growth in line with the business's goals.
- **People in the business** typically value cost efficiencies, risk mitigation and improved compliance with tax, immigration and other regulatory requirements.
- **Employees** may seek quality experiences too, with opportunities for career advancement and support for their families to join in the move.

These needs and expectations can often overlap. It is important for Global Mobility teams to understand what each stakeholder group aspires to so teams can measure and report on the impacts of mobility programs across different stakeholder lenses. Accounting for these various views engages all stakeholders in the creation of more successful programs.

### Plotting priorities — Zero or Hero?

A next step is to examine the scope of Global Mobility's activities in terms of Easy versus Hard, and Expected versus Appreciated.





## New ways of measuring value are needed to highlight the full scope of Global Mobility's contributions.

Some duties — let's call them Zero activities — are simply expected. However necessary, these tasks may be, they earn you little credit or even notice when they are done well. Some Zero work is easy, such as vendor initiations and employee orientations. Other Zero work, such as international payroll and cost negotiations between countries, can be quite difficult.

In contrast, Hero activities are tasks that partners in the business and employees prize highly and recognize accordingly. Again, these may be easy — such as management reporting — or hard — such as managing exceptions or executive expectations. Whatever the amount of effort, your Hero work on these matters can attract attention and accolades.

Once you have assessed activities on these parameters, Global Mobility can see where they should focus their efforts for maximum impact:

- **Easy/expected tasks** should be automated where possible to reduce the amount of time you spend on them.
- **Easy/appreciated tasks** are also likely candidates for automation. As Hero activities, Global Mobility should report on their delivery to make them known across the organization.
- **Hard/appreciated tasks** are the ones that Global Mobility should mainly focus on. They also produce the most bonus points, so extra effort should be made to showcase these contributions.
- **Hard/expected tasks** might be the most challenging ones. The best ways to deal with them are to either automate or simplify the task, or educate the business to change perceptions and elevate the task from expected to appreciated.

Now that Global Mobility's priorities have been identified, the next step is to figure out how to achieve them.

What potential roadblocks or operational challenges might hold you back? How do you measure success and ensure that top management is aware of and appreciates the value you bring? Are any priorities in conflict, and how do you provide balance?

In particular, how do you square pressure to reduce costs for the business with the goal of delivering the best possible mobility experience for employees?

### Changing the narrative — calculating the real investment return

New ways of measuring value are needed to highlight the full scope of Global Mobility's contributions. Views need to be shifted away from seeing talent mobility as an expensive exercise with no clear value by using metrics that highlight mobility programs as investments that generate returns.

This means selecting a wide range of qualitative and quantitative variables to measure Global Mobility's cost/benefit. Direct relocation costs, such as flights and freight, are easy to track. Indirect costs and returns are harder to monitor but they tend to produce more value.

For example, organizations tend to define success narrowly for mobility assignments, for example, based on whether the assignment was completed. More accurate markers of the assignment's value can be obtained by capturing the future outcomes.

Measures of the assignment's true value can include:

- the knowledge and skills transferred during the posting
- improvements in the assignee's post-assignment performance and satisfaction
- post-assignment retention rates and staff stability
- transfer of culture from head office to other parts of the organization



Bringing these qualitative measures into the mix allows you to report the full extent of benefit of its activities and strategically boost Global Mobility's position in the organization.

Of course, this reporting depends on Global Mobility's access to good quality data, so you should define what measures to collect on your programs' input costs and its outcomes in the near and long terms. In doing so, it's important to establish a baseline for each measure at the outset so you can quantify progress down the road and continue to improve. Baseline data is vital for telling a compelling story about how Global Mobility is driving success.

### **Celebrating Global Mobility's impact — don't be shy!**

In summary, Global Mobility teams have opportunities to lift their role as trusted advisors to the business by taking steps to:

- Know your stakeholders and what they want
- Understand your role, the impact you have, and the best use of your time
- Define, track and report measures that highlight return on investment

By linking these benefits to tangible business objectives of the assignment and highlighting those benefits to top management, you can position Global Mobility in the best possible way — as a strategic partner that delivers value.



# Key takeaways

Global Mobility teams are going beyond the ins and outs of moving people between countries and asserting their influence on the organization's broader talent strategy. But how can Global Mobility demonstrate its impact and secure its seat at the table when strategic decisions are being made?

- A first step is to understand what success means to the different stakeholder groups involved in employee relocations, including employees, people in the business and program managers. What do they value most individually and collectively, and what are their top priorities?
- A next step is to examine Global Mobility's various activities and pinpoint "Hero activities" — tasks that partners in the business and employees prize highly and recognize accordingly (unlike "Zero" activities, which are expected and earn little notice). Global Mobility teams can earn their credit due with reporting that showcases their "Hero" contributions.
- New ways of measuring value are needed to highlight the full scope of Global Mobility's contributions, using metrics that view mobility programs as investments that generate returns. In addition to direct costs, for example, organizations could assess an assignment's true value in terms of knowledge and skills transferred during the posting, or post-assignment retention rates.
- Global Mobility professionals have opportunities to lift role as trusted advisors to the business by taking steps to:
  - Know your stakeholders and what they want
  - Understand your role, the impact you have, and the best use of your time
  - Define, track and report measures that highlight return on investment
- By linking these benefits to tangible business objectives of the assignment and highlighting those benefits to top management, you can position Global Mobility in the best possible way — as a strategic partner that delivers value.



# Global Mobility and ESG:

## What's in your control?

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- **Kal Nijjar**  
Partner,  
KPMG in the UK  
kaljinder.nijjar@kpmg.co.uk
- **Beth Crossen**  
Director,  
KPMG in the UK  
bethan.crossen@kpmg.co.uk
- **Will Easton**  
Managing Director,  
KPMG in the US  
weaston@kpmg.com
- **Anne Burgard**  
Senior Manager,  
KPMG in Germany  
aburgard@kpmg.com



## What are your company's ambitions on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues? How can Global Mobility support the company in achieving those goals?

With ESG matters commanding board-level attention, Global Mobility teams are finding ways to help their organizations become more sustainable, diverse and equitable enterprises. While early action on ESG tended to focus on the environmental footprint of mobility programs, many of today's Global Mobility professionals are taking bolder steps to make an impact across a broader spectrum of ESG concerns.

In fact, recent experience shows that the Environmental and Social aspects of ESG are where Global Mobility teams can deliver the most meaningful positive change.

### Reducing environmental impacts with sensible travel

Given the potential carbon footprint that employee moves can create, environmental issues have been a traditional focus area for Global Mobility

professionals. This was highlighted even more so with the 2020 pandemic when business travel ground to a halt, many of us were forced to work remotely, and advancing technology made remote work not only possible but also popular with many employees.

Immediately after the pandemic, emissions were maintained at a lower level by limiting discretionary employee travel. As demand for business travel has revived, Global Mobility teams are seeking ways to sustain these environmental and cost benefits for the long term.

For example, many Global Mobility teams are promoting the notion of **sensible travel**. The idea is not to discourage essential business travel; rather, it is to ensure the benefit justifies its cost and supports travel in ways that offset or reduce the environmental impact.

As the accompanying chart shows, sensible travel might involve:

- **green relocations** — working with relocation providers to offset the adverse environmental impact of international business travel
- **multi-purpose travel** — grouping activities to increase the impact of individual business trips
- **green mobility policy review** — evaluating how mobility policies could be adjusted to reduce their environmental impact
- **green cost projections and vendor partnerships** — working with external travel service providers to understand the environmental impact of business travel and ensure the business benefits that ensue are worth it.





## Sensible travel ideas

Sensible travel aims to ensure the benefits of business trips justify their environmental costs and that travel is undertaken in ways that offset or reduce its environmental impact.

### Green relocations

Working with relocation providers to offset the adverse environmental impact of international business travel by:

- reducing the volume limits for assignees' moving costs (often in exchange for cash)
- offering furniture rental to avoid buying and discarding new furniture)
- partnering with local charities to donate furniture not needed post assignment
- onward sale of furnishings by repatriating employees to new assignees
- selecting vendors based on their green credentials and offerings (e.g. offering accommodations with solar panels, onsite recycling facilities).

### Green mobility policy reviews

Evaluating how mobility policies could be adjusted to reduce their environmental impact by:

- adopting a "stop/go check" policy to challenge whether travel is really needed
- weighing whether a policy's commercial, monetary, developmental outcomes provide good returns on their upfront cost in terms of, among others, harmful emissions, wellbeing and time resources (i.e. conscious consumption)
- reviewing whether a proposed move could work as a virtual assignment, keeping an open mind about routes to success
- identifying and selecting a local successor to assume the assignee's role post assignment (often by recruiting the assignee for this task).

### Multi-purpose business trips

Grouping activities to increase the impact of individual business trips by:

- grouping multiple meetings in one location and building in additional trips or add-on events to get the most business benefit in return for the emissions expended
- grouping multiple meetings in one flight-based trip, and traveling from there to additional meetings in the area using greener forms of travel (e.g. train, electric vehicle).

### Green cost projections and vendor partnerships

Working with external travel service providers to understand the environmental impact of business travel and ensure the business benefits are worth it by:

- factoring carbon costs into pre-travel cost projections and assessing the value of benefit gained from travel (commercial, financial, productivity, employee development)
- collaborating with third-party relocation vendors to ensure they provide green support options that help reduce carbon emissions and meeting employee demand for environmentally friendly alternatives
- collecting detailed data from travel providers on the carbon costs of each business trip taken and helping the wider business reach its emission reduction targets by calculating how to offset travel-generated emissions (e.g., how many trees to plant).



## What is the best way to offer a wider variety of more flexible benefits?

### Tackling the social agenda

As more companies recognize the benefits of having a diverse workforce and assignee base, Global Mobility teams are increasingly being called on to support their organizations' social agenda in driving inclusivity and diversity objectives.

**Data** is critical for tackling this issue — you need to know the makeup of your workforce in order to identify where to devote your efforts. Businesses can have quite different priorities based on their industry, traditional employee types, geography or culture. In industries where the employee population is predominantly white and male, such as mining and oil and gas, delivering gender and ethnic diversity in mobility programs can be difficult.

**Data transparency** is therefore a key starting point. Just as many organizations are addressing the diversity mix of employees overall, Global Mobility teams are doing the same for the assignee population to determine the best focus for their activities.

The **candidate selection process** is another area where diversity and inclusion can be improved. In many organizations, the process for selecting assignees can be ad hoc, with mobility opportunities being offered to employees who are already known to the person or team making the selection. To combat this, we are seeing many Global Mobility teams update their processes to:

- set a clearly defined recruitment and selection policy and process, requiring all international opportunities to be advertised internally

- require the resulting shortlist to include candidates from specific minority groups (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic factors) so that the business makes its final decision based on broader, more transparent initial screening
- manage pushback from the line managers/teams who previously had the sole power to make these decisions.

Global Mobility teams often find that members of minority groups do not apply for mobility assignments or opt out of the running because they need different supports than those being offered. As a result, many businesses are **reviewing their assignment benefits policies** to identify any barriers to the creation of a diverse assignee workforce. Questions to ask include:

- What childcare benefits are in place for single parents?
- What cultural training should be offered or factored into assignment plans to encourage more ethnic diversity among assignees?
- What is the best way to offer a wider variety of more flexible benefits (e.g. by adopting points-based benefit selections so employees can pick the that suit them)?

Cultural change can take time, and Global Mobility teams are doing what's in their power to drive the social agenda forward.



# Key takeaways

ESG has many dimensions, and it can be hard for Global Mobility teams to know where to start. Taking these three steps can help:

- **Know your business's ESG agenda:** Your business's ESG agenda should inform your ESG guiding principles and priorities. By understanding these priorities now, you can be agile in meeting requirements as they evolve.
- **Take the wheel:** By taking the lead, Global Mobility can add value and ensure balance between their mobility strategy and the company's broader ESG objectives.
- **Don't try to do it all:** In today's dynamic environment, real impact can only come from a sharp focus on a few key areas. Devote your efforts to the strategic and deliverable priorities within your control that will make a tangible difference.

Global Mobility teams who know their business and align their ESG agenda accordingly can create better outcomes for mobility assignments while contributing to fairer, more inclusive workplaces. Best of all, the conversations that Global Mobility will have with senior business leaders can help to build the team's profile as a valued and respected contributor to strong ESG performance more broadly.

# Global Mobility policies:

## Have they kept up?

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- **Katherine Avery**  
Principal,  
KPMG in the US  
katherineavery@kpmg.com
- **Demetra Marcantonio**  
Director,  
KPMG in the UK  
demetra.marcantonio@kpmg.co.uk



As the make-up of the global workforce continues to evolve, organizations need a more agile workforce than ever. How can your global workforce policies support the business, and attract and retain the best talent? Putting on a product developer mindset will help you find out.

Finding and securing in-demand, skilled talent continues to be one of today's biggest business challenges. Similarly, many companies also struggle to find talent in the location where they need it. Global Mobility plays a fundamental role in attracting and motivating people to stay and grow within an organization. Having a compelling policy approach is therefore essential.

Despite some loosening of the labor market overall, it continues to be unpredictable. As a result, ongoing innovation and flexibility in policy design is critical to drive a good employee

experience. Global Mobility teams must step up and emphasize their role in designing and selling talent experiences as a fundamental component of the organization's people services. Doing this requires an innovative mindset, broader thinking, and a bold approach to drive change.

To this end, it may be helpful to step back and think of your global workforce policies as the product that Global Mobility sells, and to treat the business and employees as your target market. Like any good product developer, the Global Mobility team needs to manage

the global mobility policies across their lifecycle, from design and launch to post-implementation review, ensuring the packages they offer continue to match their market's demands – all while keeping the user experience front and center.

An important step in the product lifecycle is to determine the route to market. This is one of the most significant elements in creating a seamless, connected and tailored experience.

## Starting point

There are many elements to consider to increase customer satisfaction, but **policy** is the starting point.



Generation



Family



Gender



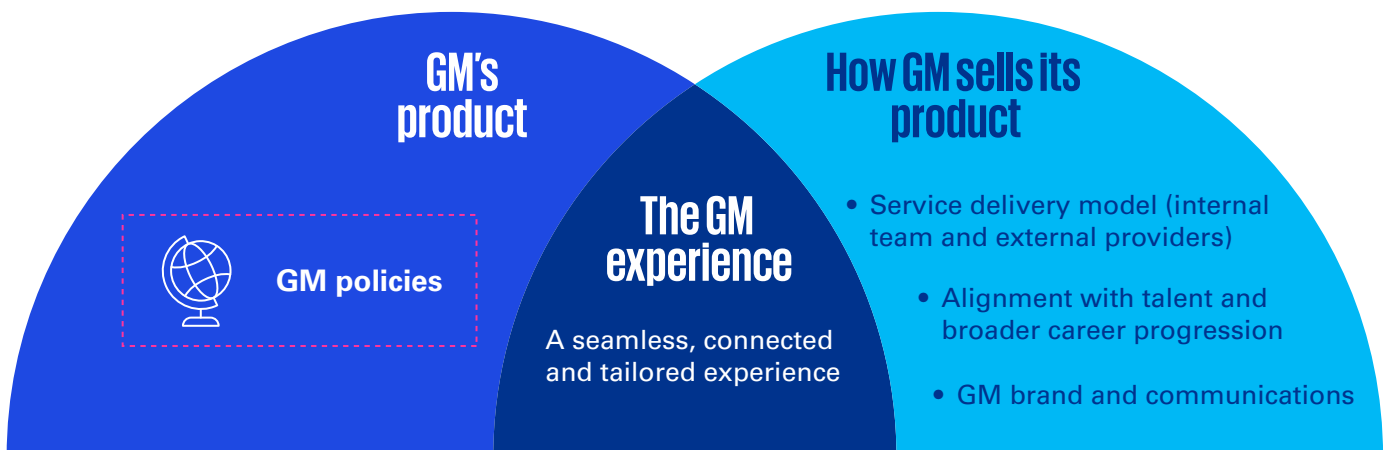
Sexual orientation



Ethnicity



Race





As the visual shows, the service delivery model can transform the experience, especially when external vendors are well connected amongst themselves and with the internal stakeholder ecosystem. Other critical considerations include how the mobility experience aligns to talent management and feeds into career development, and how the Global Mobility brand is communicated internally to employees and the business.

Product lifecycles and speed to market are shortened in the face of external economic turbulence, geopolitical unrest or changing regulations. Internal change within an organization such as new leadership or merger activity can also accelerate product lifecycle windows. With companies and global mobility teams navigating disruption at a faster pace than ever before, the lifecycles of global mobility policies are shrinking in response.

In an ideal world, Global Mobility would monitor its policies continuously, benchmark regularly and gather feedback from stakeholders on how the policies could be improved and subsequently updated. This would be a similar best practice that we would find in a Total Rewards organization as it relates to compensation benchmarking. At a minimum, Global Mobility policies should be reviewed every 18 to 24 months.

### Is the cost of the policy the most important factor?

When evaluating the design of a new or existing Global Mobility policy, a fundamental question to answer is whether the business always prefers the lowest cost. Global Mobility teams often insist this is the case (particularly over the last 18 months), but answers from stakeholders usually depend on the circumstances. For example:

- Some talent can be worth a greater investment.

- Some parts of the business are more well-funded, reducing the emphasis on cost.
- Other business unit leaders may be under pressure to acquire resources with hard-to-find skill sets for specific locations and willing to pay a premium.

There will of course always be some stakeholders with restrained budgets who might seek to block a policy due to the expense and impact on cash flow and P&L statements. However, seeking the lowest cost at the expense of other priorities can open the risk that gaps or flaws in the policy will create even bigger downstream costs. Each move has a specific business rationale behind it, and mobility policies need to be able to scale up or down, depending on the need.

A better approach is to cast these costs as an investment in the company's talent strategy, improving its culture and its brand as an employer. In the past, for example, companies often set policies to provide only minimal, generalized support for relocations driven by employee requests. In today's tight talent markets, some companies are being more cautious about employee-requested moves, however they are a reality and can be strategically important in retaining high performers. If the individual has a critical skill that would be hard to replace, the best approach may be to provide more support, increasing the assignment's costs to advance the organization's talent retention strategies and support the business to deliver its objectives.

### What is the right amount of flexibility to include in the policies?

A second key consideration is how much flexibility to allow in the policy. Today's workforce expects more choice to enable more personalized work experiences; individuals want

In an ideal world, Global Mobility would monitor its policies continuously, benchmark regularly and gather feedback from stakeholders on how the policies could be improved and subsequently updated.





employers to know them and their preferences. A one-size-fits-all approach for all employees no longer works in today's market.

Overly rigid policies are also likely to lead business units to request exceptions from the policy. Too many exceptions can add costs and complexities to a program and impede its effectiveness, so allowing some flexibility is important. Global Mobility teams should be clear about what items are not up for negotiation, for example, due to local employment law, immigration, or other regulatory restrictions.

Reducing exceptions is also important to a policy's equity in the eyes of employees. Exceptions are often seen as precedents. One employee might feel disadvantaged if they are denied an exception that was granted for another employee. If flexibility is built into the policy, as part of a well thought-through framework, this promotes an inclusive and equitable approach.

Flexibility can enhance an employee's satisfaction by providing choices that feel personalized and tailored to them, giving them a sense of control over the experience. Even if take-up of flexible options is low, just making them available can improve engagement. It demonstrates that the company is thinking about its workforce and how it can meet their unique needs, with different approaches for different people.

It is important to consider who the flexibility is intended for — the business or the employee — and what is the simplest and most cost-effective way of embedding this flexibility. Complex and costly ways to administer flexibility in mobility programs are not as common as they previously were.

### Who gets the final say on policy changes?

When designing a new policy or evaluating an existing one, stakeholder involvement is critical. Any new or revised policy will benefit considerably from input from a broad range of internal stakeholders, including country

heads, HR business partners, talent management, talent acquisition, finance, and current or historic assignees to name a few.

Adopting a product developer mindset can help draw out better information and ideas from stakeholders — asking what's working well, what could be better, and what more Global Mobility could do to help drive business and talent objectives forward. Employee pulse surveys can provide insights into the impact of current policies and what

changes would be beneficial. External benchmarking studies can demonstrate how the company's policies stack up against competitors and the wider market.

To ensure policies keep up, Global Mobility teams should stay close to their stakeholders to develop agile, future-fit policies that deliver top-notch experiences to their employees, thereby boosting engagement and retention, while advancing the organization's strategic goals.





# Key takeaways

- As many companies struggle to meet targets with fewer resources, global mobility policies can play a big role in motivating people to stay and grow within your organization.
- Like any product developer, Global Mobility needs to manage mobility policies across their life cycle, from design and launch to post-implementation review, ensuring the experiences include early stakeholder involvement and continue to match their market's demands.
- Mobility policies should be reviewed every 18–24 months, but earlier at times of greater internal or external disruption, such as economic turbulence, geopolitical shocks, changing regulation, internal leadership change or merger activity.
- When designing a policy or evaluating an existing one, stakeholder involvement is critical:
  - Leadership needs to focus on communications and change management to bring targeted talent and their managers on board.
  - Surveys and other employee listening methods can help you understand the impact of current policies on employees and what new benefits they are looking for.
  - Benchmarking studies can show you how the company's policies stack up against those of other companies.
- The goal is to develop flexible, cost-effective policies that deliver top-notch experiences to employees, boosting engagement and retention in ways that align with and advance the organization's strategic goals.



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