



Career Moves

8 best practices for integrating mobility and talent management.

By Yvonne McNulty and John Brice

Today's global mobility practices have evolved considerably from what they were five years ago. Global careerists have emerged: According to McNulty & Inkson, global careerists are those who will live in whatever location suits their purpose at the moment while building career skills that are not organization or location specific. Organizations are seeing expatriates increasingly demand rewards beyond only financial remuneration. And the prestige of an international assignment has been replaced by global mobility being a routine step on the career ladder.

These challenges are further complicated by organizations' resistance to change. Companies

need to adjust structures, policies, and procedures to provide a new level of service in line with the changing demographic of the assignee profile.

Global careerists—who are often high performers—will continue to become more nimble, savvy, and demanding. Organizations need to ensure they have the right strategic processes in place to administer a more integrated talent management program within their mobility offering.

But how is this done? One important way to address global talent management is to shift the focus away from the end points of the process—finding and acquiring

talent, and then trying to keep it—to the intervening processes of developing talent. There are a number of best practices for motivating global talent and driving employee engagement.

1. Offer career planning. It helps for organizations to identify a global talent pool with key positions, including successors for key executive positions, and high potentials. Assignees can then be monitored in terms of what they do and how best to develop them. Global talent review systems are crucial for managing assignees because they enable all parties to know what level assignees are operating at so that business units can pinpoint people with potential and determine the roles they should be considered for next.

Companies may also consider investing in executive coaching and mentoring, which millennial employees in particular find to be a valuable part of their expected training and development.

2. Network and support. Maintaining contact with assignees who are considered high potential and informing them of new opportunities usually involves little effort for a substantial return. However, this requires an organization to have a structure in place internally, with clear accountability as to who is responsible to liaise with and support assignees throughout the assignment.

3. Manage expectations. Assignees' expectations in relation to global career development are crucial. These include career management support, interesting work roles that leverage existing and acquired skills, and ongoing career discussions as to what's next. When expectations regarding what expatriates are prepared to buy into are clear from the outset, particularly for global careerists pursuing multiple assignments over many years, the commitment and retention rates of assignees are likely to be higher.

4. Understand assignees' needs. When companies seek feedback from expatriates, the focus is all too often on process elements such as relocation assistance and the quality of the repatriation program. Rarely do companies ask about expatriates' personal satisfaction with an assignment and the outcomes they have derived from it. Questions that matter include whether assignees are happy with their new career/role, whether they have plans to stay longer, and whether the assignment has helped their development.

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5. Prepare and equip. Ensuring that assignees are best prepared to be successful in their new, often challenging, assignments can make or break the important onboarding phase of the assignment. Organizations that spend the appropriate time and resources to fully prepare and equip their people before they depart can help exponentially increase the effectiveness of the transition and also lay the groundwork for ongoing assignment success.

6. Plan repatriation. Whether an expatriate is repatriating for good or intending to relocate again at some point in the future, the planning of repatriation activities is a major shortcoming of many companies. Best practice for repatriation involves having an assignee pop up on a list six months or more before he or she is due back, then identifying a job or at the very least entering into a discussion about what could be next. As obvious as this seems, many expatriates worry that they will slip under the radar and be made redundant, or stuck in limbo because the employer has no jobs on offer. Research shows that these fears frequently result in a strong desire to avoid repatriation altogether and instead to re-assign to anywhere but “home,” thus pushing assignees to look for jobs with competitors.

7. Instill top management support. When top management does not support global career activities, assignees know. Buy-in from senior managers, particularly those with their own global career

experience, can be pivotal in sending clear messages that international assignees are valued and that global careers matter. They can also encourage others in the company to focus on improving global mobility and enhancing global career opportunities.

8. Reward and recognize. Ultimately, assignees need to feel validated and appreciated for their efforts. Having a system of rewards and recognition tied to pay-for-performance demonstrates that an organization actually values the experiences and skills assignees have gained. Linking talent management to performance and rewards then becomes the backbone to demonstrating true organizational commitment to an assignee program. As people are rewarded and recognized, this also helps to increase assignee engagement and retention. Well-motivated employees on assignments are still considered talented when they come back or move to another assignment, and this sends a clear message that global careerists are valued and important.

Another important way to address global talent management is to find key ways that companies can keep and retain the talent in which they have invested much time, effort, and money. Ultimately, retaining global talent is perhaps the biggest return on investment payoff

Emergence of Global Careerists

Global careerists are those who will live in whatever location suits their purpose at the moment while building career skills that are not organization or location specific. They are qualified temporary employees who voluntarily move to new countries and use them as bases before deciding whether to settle there, return to the home country, or move somewhere else. These types of expatriates, who will come to dominate the international labor market, constitute the building blocks of much wider groups and movements such as global staffing, international itinerants, brain drain, global managers, talent flow, and the war for talent.

Source: McNulty & Inkson, 2013

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of all. The critical question is, once we have developed talent, how do we counteract talent loss and brain drain? Whether the goal is short-term on-assignment retention from talent or long-term succession planning for talent that is developed internally, the aim has to be to keep employees long enough to achieve specific objectives.

It is one thing to talk about talent management and another to actually do it. Many companies want and seek talent, but few "walk the talk" when it comes to implementing an effective global talent management program. Research shows, however, that organizations with a properly managed talent management program (with clear internal accountability for administering, supporting, and deploying talent) have repeatable and sustainable success over their competitors.

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Thinking Ahead, Getting Ahead

CHRO Joseph Cabral knows his biggest competition is status quo. His solution? Constant change for constant improvement.

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News from the world of work



Share the Love

There are few things more satisfying at work than when someone tells you that you've done a great job. A manager, a peer—whomever it comes from, it can often make your day. We recently conducted a readers' survey—thanks to all who participated—and I was pleased to see that 84 percent of our readership finds the publication well-written. That type of feedback, especially coming from our readers, was powerful for me. A little recognition goes a long way.

Recognition programs continue to be a mainstay at the majority of U.S. organizations, with 90 percent of companies having one in place. But what continues to impress us about these programs is how they evolve to suit the needs of the changing workforce. Millennials already make up 30 percent of the workforce, and that number will grow to more than 50 percent in just four years. So how can you grab the attention of your younger workers through recognition and rewards? Perhaps it's time to incorporate a mobile strategy. Mobile has been a strong growth area for many areas of outsourcing in recent years, and rewards is no different. Why? Employees are addicted to their smartphones and sharing accomplishments through apps is a quick, easy, and fun way to do it in real time.

"By having recognition on a mobile device you can actually nominate someone when you think about it or when you see good work happening. The fact that you've got a notification on your mobile phone, just like a notification that you've got a new tweet, or an email, makes recognition just as easy as replying back to somebody or checking on an update on Instagram," says Charlie Ungashick, chief marketing officer for Globoforce.

Mobile also has some interesting native capabilities like voice recognition and GPS navigation. But any new approach should be explored with caution, and our roundup of experts provides advice as well as best practices. Learn more in *Real-Time Rewards* by Associate Editor Audrey Roth on page 12.

Another innovative technology increasing employee engagement is wearable devices. Organizations are beginning to leverage wearable health trackers—like Fitbit or Jawbone—as drivers of preventive care and wellness programs. Nate Walkingshaw, vice president of Tanner Labs (a part of O.C. Tanner), explains that wellness programs involving the use of wearable technology have led to happier, healthier workplaces where employees are motivated to be more productive and engaged.

And the proof is in the pudding. A three-year analysis by The Vitality Group found that participants of the study who were both previously active and inactive reduced their health risk factors by 22 and 13 percent respectively. The program encouraged participation by distributing points to employees for hitting goals. Employees could then redeem said points for items in an online marketplace. Combining wellness, wearables, and rewards—now that's cutting-edge HR. See *Wearing Wellness* on page 32.

Of course our ode to recognition would not be complete without our annual 2014 Baker's Dozen Customer Satisfaction Rankings for Recognition. See which organizations top this year's list on page 16.

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