

# PUBLICATION

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## Global Mobility Objectives and Immigration

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**Businesses worldwide are looking to tap into international talent pools, as global expansion is now a critical component to success. Moving individuals to the right roles in new locations, and fast, can provide a company with a significant competitive advantage. However, a company's desire for talent mobility may face hurdles and roadblocks in securing work authorization for their employees as part of an international move. How, then, can companies align their global mobility objectives with rapidly changing immigration rules and regulations?**

### Centralize the Process

Employers should consider establishing dedicated teams to facilitate the process even if a company outsources its relocation and immigration matters. A decentralized approach, one without any set contacts at either a local or a global level, will lead to an inefficient program, missed opportunities, and a lack of minimum consistencies. Employers must have a formalized policy in which management and human resources are involved in the decision-making process of each foreign hire. A centralized policy also allows the immigration process to be easily measured, both in time and in cost. Dedicate one group to maintain responsibility for the immigration function and to oversee the international movement of employees. This type of centralized model ensures the highest level of consistency, simplifies expat administration, and eliminates redundant processes.

### Align Business Objectives with the Realities of Immigration Law

It is imperative that all parties involved in a relocation effort understand that immigration rules are constantly changing and are often restrictive and sometimes discretionary. The granting of a visa, especially within a specific timeframe, is not always guaranteed. HR leaders must take the time to set expectations with business leaders and their employees as to whether relocation is possible and to set the timeframe for an expected move. Senior leadership should assess future business needs to ensure talent is timely in place. The pressure to remain competitive may result in companies searching for shortcuts to facilitate quick global transfers; however, the best protection is creating a strong culture of immigration compliance at all costs.

### The Power of Communication

Employees should be encouraged to remain in direct and regular contact with HR regarding their move, timeline, and any concerns relating to the immigration process. Employers must communicate the purpose and duration of the international relocation at the outset, and maintain a sufficient connection with all transferring employees even if outside counsel handles their immigration matters. It is necessary that clear communication be established early in the process regarding the length of the assignment, whether permanent sponsorship is an option, and whether repatriation is required. Larger companies with a high number of mobile employees should consider holding regular town hall sessions to provide critical information to employees and managers.

### Relocate Strategically and Think Creatively

Not every relocation requires a long-term move or permanent transfer. Short-term assignees, business travelers, rotation/training programs, and commuter assignments are available options that allow for knowledge transfer and global movement at reduced costs to the employer. Every country has its own policies regarding long-term relocation, extended business trips, and taxation implications, which is why it is vital that employers review all options and assess all obligations prior to any moves. Flexibility is key, and avoiding a cookie-cutter approach allows employees to have a positive relocation experience.

## Conclusion

A rapidly increasing international workforce makes it crucial that employers provide a dedicated mobility function to their employees, develop appropriate workflows, and create internal policies to deal with the limitations of immigration laws and to ensure that there is no compromise when it comes to compliance. HR, in conjunction with senior managers and executives, should review their internal practices to ensure a high-quality experience for their international employees undergoing relocation.