



SANTA FE
RELOCATION

ROUNDUP

Global Mobility Q3 2022 review



Preface

Santa Fe and Crowe recently hosted a roundtable of Global Mobility (GM) experts and human resource professionals to explore and debate the challenges and opportunities they face. This overview looks at the key themes explored and how they compare with our 2021/22 Global Mobility Survey (GMS) report.

The insights from this forum reflect on a seismic shift in international ways of working and changes in the talent pool and technology.

Note: All charts are from our 2021/22 GMS report: REDEFINE.
Search “GMS Redefine” to download the full report.

Key insights from the roundtable

Global Mobility—its place and purpose

- The pandemic has forced a change in GM's function. It now plays a more strategic, advisory role to organisations.
- GM's remit has broadened to include global workforce management, talent mobility—and environmental, social and corporate governance (while positively influencing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I)).
- The complexity of the workload of those managing cross-border people issues since the pandemic has transformed GM's place and purpose.

Skills and approach

- The talent function and GM are becoming more connected than ever.
- Knowledge transfer, innovation, and leadership skills development require physical presence.
 - The pandemic has highlighted virtual and hybrid working do not deliver these at the same speed.
- Real-time data from mobility and HR that drive analytics and competitive knowledge are no longer a nice to have: Digitalisation is combining technology and human interactions more effectively.

Macro issues

- Flexibility and agility against a backdrop of uncertain industry and geo-political environments are key to sustainability.
- Focus on the team is vital. “How are you feeling, how are you doing?” are key questions, and pressure release valves enabling more to deliver the right experiences.

Emerging topics and trends

Does GM have a seat at the table?

Reduced team sizes

GM activity & profile

Front & centre in the spotlight—where are all our people?

Flexible & agile working

Policy and process optimisation

Skills & approach

Transactional support

Technology adoption

Service digitalisation

Economic & health crisis

Global recession

Macro issues

Increasingly global talent pools

ESG everywhere



Constant monitoring of border, health crisis restrictions & compliance

Physical mobility rebound

Significant increase in cross-border remote working

Can we maintain a seat at the table?



Crisis response management

Cost management

Consultative business partner

Managing constant flexibility & agility

Rebound & recovery

War in Ukraine

Metaverse

The great resignation

Cost of living crisis

Web 3.0

2022 & beyond

Taking the lead on hybrid working— but does leadership require presence?

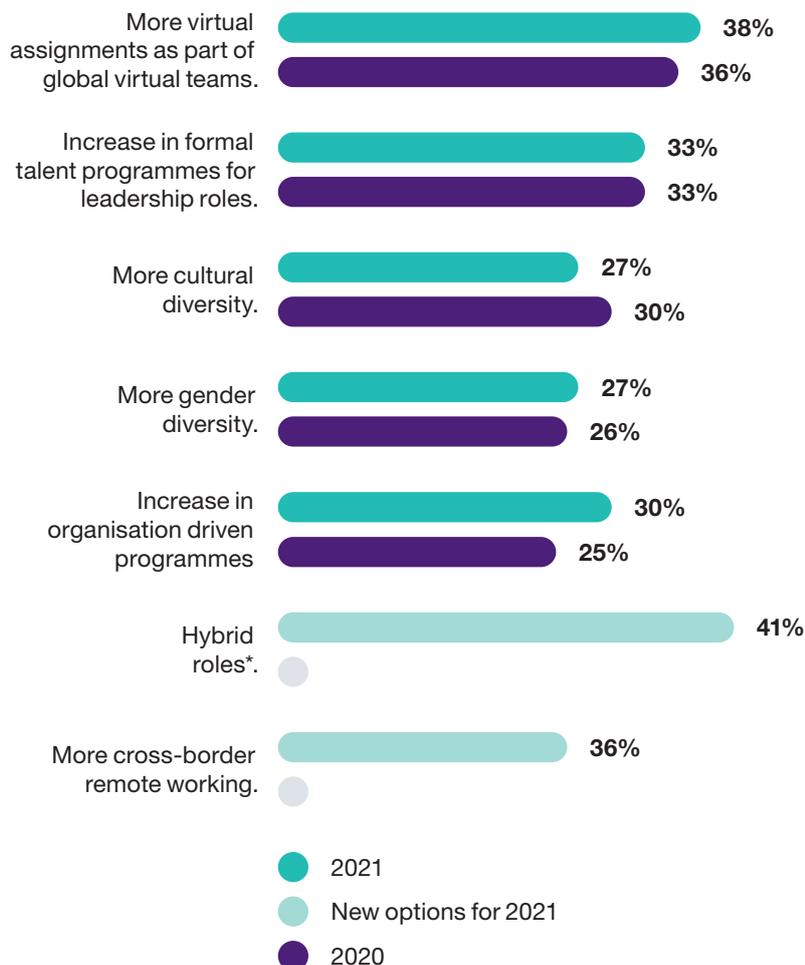
Comparing our 2021/22 Global Mobility Survey (GMS) report with recent insights from the roundtable

We projected in REDEFINE that GM professionals expected virtual assignments to significantly alter the structure of the internationally mobile workforce. We also saw signs of the pendulum shifting towards in-person assignments.

The most anticipated change for GM professionals was a move to greater hybrid working, with 41% suggesting this will be a significant change over the next 12 months. This indicates they see virtual working to remain prominent, but it will blend with more traditional, physical relocations.

Predictions of GM teams playing a more significant role in selecting and screening talent are reflected by an expected 30%-increase in organisation-driven programmes.

What changes do you expect amongst your internationally mobile workforce over the next 12 months?*



*GMS 21/22 chart ref. fig. 7 pg. 15.

Striking the right balance*

ROI. “How can we compare outcomes of **remote assignments** versus **physical cross-border assignments?**”

Dr Phil Renshaw

Insights from Global Mobility leaders

- Most confirmed their priority is getting the right talent onboarded in the right location. Costs are important but are not in themselves stopping the right people from being recruited or mobilised across borders.
- A majority of organisations are in growth mode. Talent mobility is a big enabler of growth. Therefore, recruitment and deployment of the right talent, with less focus on costs, is not uncommon.
- Mobility is seen as an important investment decision. The downstream impacts of additional costs or processes are not always well understood. There is an opportunity to educate the business.
- The current climate of investing as a priority over cost management could end through a change in management or the macro environment. Those managing mobility need to communicate incremental costs over and above the cost of a local, and obtain approval.
- In some ways, focusing on cost measurement, reporting, then returns is simply a product of programme maturity. For many fast-growing businesses, this phase may not yet have come but as the function and the team mature, it likely will.



*Session facilitated by Dr Phil Renshaw, Cranfield University Research Fellow and LIBF Visiting Professor. Dr Jenny Robinson, Visiting Fellow, Henley Business School—co-researcher.

An enhanced awareness

We remarked in REDEFINE that one positive result of the pandemic was leadership's increased awareness of the GM function.

58% of business leaders had little or no visibility of Global Mobility teams before Covid-19

How visible are the GM team in your organisation?*



29%

Until the pandemic they were not visible but as a direct result of the pandemic they are now very visible.

Leadership know who they are and understand their role in internationally mobilising employees.

42%

They have always been very visible. Leadership know who they are and understand their role in internationally mobilising employees.

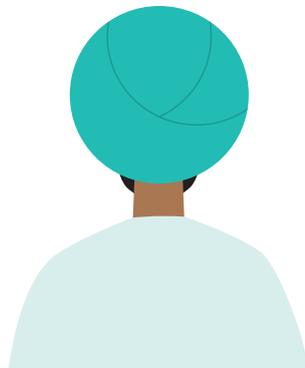
6%

They are visible only if the leadership either relocates themselves or have an employee undertaking the process.

23%

We typically only deal with the functional head such as HR, talent or reward, not directly with GM specialists.

*GMS 21/22 chart ref. fig. 1 pg. 6.



Future focus and challenges*

Despite a significant shift in the place and purpose of GM in organisations, GM professionals must work with key stakeholders to maintain their seat at the table—and ensure they transform from an operational role to a broader, global workforce management one.

The remit of GM has expanded substantially since 2019 to cover global workforce management, talent mobility, and environmental, social and governance. To succeed, it must continue to evolve at pace in the context of globalisation, digital innovation, and new, more fluid ways of working.

Here are the results of the live polls from the 2022 forum

Do you think GM is going through a transformation to become more strategic and advisory?

Yes	100%
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Pandemic challenges: What are the key areas of focus for GM in your organisation for 2022?

Remote work policy	79%
Compliance	63%
Talent shortages	63%
Mobility transformation to meet strategic growth objectives	58%
Technology	42%
Business travel management/posted workers	32%
Cost reduction	21%

What does the future of GM look like in your organisation?

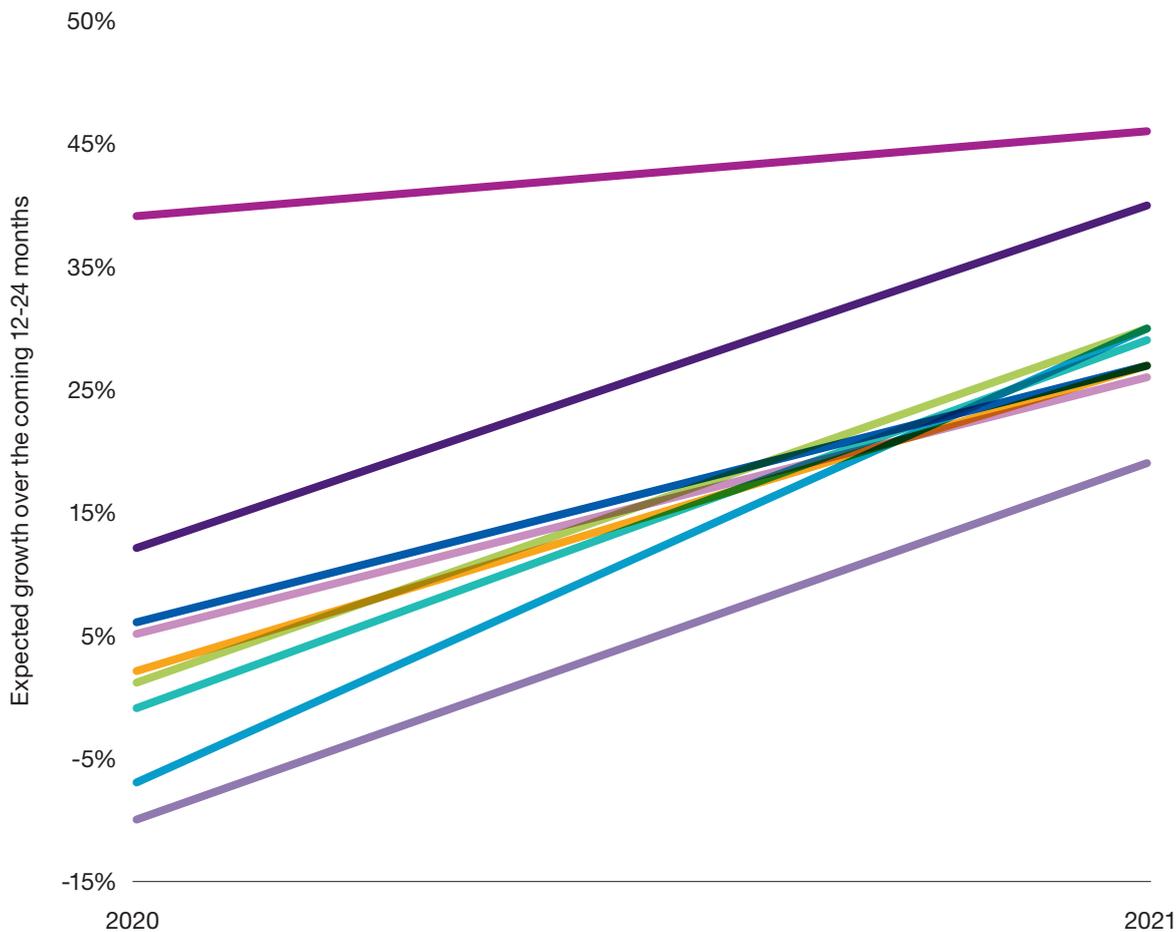
More strategic	56%
Greater co-operation and alignment with talent management	22%
Broader remit and focus on global workforce deployment	17%
Stay the same	6%
More operational, less strategic	0%

*Session facilitated by Tracy Figliola, Global Hedge Fund Company.
Siobhan Cummins, Strategic GM Advisor. Julia Palmer, COO, Santa Fe Relocation.

The predicted resurgence of international assignments

In REDEFINE, we forecast that there would be no let-up of demand across the global talent pool, as evidenced by the increase in one-way relocations. GM teams are key stakeholders in enabling and selling these moves to prospective employees. As international work arrangements become more fluid, and with the continued evolution of hybrid arrangements, it will be essential for GM teams to determine their framework for governance, compliance, and rigidity of policies. It's another compelling driver to establishing greater rigour in the initial business/people investment case by GM in the planning process.

Expected growth of assignment types*



- Remote or virtual arrangement. **+7%**
- Graduate programmes. **+28%**
- One-way international relocations—employee initiated. **+29%**
- Strategic long-term. **+37%**
- Short-term. **+30%**
- One-way international relocations—company initiated. **+21%**
- Developmental long-term. **+25%**
- International commuting. **+21%**
- International business travellers. **+29%**

*GMS 21/22 chart ref. fig. 9 pg. 17.

Adapting to change*

The complexity of workload for those managing cross-border people issues has transformed the GM function. International hiring and movement are recovering, and significant growth is expected of permanent relocations, short-term assignments, and cross-border remote workers.

GM needs to be proactive, flexible, and agile in designing solutions that meet the changing needs of their organisations, and address employee expectations.

Talent shortages were seen as a major issue. In the future, GM will be used as a key facilitator in attracting and retaining employees.

It is expected that GM and talent management will become more aligned— with policies and processes being designed around organisational talent and recruitment needs.

Global Mobility needs to be proactive, flexible, and agile in designing solutions that meet the changing needs of their organisation.



*Session facilitated by Tracy Figliola, Global Hedge Fund Company. Siobhan Cummins, Strategic GM Advisor. Julia Palmer, COO, Santa Fe Relocation.

A growing trend to invest in technology

Our research in REDEFINE highlights that three-quarters of GM teams plan to invest in new technology in the next 24 months.

On the organisational side, the ability to mitigate and improve compliance and risk management through connected systems and processes is a priority for many—and enhanced data analytics for workforce planning is imperative.

A key aspiration is to deliver better value for their programmes, acknowledging the need for an integrated approach to developing policies, workflows, communication, and data flows with the external supply chain.

On the employee side, there are significant gains to be made from managing employee experience and engagement. Differentiation in attracting international hires, who may be considering their options on several roles in different locations, is critical.

Choosing between purchasing technology through capital expenditure versus outsourcing requires complex cost-benefit analyses, but is essential to identifying the individually best solution.

Looking at digital innovation, where do you see it making the biggest impact on your business, in relation to the GM function?*



The need for better technology*

Digitalisation was highlighted as a key enabler for GM during the roundtable. The function holds a breadth of data from demographics to relocation spend—and needs to process that into relevant analytics to better inform leadership and stakeholders on the ROI of assignments. Many GM teams are still without technology tools due to cost and lack of resources or market knowledge.

It was agreed that GM and their service partners need to provide smarter data to their key internal stakeholders and invest in better technology.

Digitalisation poll from the 2022 roundtable

Is your organisation considering any new tools for GM?

Remote work approval and tracking	39%
Improved employee experience	33%
Short-term business travel tracking	11%
Improved cost data and analytics	11%
Cost management	6%



*Session facilitated by Dinesh Jangra, Partner, Global Practice Leader, Crowe.

Conclusion

As we reported in REDEFINE, the pandemic has catalysed the rate at which GM's role has changed and will continue to evolve. Not only are organisations focusing on new markets, products and services, they are adapting to the new deal between employer and employee.

While long-serving internationally mobile employees may accept the status quo of how their organisations function—their culture and values—there is also a new wave of internationally mobile talent. They have expectations of being treated differently and having more of a say in how and where they will work. Enhancing the personal with the digital will become a balancing act, and this is never more so a reality for GM.

Maintaining control in a flexible and agile framework will rely on a digitalised connectivity between all actors in international workforce arrangements.

As the GM leaders at the roundtable suggested—organisations are still assessing at leadership level how to get to grips with the increased governance required to comply with national legislation changes, bureaucracy, and a zealous appetite to identify and prosecute compliance breaches, particularly those associated with cross-border remote working and virtual assignments.

Organisations and GM teams must redefine their boundaries and criteria for approving new hybrid and cross-border work arrangements. Frameworks, compliance protocols, and new policies will need to be embedded quickly.

GM's coming of age through the pandemic is daunting yet exhilarating in equal measure. Maintaining a 'seat at the table' is both a challenge and opportunity—which may require bravery and a willingness to eliminate practices and processes in a different environment.

Ten reflections

1. How has GM's role shifted through the pandemic?
2. How has GM adapted to a new normal?
3. What are the value measures that matter, and for whom?
4. Is GM resourced and aligned with potential organisational shifts from a traditional workforce model to become more fluid, with a focus on a global workforce?
5. What communication and 'marketing' activity is necessary to be seen as flexible and agile?
6. How does GM connect with the talent function?
7. Can global talent and leadership development really be delivered by endorsing remote, cross-border assignments?
8. Are cross-border and domestic assignment and relocation policies aligned with workforce expectations?
9. Has GM's scope been reshaped to include workforce requests for hybrid and remote working?
10. What rules, tools and policies will organisations need to remain competitive in attracting talent over the next three to five years?

This report was written by John Rason, Group Head of Consulting at Santa Fe Relocation. He is recognised within the Global Mobility industry as a multi-award-winning thought leader and speaker on strategic international HR and talent management. John has over 15 years of global consultancy experience, having previously held senior HR leadership roles in numerous global businesses across various industry sectors. John now works with global organisations to create value and improve the structure of their GM programmes, focusing on aligning strategic objectives with operational delivery.



**GM activity
& profile**



**Skills
& approach**



**Macro
issues**



**So, how will you solve your
Global Mobility puzzle?**

We can help you.
Get in touch.

We help people to work, live and thrive in new places around the world

Global Mobility made easy



About Santa Fe Relocation

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