

Flexibility in policy design

Successful relocation policies will address rapidly changing business requirements as well as employee needs. These objectives require flexibility while maintaining equity. Rather a prescriptive and controlling framework, mobility policy should be proactive, supportive and tailored.

MEETING BUSINESS NEEDS

Given the rapidly changing economic and political environments in which organisations operate today, global mobility policy must provide flexibility to accommodate business needs. The adoption of a core-flex approach to policy design is particularly useful in this regard.

In the design of a core-flex arrangement, the emphasis is on business flexibility rather than employee choice; control over benefit provision lies within the remit of the business.

At its simplest, a core-flex policy provides core benefits to all, such as those that ensure compliance and duty of care. Additional support elements are given (or not) with the decision-making under the control of the business.

Greater flexibility in the provision of additional benefits can be given via a series of predefined support levels. Alternatively, complete flexibility for the business can be given such that it can increase or decrease levels of support to match the assignment type, the employee need and the business requirement.

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Cafeteria style benefits provision provides employee choice. Under this approach the emphasis is on improving the employee experience by enabling those who are relocating to select the benefits that they believe best suit their requirements. The key to employee satisfaction is to ensure that policy flexibility enables mobility but without assignees needing to justify each and every item they require as an exception to the rule.

Cash lump sums that enable employees to spend as they wish on relocation support can also form part of a flexible global mobility support package.

It is important to remember that employees can make poor choices and these can undermine policy intentions. Clear communication is needed such that the implications of choices made are explained.

TRANSPARENCY & EQUITY

A flexible approach to policy can undermine perceptions of equity unless careful communication is undertaken to ensure policy provision is fully explained.

Policy content should be transparent. Transparency and equity are crucial for employee buy-in and motivation.

POLICY GUIDELINES OR STRUCTURE

A guideline approach is likely to provide greater flexibility for both the business and the assignees on the move than structured policies. Effective administration and communication systems will be required to support delivery of guideline elements. Policy guidelines should be accessible to employees so that they can understand their content.

While the trend towards greater flexibility in policy design and delivery

might imply the end of structured mobility policies, this is not the case. There is still a need in many organisations for a structured approach; it can reflect and maintain organisational culture and can prove to be very successful as part of a talent mobility management strategy.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology that can keep account of the elements delivered and their costs set against budgets will be required for core-flex, cafeteria and/or policy guideline approaches if flexible delivery is to work in both an equitable and controlled manner.



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