



The RES Forum Annual Report 2017

The New Normal of Global Mobility

Flexibility, Diversity & Data Mastery

Authored by Professor Michael F. Dickmann,
*Professor of International HRM,
Cranfield University, School of Management, United Kingdom*

Executive
Summary

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This is an introduction to the RES Forum Annual Report 2017. To read the full report:

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Picture theme: Opening Doors to the World...

The images that we have selected for this year's RES Forum Annual Report demonstrate how we as an industry are opening doors to the world. We hope you enjoy joining us on this journey throughout the report!

The RES Forum Annual Report 2017 is written & produced by:

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The RES Forum is an independent, highly engaged and international community of senior in-house International Human Resources professionals with members in over 40 countries. We are not influenced by external parties or third-party vendors. We share information to make our working lives easier and to assist in solving difficult work challenges. We collaborate on shared projects and initiatives, and we learn together. Our agenda, set entirely by our membership, is delivered through a spectrum of services including member information exchange, custom research, professional consultancy and training and a full schedule of events held around the globe.

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Report introduction by
Andrea Piacentini
Co-founder, The RES Forum

The RES Forum Annual Report 2017 presents another fascinating insight into the key strategic themes relating to the management and deployment of an internationally mobile workforce within companies globally. As joint co-editor on the report, together with our General Manager Heather Hughes, each year I look forward to reading the assembled research, insight and practices of our members, all pulled together so effortlessly and intelligently by Professor Michael Dickmann of Cranfield University, School of Management, a long term friend of the RES Forum who has written the Annual Report for us for the last four years.

Professor Dickmann summarizes the key themes of the RES Forum Annual Report 2017 in his introduction and I will not repeat those in my foreword. Rather I will pick out some ideas covered in this report which have particularly resonated with me over the last 12 months. As I reflect on this time last year, March 2016, we were in the process of deciding which chapters to lead with in last year's Annual Report. The two key themes were Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) and Gender Diversity through the lens of international assignments. Fast forward to March 2017 and these themes seem even more acutely relevant to the world of Global Mobility than they were at this point last year. Who would have thought?

VUCA has moved from a somewhat esoteric concept to something very tangible, evidenced in the emerging global geo-political environment where repatriated sovereignty, as well as inward looking political, migration and economic policies are rapidly emerging. Coupled with politically populist themes, such policies have found, and are continuing to find, very willing audiences in first world economies all around the globe. With respect to the political earthquakes from the last 12 months, specifically 'Brexit' in the United Kingdom and the election of President Donald Trump to the White House (USA), the impact on the global economy and the globally mobile workforce is huge. For example, in the USA and the UK, companies with a reliance on global talent have stated publicly that they will find it harder to recruit nationals of other countries to work for them... that assumes of course that these groups of potential employees remain willing to come to both locations.

None of this is of course new information to anyone who has been awake from summer 2016 through to present times – indeed the RES Forum membership are telling us that already their organizations are planning contingencies and are adapting to the emerging environment, either through making public statements on government policy, reconsidering location of factories and operations or indeed supporting potentially affected employees with dedicated help lines to guide them through residency and immigration requirements. Chapter 3 of this report discusses 'Brexit' (the UK leaving the European Union following the referendum vote in June 2016) and the impact on programme management and international assignees themselves in more detail. What is evident is that the considerations and conclusions in chapter 3, although linked to Brexit, have broader global impact and should be considered through a broader VUCA perspective.

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On the subject of diversity, as I write this foreword in March 2017, the recently passed International Woman's Day reminded us all about the importance of Gender Diversity and the ongoing disparity between pay and organizational representation of females. The struggle is real. When I have been asked to speak at external events over the last 12 months on Global Mobility matters, I have focussed on the RES Forum research in the area of Gender Diversity and international assignments. At this point last year, the RES Forum research on Gender Diversity in the arena of international assignments was some of the most pioneering insight on the subject (may I also add unashamedly that many other papers and research studies have followed in the wake of our research). Although the answers are not always evident, or easy to come up with, the headlines are: Female assignees are less likely to be selected and less likely to enjoy the same career capital post assignment when compared to their male counterparts. This cannot be acceptable.

This year, the report broadens the subject of diversity into looking at another area where unconscious bias is recognized as an issue with respect to deploying the global workforce on assignment, namely age diversity. I will not spoil the research for you as it is very much worth reading in more detail, but the headline conclusion is that there are different expectations from companies on what different generational segments expect from an international assignment and the suitability of the different generations to go on assignment is perceived to vary from one generation to the next. Are these differences in expectations and



How can we create tools which allow any unconscious bias to be removed from the decision making process in selecting assignees but also allow companies to maximize the potential talent pools available to them?

suitability real or imagined? If imagined, how can we create tools which allow any unconscious bias to be removed from the decision making process in selecting assignees but also allow companies to maximize the potential talent pools available to them – that is fundamentally the crux of the issue, be it gender or age related. Surely there is a strong commercial argument for doing so?

If you remain interested in this subject of diversity in relation to international assignments, you can request a copy of the RES Forum Annual Report 2016 by emailing office@theresforum.com. We are also completing detailed follow up research on Gender Diversity in collaboration with Leuphana University and Professor Benjamin Bader and Birte Manke, MA, PhD Candidate. Look out for this over summer 2017.

As a final point, what about the RES Forum? What has happened in the Forum in the last year and where do we go from here? The first thing to note is that during 2017 we have expanded strongly into North America with our regional branch (RES Forum Americas), with our US and Canada based events creating thought leadership and engaging interaction between our growing Americas in-house membership. I was delighted to attend and speak at our inaugural New York event and to share a stage with Tammy Hughes, President of the Heim Group. The Heim Group, for the uninitiated, are experts on Gender Diversity and work to create successful and diverse leadership teams. Our RES Forum Americas President Chris Kline deserves much of the credit for this success in our inaugural year in the Americas and I look forward to seeing how he grows our concept and network within the Americas Region.

2017 will also see us expand into the APAC (Asia Pacific) region, as well as intensifying our research agenda through our partnership with Professor Benjamin Bader and his team of the Leuphana University in Germany. Globally we are now reaching 1,400 members, yet we remain committed to our core principles of being first and foremost a network of HR people for HR people, facilitating knowledge sharing and best practice within that community and creating thought leading ideas and concepts with respect to Global Mobility through our structured programme of papers, research and learning. None of this is possible without the continued participation and engagement of our in-house members, and from the RES Team we want to say 'Thank You' to each and every one of you. I hope you enjoy reading this report and the insights it offers into the world of GM as much as I have.

Andrea Piacentini
Co-founder, The RES Forum





Executive Summary by Report Author
Professor Michael F. Dickmann
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Welcome to the sixth RES Forum Annual Report. The last year has been shaped by many dramatic socio-political developments that have strong impacts on the Global Mobility (GM) field. We identify some of the assessments and reactions of companies about how to cope with the ever increasing degrees of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). As in earlier years, the RES Forum Annual Report tracks key GM trends in rewards, organizational developments, talent and career management. In addition, we explore data analytics and the GM reactions and planning in relation to the Brexit vote. One of this year's highlights is that we report extensively on age diversity in GM and how companies are managing and engaging the different generations at global work.

Each year the RES Forum Annual Report gives the reader the most up-to-date, cutting-edge data and insights into the GM world. The world does not stand still for anyone. The GM field is not immune to the same technological and cost challenges facing human resource departments and society as a whole. There is relentless pressure to improve the employee experience on global careers as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of GM programmes. Data Analytics wants to provide timely and relevant GM insights to enable companies to take superior GM decisions.

Chapter 1 shows that most companies see a variety of benefits to discovering and visualizing useful GM information. Data analytics allow a Multinational Corporation (MNC) to arrive at evidence-based conclusions. The learning points from this chapter include:

- MNCs are not using the full array of IT opportunities and integration mechanisms that may reduce their costs and may lead to a more standardized, possibly higher quality, GM service provision. Currently, only a very small minority of firms have assignment software in place with which they are satisfied.

- Almost all companies consider that general data analytics will be important or very important to their GM programme management over the next three year period. Good quality data analytics would allow them to compile and consolidate data effectively, visualize it and gain insights from which to make evidence-based decisions.
- With regard to predictive analytics, organizations plan to decisively move forward in terms of analyzing overall assignment success, retention and performance in order to predict success elements and patterns. In addition, half of GM professionals aim to predict future assignment compensation, reward trends and costs. Two in five strive to predict assignment types and movements and want to draw up lists of identified future GM candidates.
- GM teams will also concentrate on starting to report on performance trends, nationality and the ethnicity breakdown of assignees versus the general employee population. Additionally, they will strive to compile an age breakdown of their assignee population.
- In the medium-term future, MNCs want to expand all areas of data analytics. In the next three years the biggest growth is expected to be in measuring Return on Investment (ROI), retention of assigned talent after and during global assignments, career progression of repatriated assignees post assignment and the early return of assignees.

The GM data analytics field is still immature and we have seen that it is currently relatively neglected within companies. However, the field is gathering energy, speed and focus. We expect many interesting developments and trail blazing activities in the near future.

Half of GM professionals aim to predict future assignment compensation, reward trends and costs.

Chapter 2 explores age and generational differences in Global Mobility. We distinguished early-mid career staff (Generation Y and Millennials, born after 1981), mid-peak career individuals (Generation X, born between 1964 – 81) and late stage careerists (Baby Boomers, born before 1964). The RES Forum survey 'Age Diversity, December 2016' sheds light on a range of interesting differences and generates valuable insights.

- Older expatriates are more likely to be in senior positions and therefore more likely to be sent on a strategic (control and coordination) business needs assignment. Younger expatriates are more likely to be sent on a developmental assignment.



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- As potential assignees get older, the respondents feel that it becomes more difficult to identify suitable candidates and to motivate them to accept postings.
- Different sets of drivers motivate the different age groups:
 - Personal drivers were most important to early-mid careerists (Generation Y, Millennials).
 - Expatriation package was most important to mid-peak careerists (Generation X).
 - All age groups sought sense, fulfilment and career progression. However, career impact was more important to early-mid as well as mid-peak careerists compared to their older counterparts.
 - Professional challenge was most important to early-mid careerists (Generation Y, Millennials) in comparison to the other generations.
 - Younger expatriates perceive a stronger need to expand their social capital even though it is probably older assignees who utilize their social networks more for work purposes.
 - Partner and dual career considerations as well as family and educational concerns are more pertinent for mid-peak careerists (Generation X) than for other age groups.
 - Security concerns are more important to mid-peak and late careerists (Generation X and Baby Boomers) while early-mid careerists (Generation Y, Millennials) are more concerned about the attractiveness of specific host locations.
- Early-mid careerists (Generation Y, Millennials) change employers more often (36%) and are more frequently promoted (25%) than their older peers.
- Mid-peak careerists (Generation X) fit more successfully into their host teams and are seen to facilitate knowledge transfer more than their younger peers (Generation Y, Millennials).
- Business learning is more extensive for mid-peak (Generation X) than late stage careerists (Baby Boomers). However, there is no strong indication that the performance of late stage careerists is inferior to that of younger generations when on assignment.

Overall, this confirms the GM approach of many MNCs who offer more developmental assignments to younger expatriates and more business need/strategic assignments to older assignees.

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Chapter 3 used a GM lens to outline some implications of what has become known as Brexit, (the referendum vote in June 2016 in which the UK population voted by a narrow majority to leave the European Union), and what this means in the broader, more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) geo-political context in which we now operate. Rarely in the decades following the fall of the Berlin wall and the old Soviet Union have there been such monumental political developments as in 2016 and 2017. In addition, the geopolitical developments in Turkey, Syria, Russia, China and the USA are highly dynamic. The RES Forum research on the perceived impact of Brexit showed that:

- The UK will continue to be highly attractive as a destination country for potential assignees.
- Organizations will face a more complex compliance and social security situation which will probably be more costly to administer.
- Talent sourcing strategies that aim at hiring external, foreign candidates will have to become more agile and responsive to successfully respond to the changing legal and political landscape.
- Some GM managers estimate that the number of in-bound assignments to the UK will diminish as the willingness of EU nationals to work and live in Britain may decrease.
- Half of the companies feel a high degree of insecurity in relation to Brexit implications and 40% believe that Brexit will be costly. A third of MNCs think that their preparedness to cope with Brexit challenges is low. Many companies have set up working groups but are essentially monitoring the developments and are waiting for more precise and concrete information.
- There are a range of 'known unknowns' such as further countries leaving the EU or the impact of Brexit on the financial markets. While there have been plenty of gloomy predictions in relation to Brexit – or with respect to other economic, ecological, political and security developments – only time will tell what the actual effects will be. It is, however, fair to say that so far, some of the negative economic predictions that were made prior to the vote have not materialized.
- With respect to geopolitical developments, firms believe that the next few years will become tough, in the sense that the world will become more divided into rich and poor, becoming more violent, nationalist, protectionist, insecure, volatile and uncertain.

We live in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment that is likely to present both opportunities and threats. Just like reacting to external risks and dangerous developments in hostile countries, MNCs are well advised to devote leadership attention and their creative capabilities to understanding not just the threats but also the opportunities that Brexit and other challenging geopolitical developments present.



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Chapter 4 looks at the key issues of organizational development and talent management. Innovative thinking, in-depth understanding of assignees and their families, as well as the variety of location contexts and geopolitical developments, all combine to shape the GM approaches of MNCs. The key lessons learnt from Chapter 4 include:

- The willingness of expatriates to work abroad is of high importance for companies. Unfortunately, a large percentage of MNCs complain that they have a substantial number of vacancies for executives, senior managers, managers, professionals and in some cases, entry-level staff that they find hard to fill with suitable GM candidates. Frustratingly, the situation seems to be getting worse with time.
- This resourcing challenge is not made easier by the many challenges that firms face in relation to career, talent, performance and repatriation planning and management.
- GM planning concentrates on top talent. Most companies have a dedicated top talent strategy to develop future leaders but half of MNCs do not have a talent pipeline across all levels of the organization.
- Firms continue to use relatively unsophisticated GM selection that is driven by current work performance and the candidates' willingness to work abroad. For instance, only a quarter of firms assess the cultural intelligence of potential assignees and about one in seven evaluate language capabilities during their selection.
- Working abroad tends to pay off in terms of promotion. Expatriate experience is particularly important for senior managers, followed by executives, managers and professionals. While mentors and business sponsors can improve the career and business outcomes of expatriation, many MNCs still do not use these across their functions and hierarchies. In turn, higher touch HR support for assignees is relatively common with almost two thirds of organizations providing this. Overall, in more than a third of MNCs the career advancement of repatriates was superior to that of non-expatriated peers.
- Repatriation continues to be a challenge for GM departments and individual assignees. While long-term career planning has been shown to increase retention and career success, only a third of MNCs plan the individual's next role after return.
- Few companies systematically assess Return on Investment (ROI) in GM. Only two out of five MNCs go beyond cost issues to look at the achievement of assignment objectives, a quarter assess employee effectiveness and a third evaluate retention issues. ROI assessment could be more in-depth, broader and more systematic.

It is clear that many issues in organizational development and talent management are interlinked, dynamic and highly complex. The challenges that must be overcome in order to improve GM programmes are substantial.

Chapter 5 is devoted to reward package design and charts the status quo as well as key trends in GM remuneration and benefits. It provides rich insights into the status quo of global reward approaches and the nuances of reward strategies in relation to different assignment types and individual situations and needs. The key learning points include:

- The GM function deals with a great variety of international work types. While companies tend to look at effectiveness, business needs and at individualization considerations to design reward practices, the location that bears the cost of the assignment might be determined in relation to where the organizational benefits accrue.
- Business-driven assignments have a more generous reward and benefit package than developmental assignments. In turn, developmental assignees benefit more often from talent management interventions and from having a career mentor.
- More than three quarters of MNCs do not incentivize assignees through linking assignment bonuses to assignment goals and performance. Companies simply use their normal annual performance management system and reward structures to reward extraordinary performance.
- 87% of organizations use a home-based balance sheet approach to determine the reward package of long term expatriates, but only 10% use it for local plus assignees. Long term assignees were better shielded from currency fluctuations than other international workers, a facet that is likely to have been particularly useful for UK outbound expatriates during the strong currency fluctuations in the wake of the Brexit vote.
- Assignment packages varied substantially depending on a range of factors. On average, short term assignees had a less generous deal than long term expatriates; business-driven and strategic needs based assignments were more generously rewarded than developmental assignments.

The RES Forum aims to keep its members and readers informed with the latest data, insightful analysis and interpretation as well as leading-edge recommendations. Ultimately, you, the reader, will understand the particular context of your company best and how to 'make sense' of your industry dynamics and intra-organizational developments.

I hope that this report informs, to some extent, your Global Mobility decisions and that you will enjoy reading it.

Professor Michael F. Dickmann

BSc, MSc, PhD, AFCIPD

Cranfield University, School of Management



Executive Summary by Report Author
Professor Michael F. Dickmann
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Michael lectures in the areas of international and strategic HRM. He first worked at Cranfield University during his PhD on International Human Resource Management (IHRM). After being the Global Head of Human Resources in a multinational corporation based in Munich, Germany he rejoined Cranfield to lead its work in the areas of national cultures, global mobility and IHRM. His research focuses on human resource strategies, structures and processes of multinational organizations, cross-cultural management, international mobility, global careers and change management. He is the director of the Cranfield MSc in Management, a highly innovative, practice-centred masters that incorporates an internship with leading-edge organizations.

Michael has published more than 100 academic and professional papers and reports. He is the lead author of three books on international HRM and global careers, part of the acclaimed Routledge series on global human resource management. His latest book *International Human Resource Management – Contemporary HR Issues in Europe*, co-edited with Prof Chris Brewster and Prof Paul Sparrow, was published by Routledge in 2016. Since 2012 he has also been the Editor of *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*.

Michael has a first class honours degree in Economics from Queen Mary University of London and an MSc in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management from The London School of Economics & Political Science. Michael has several years of work experience, both with major consultancies and in industry. He has conducted a variety of consulting and research assignments with cutting edge multinational organizations mostly from the financial, automotive, telecommunications, chemical, electrical engineering and electronics industries. He has also consulted for humanitarian agencies, government and the United Nations. He has worked in his native Germany, Australia, the USA, Colombia, Spain and Britain and speaks English and Spanish fluently.



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in the research for this year's RES Forum Annual Report.

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Aviva	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	ISG plc	RELX	TomTom
BAE Systems	Fonterra	JTI International	RLG International	Twining's
Baker Tilly	Foot Locker, Inc.	Just Fab	Rolls-Royce	Veolia North America
Bank of America Merrill Lynch	Ford Motor Company	Kantar Group	Saint-Gobain North America	Videology
Barry Callebaut	Foster and Partners	Kellogg Company	Santander	Volvo
Bayer	FrieslandCampina	Kelly Services Inc.	SAP	Walmart
Bentley Motors Ltd	Fritz EGGER GmbH & Co OG	Kinaxis	Schaeffler Group	Warner Bros. Entertainment
BNP Paribas Fortis	Frontica Advantage	LEGO Group	Schneider Electric	Whirlpool
Bombardier Transportation	FTI Consulting, Inc.	Leonardo MW Ltd (Helicopter Division)	Scottish Power	Willis Towers Watson
Boston Consulting Group	General Electric	Liberty Mutual Insurance	SEB	Wolseley
British Telecom	Gerdau	Lloyd's Register	ServiceNow	Wood Group
Cargill	GKN	Mars	SEW Eurodrive	WorleyParsons
Caterpillar	Grant Thornton	Mattel	Shawcor Ltd.	Xchanging
Centrica	Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation	Mayer Brown	Siemens	Yum Brands
Cigna	Halliburton Management Limited	McKesson Corporation	Sika AG	
Cimpress	Herbalife	Micron Technology Inc	Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken	
Cognizant Technology Solutions		Naspers	Skanska	
		NATS	Spotify	



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