



CONVERSATIONS WITH MOBILITY LEADERS

Branding your Mobility
Program within your
Organization

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In our continuing series, “Conversations with Mobility Leaders”, Sirva explores the various ways Mobility leaders can successfully brand their mobility programs within their organizations and emphasizes the importance of the Mobility function being viewed as a trusted partner.

Our discussion centered on the three key areas:

- The benefits of branding Mobility
- Defining Mobility
- Ensuring Mobility has a seat at the table

INTRODUCTION

With rapid globalization and the evolution of workforce trends, the importance of branding the Mobility function within an organization cannot be overstated. As companies expand their operations globally and talent becomes increasingly mobile, the role of Mobility in facilitating seamless transitions for employees has become pivotal.

Branding the Mobility function goes beyond just being recognized; it is important that Mobility is identified as a trusted and reliable partner in navigating the intricacies of employee relocation. For individual business areas within a company, having a Mobility arm that is viewed as a trusted partner is essential. It ensures relocating employees experience smooth transitions, allowing them to focus on their roles without the added stress of logistical challenges.

A well-branded Mobility function fosters strong relationships with business units, positioning itself as an invaluable resource and strategic partner in achieving organizational objectives amidst the complexities of today’s agile workforce.





THE BENEFITS OF BRANDING MOBILITY

Below are several areas that underscore the significance of branding Mobility programs within organizations:



Employee satisfaction and retention: According to various studies, employees are more likely to stay with a company that offers opportunities for career growth and development, including mobility programs. Branding these programs effectively can enhance employee perception of the company's commitment to their professional advancement and contribute to higher satisfaction and retention rates.



Talent attraction: A well-branded Mobility program can serve as a competitive advantage in attracting top talent. Potential hires often consider factors such as career advancement opportunities and mobility options when evaluating job offers. A strong brand in Mobility can differentiate the organization as an employer of choice, attracting candidates seeking opportunities for growth and progression within the company.



Organizational agility: In today's fast-paced business environment, organizational agility is crucial for staying competitive. Branded Mobility programs signal the organization's adaptability and readiness to deploy talent where needed, enabling quick responses to changing market demands and business priorities.



Employee development and diversity: Mobility programs provide employees with valuable experiences and exposure to different cultures, markets, and work environments, contributing to their professional development. Branded programs that emphasize diversity and inclusion initiatives can attract diverse talent pools and foster a culture of openness and acceptance within the organization.



Cost Optimization: Effective branding of Mobility programs can result in cost savings by reducing turnover, minimizing recruitment expenses, and leveraging internal talent for international assignments or project deployments.

While specific statistics directly addressing the importance of branding Mobility programs may vary, these overarching trends highlight the strategic benefits of enhancing the perception and effectiveness of Mobility initiatives within organizations.



DEFINING MOBILITY WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION



Most Mobility leaders we speak with agree that the need for the Mobility function to be recognized and consulted is essential to the success of both their individual programs and their companies as a whole. The consensus is that while Mobility is an established group within their respective organizations, there is still a lack of education on what Mobility really does.

The confusion, in part, stems from the uncertainty around the responsibilities that fall within Mobility's remit and which lie in other departments. In other words, where does Mobility's role begin and end? Some of the gray areas mentioned include business travel compliance, remote travel, and remote work. Much of the branding work that is being done by Mobility teams is centered on creating clarity about what is actually "within brand" for Mobility while still establishing the team as helpful and supportive, even when a responsibility does not technically sit within its function.

To avoid confusion, it is important to define where Mobility's role begins and ends.

As Mobility increasingly becomes a sought-after resource for navigating complex relocation scenarios, such as cross-border moves, short-term assignments, and gig work, it is important to showcase its wide-reaching impact across various facets of the business. Through strategic branding and concerted efforts to articulate its role, Mobility can shed light on its contributions and cement its position as an indispensable partner in organizational success.



ENSURING MOBILITY'S SEAT AT THE TABLE

Relocation requires a great deal of forethought and planning that cannot be accomplished in a silo. Mobility must be able to partner with Human Resources, Talent Acquisition, and the various business areas to plan and execute a move properly.

So, how do Mobility leaders ensure that they are part of the conversation well before an employee is authorized for a move? Here are a few examples of strategies Mobility leaders are using:

- **Be proactive.** Put time on key business leaders' calendars to meet. One Mobility leader suggested the agenda for the meeting be: A Day in the Life of Global Mobility, to stress the importance of planning to preemptively avoid missteps that might cause the employee or the company problems down the line. Simply by identifying themselves and helping to educate others, it has made a world of difference in terms of recognition and communication for Mobility teams.
- **Stay relevant.** Mobility's relevance can change quickly depending on the latest initiative, project, or crisis. Mobility has to keep their relevance front and center, because even if the Mobility team has a comfortable seat at the table with the company's leadership, the world of mobility is continually evolving. Mobility needs to maintain its position and even strengthen it to keep momentum within the organization.
- **Bring data.** Enter broader business discussions by showing up with data and approaching the business from the perspective of your target audience. For instance, take the time to prepare foundational analytics to help HR business leaders determine career pathing possibilities for individuals embarking on assignments. In one instance, a Mobility leader met with HR business partners to share trends analyses and help map out a 3-year trajectory plan for the group. This type of proactive engagement helped Mobility be seen as a valuable partner and strategic resource to Human Resources and Talent Acquisition.
- **Develop trust.** While a Mobility program may be progressive in nature, Mobility's brand may be less so. How does Mobility demonstrate its strength and value to become a more trusted brand? Ask Human Resources stakeholders how Mobility can help them do their jobs more easily and efficiently, and then show up with solutions and be ready to assist. In this way, Mobility can become known as subject matter experts, especially when it comes to assisting with staffing and development. While company culture and size can play a role in the time it takes to develop trusting relationships, navigate schedules, and demonstrate value, it is well worth the pursuit in branding Mobility as a Center of Excellence.





CHALLENGES AT THE TABLE

Once Mobility leaders have earned their seat, it's important to demonstrate how Mobility can assist in tangential aspects of relocation, aside from solely procuring and overseeing the logistics of a move. When Mobility leaders ask Talent Acquisition or Human Resources how they can help, it is important to identify the exact problem business partners are trying to solve.

For example, business partners often challenge the notion of a location premium in a particular region because their aim is to entice more people to relocate there. However, Mobility understands that the intent of the established premium is based on the challenges inherent in living and working in that specific country, rather than designed solely to attract individuals to that destination. It's important to determine which additional strategies are being employed to encourage a move and how they align with an individual's career trajectory and goals. It's essential that Mobility helps guide the business in considering different perspectives and ensuring they align with the intended purpose.

Lack of fluency in Mobility language and policies causes the stakeholder education process to be repeated frequently.

Another obstacle that has surfaced is Mobility leaders feeling like newcomers every time they take their seat at the table. This situation arises from the tendency of business colleagues to introduce new and specific circumstances and scenarios which, coupled with the infrequent utilization of Mobility services by end users, results in a lack of fluency in Mobility language and policies. Consequently, the process of educating stakeholders begins again each time.

To tackle this challenge, some Mobility leaders have implemented office hours, which allows business stakeholders one-on-one time with Mobility specialists to ask questions and collaborate on problem solving without the need to schedule a formal meeting. Notably, new in-house recruiters or HR business partners are among the most regular attendees, seeking to gain a better understanding of Mobility's functions. These micro-education sessions serve to enhance and enrich the broader, more complex discussions surrounding Mobility.

Organizational restructuring and the retirement of a generation of senior leaders has resulted in the departure of individuals with valuable institutional knowledge. Amidst these changes, frustrations emerge, particularly regarding the diminishing ability of business partners to effectively collaborate. The acquisition of new companies introduces additional complexities, including differing organizational cultures.

In this dynamic environment, Mobility strategy needs greater clarity and direction. Hence, efforts are being made to initiate discussions and assert influence in shaping the trajectory of Mobility as a strategic partner.





USING THE DATA

One Mobility leader shared that they noticed certain relocation patterns and opted for a different approach in conveying information. Instead of simply stating the number of expats in a region or division, they presented a compelling case by highlighting the financial impact of expat turnover. This shifted the conversation to a new dimension, prompting stakeholders to consider the strategic implications of expatriate assignments and emphasized the importance of supporting repatriation activities and fostering dialogue on career development.

One Mobility leader noticed a concerning business trend and highlighted to management that over the previous decade, four high-level expatriates had left the company within a year of repatriation. This led to discussions on strategic support for repatriation activities and a reevaluation of the selection criteria for international assignments.

There is an acknowledged disconnect in many organizations regarding the purpose and selection process for international assignments. Amidst significant organizational changes and turnover in institutional knowledge, Mobility leaders are seeing challenges in maintaining effective business partnerships and navigating diverse corporate cultures, especially amidst company mergers and acquisitions. By expressing a commitment to fostering dialogue and asserting their role in facilitating strategic discussions, Mobility can use data to demonstrate the importance of Mobility in organizational strategy.

By using data, Mobility can demonstrate its importance in organizational strategy.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

Sirva emphasizes the importance of Mobility leaders identifying both decision makers and influencers to effectively promote and establish the Mobility brand. This extends beyond the employees being relocated; there is a diverse array of individuals within an organization that must be engaged.

A significant challenge lies in maintaining consistent communication and messaging due to frequent turnover within organizations, as individuals either leave or transition to different roles internally. Therefore, Mobility leaders must continuously adapt their communication strategies to cater to the influx of new personnel across various functions and leadership positions and make sure they are up to speed.

Continuous education of stakeholders is challenging due to employee turnover, so Mobility must continue to adapt communication strategies.



CREATING VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Most Mobility leaders seem to have vision and mission statements in one form or another; although the perception as to what constitutes a vision and mission statement differs and is not necessarily clearly defined.

Mobility's vision and mission ranges from relocation information made available on the company's intranet for various internal stakeholders, such as Talent Acquisition, Human Resources, and Finance, to stated value propositions targeted to individual business sectors and reiterated during company meetings. All agree on the importance of revisiting Mobility vision and mission statements on an annual basis due to the changing nature of global business.

It was also noted that culture plays an important role in establishing your vision and mission statements. An organization that is very protective may have statements that align with the company's business goals and corporate culture and be centered on employee experience, support, and duty of care.

Another Mobility leader said they "evangelize" the department's value proposition by creating and distributing a two-page capabilities document including elements such as number of assignments and breakdown of assignment types, assignment locations, assignment costs, experience of Mobility team members, and information about local labor laws, global payroll, tax implications, etc.

"MOBILITY IS A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE DEDICATED TO THE STRATEGY AND EXECUTION OF GLOBAL RELOCATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR OUR EMPLOYEES, KEEPING THE COMPANY COMPLIANT WITH IMMIGRATION AND TAX LAWS AROUND THE WORLD AND SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCE."

- SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT

REBRANDING YOUR MOBILITY PROGRAM

Some leaders in the field of Mobility are considering whether rebranding their department could enhance their visibility and underline their significance within the businesses they support. For some leaders, it was suggested that switching from "Global Mobility" to "Talent Mobility" might better define their role. However, there is concern that it could exacerbate the existing confusion surrounding Mobility's functions. Other leaders proposed renaming "Global Mobility" to "Global Workforce" or simply "Mobility", to reflect the broader scope of their responsibilities, while another leader rebranded their department as "Talent Deployment" to tie themselves to Talent Acquisition.

All Mobility leaders agree on the importance of adopting a user-friendly name that accurately conveys the breadth of the department's activities. They also highlight the potential value of incorporating a tagline that aligns with Mobility's mission and value proposition. Whatever the approach, the main point in branding or rebranding is to effectively convey that, while Mobility excels in HR mobility, it also encompasses a broader range of responsibilities.



CONCLUSION

There are many effective strategies that Mobility leaders can deploy to establish a strong brand presence for their programs within their organizations, and it begins with Mobility being perceived as a reliable partner to the businesses they support. This entails identifying key stakeholders within the company and extracting and tailoring data to meet their specific needs, solidifying Mobility's role and earning a position in decision-making processes.

Additionally, it is crucial for Mobility leaders to craft a compelling mission statement and value proposition, and regularly revisit them to ensure alignment with evolving company objectives. In today's landscape, Mobility leaders are increasingly emphasizing their pivotal role in driving organizational success and are actively engaged in communicating Mobility's value through strategic branding and partnerships.

If you are interested in joining Sirva's "Conversations with Mobility Leaders" program, please reach out to your Sirva representative or email us at marketing@sirva.com.



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