

Hello

The Expat Academy Round-Up (“EAR”) gives you a handy summary of all that we’ve heard through our members and events this week.

Round-Up

We had our monthly virtual Global Heads Network meeting on Monday and then next Tuesday we have two [Huddles](#) – Symposium and Club 100. Looking forward to seeing lots of faces, so get those cameras on!



Issue 45: June 2022

Global Heads Network

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Intro

This update gives you real-time intel on what’s occurring this week in super-charged Global Mobility circles. Its purpose is to help inform your decision making on technical issues. Consign it to the bottom of your briefcase and you’re already out of date.

Global Heads Network

As always, it’s great to hear what’s on the minds of those at the top of our industry!

Shared Service Centres / Hubs

Firstly, the name of ‘Shared Service Centres’ is perhaps a little out-of-fashion, with companies now choosing names like ‘Hubs’ or ‘People Service Solutions’, for example. The question of whether anyone had any experiences transitioning to one did however create a lot of discussion. Some noteworthy conclusions are that one size does not fit all and you do have to consider the culture of the country chosen to be your Hub. The Philippines appears to have a good mix of GM talent and right attitude.

On the other hand, one can’t assume traditionally lower-cost locations are still lower-cost; Krakow has become more expensive, for example.

The structure of the team is also a key factor to a Hub’s success and again, dependent on each company. Some companies find that not having the Hub team report into the ‘central’ GM team loses some connection and control over the quality of work. There can also be a proficient level of admin, but a lack of advisory skills in some cases, so the set-up of the team can help or hinder there. And of course, tech has its part to play, especially in the automation of admin.

Global Roles / Work from Anywhere

Plenty of agreeing nods appeared when asked if anyone else is experiencing an increasing number of ‘global roles’ appearing in their organisation whereby a role is not fixed to one location. Of course, this links back to the ‘work from anywhere’ / remote working topic we cannot escape right now but the strategic use of it as talent retention varies hugely. Some hate it (*cough* Elon Musk *cough*) while others embrace it (see our [European Supper Huddle blog](#)). Key notes

What else have we been EARing from our network?

Challenges

Educating the business on the value of global mobility – getting held up with internal approval on new policies.

Not enough time! Implementation of tech / remote working policy and now having to deal with all the requests that come through!

Implementing a 9-day working fortnight and have a policy where there are no emails for a 2 hour period on a certain day of the week.



from those who have embraced it are that they tend to have more rules around the idea of working from anywhere than the headline may suggest. [Register now for our Virtual Huddles this coming Tuesday 21st June to dive deeper into some of these cases!](#)

One idea floated around was global communication pointing towards a policy. As always, comms can be wide, targeted, placed on an intranet, integrated as part of training, so on and so forth; but there will always be an alarming percentage of employees who still manage to blow your mind and have no scoobydoo that a policy even exists, so don't be too disheartened!

Ukraine and Russia

One issue raised when moving Russian nationals is that Russian tax rates are very low. Immigration for Russian nationals predictably is not an easy task and doesn't appear to be high on any government's to-do list.

Russia-friendly locations are of course easier options if available (Dubai, Netherlands, Japan, Uzbekistan, and even Spain were mentioned, although we've even heard from one member about a Russian employee having difficulties in the UAE). Be aware, Russian COVID vaccinations may not be approved in some other countries – another potential barrier.

Student Loans

A nice curveball came from one member asking if anyone has had issues with Student loan deductions when sending assignees out of the UK and their package is made considerably higher by additional allowances, which in turn increases the loan repayments they have to make. Funnily enough, I was personally in that very position in my first GM role and other attendees of the call had the same feedback: generally speaking, individuals may feel short-term pain in the

increased deductions, but they are also the beneficiaries of the loan being paid off quicker. And therefore, it is not a company issue to compensate for that. Perhaps harsh sounding, but it was the consensus. And it was how I was treated!

Supply Chain Challenges

Up next, insights into the question of mobility policy changes that others have made or are considering making to address ongoing supply chain challenges. Out-of-the-box thinking is what our network specialises in and here are two nuggets: 1. One company say that if the expat doesn't select a shipment option, they'll give one month's salary paid net, plus extend temporary living from 30 to 60 days. 2. Another will cover the costs for expats in New York to take their goods to charity instead of repatriating shipping.



Recent Benchmarking

In a very similar topic to the supply chain challenges, one of our members wanted to understand how others are managing their [environmental footprint with relocating assignees, particularly in the context of shipping personal effects](#). This question appears to be something an increasing number of companies want to do something about very soon but are yet to take the step (exceptions noted earlier aside!). Even so, the interest seems to be going in the direction of reducing shipments (for ESG and volatility reasons) and changing to allowances or rentals (availability dependent), at least in the short-term. That said, the shipping industry does have ESG answers too (check out Bournes' answer in the benchmarking link to see the alternative take).

It has always been good practice to target your support depending on the destination anyway. For example, big US furniture being shipped to small European townhouses with steep and narrow staircases is not advisable, whereas other locations may not have great furniture stores or rental options.

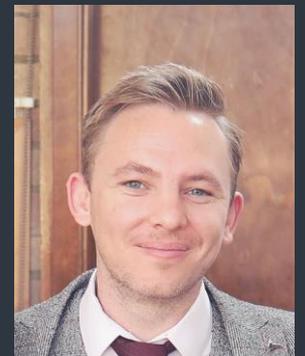
One thing to consider when switching to an allowance would be to ensure that it is spent on what you intend it to be spent on. For example, you could implement a 'Household Goods Replacement Reimbursement' whereby receipts must be submitted and reimbursed up to a cap. Some companies have actually been doing this for years simply because it's the only way to comply with US FAR regulations, for example.

EAR for Yourself

Come and boost your technical knowledge through one of our Network Huddles.

[Symposium and Club 100 Network Virtual Huddles](#) – 21 June

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