cartus

inside the global mobility maze:

tech, travel, and tomorrow's workforce

global talent mobility survey 2026

FULL REPORT

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global talent mobility survey 2026

inside the global mobility maze: tech, travel, and tomorrow's workforce

Our biannual Global Talent Mobility Survey Report 2026 takes you to the heart of today's relocation realities—where economic headwinds, rapid innovation, and the quest for a great employee experience collide.

With insights from **83 industry**-spanning mobility, HR, and people leaders, we untangle the twists and turns of global mobility through **tried-and-true survey topics** (think: cost pressures, flex mobility, tech-powered solutions) as well as **fresh questions** like what really defines **relocation success** and which perks are offered to C-suite and executive employees.

Our data spotlights a sector in motion, powered by a relentless focus on both moving people successfully and achieving wider organizational goals.

thank you to everyone who completed our second global talent mobility survey and shared the real stories and experiences shaping the future of our industry

survey respondent faces and places

who

where

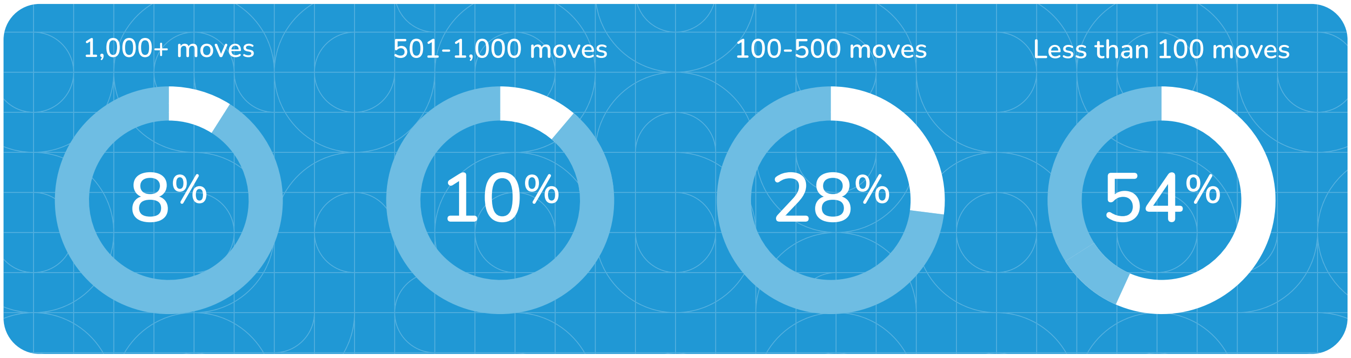
move volumes to and from

industry

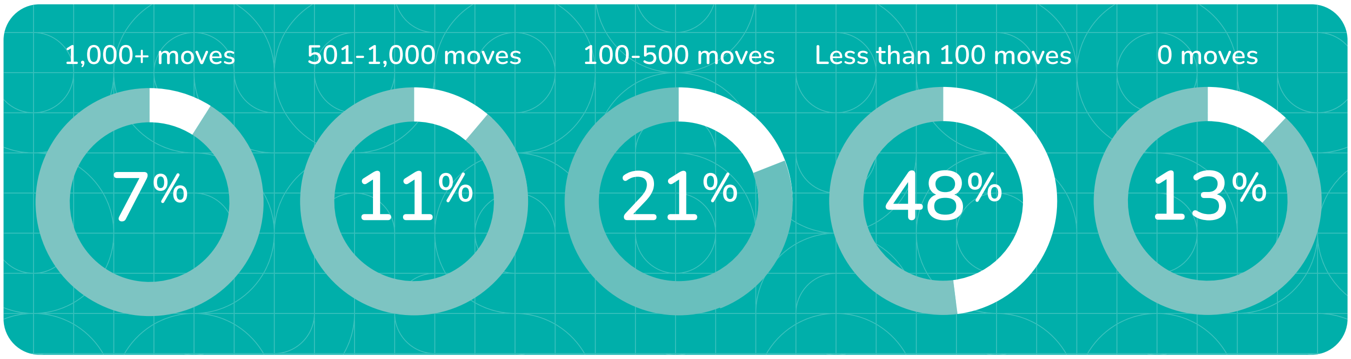
manufacturing, construction & automotive	24%
high tech/computers	15%
consumer goods/retail	13%
energy/oil & gas	10%
insurance	8%
financial & professional services	7%
other	7%
life sciences, biotech & pharmaceuticals	6%
service/media	5%
warehouse/distribution/logistics	3%
employment/staffing	1%
gaming/racing/hospitality	1%

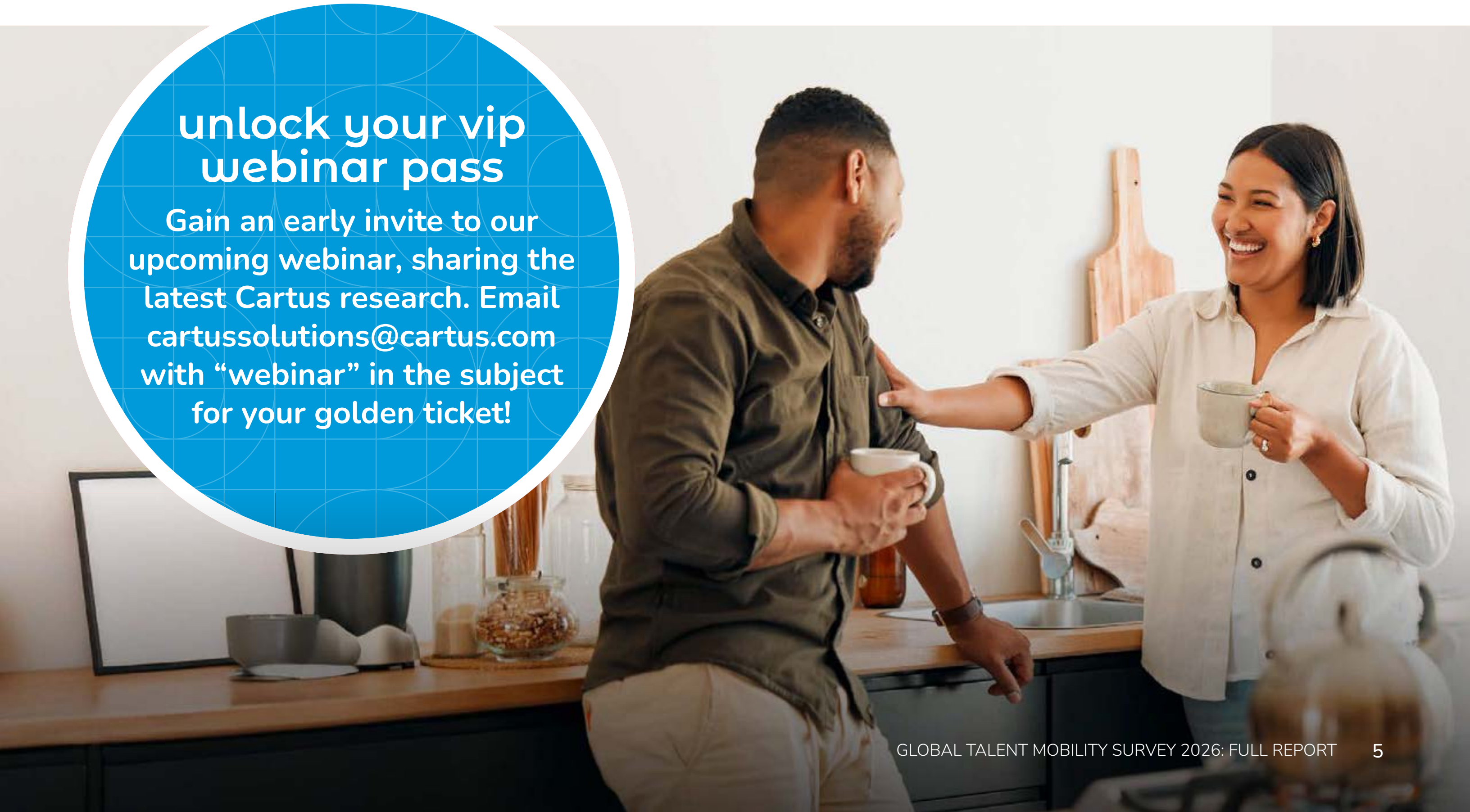
program size

international (cross-border) move volume



intra-country (domestic), non-US move volume





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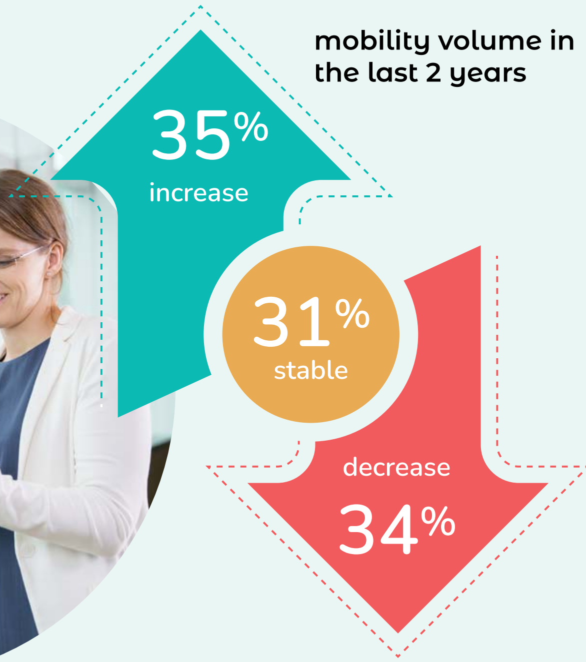
speed bumps and green lights

what's driving mobility trends?

Whether your company's move volume has been going up, down, or staying the same, you aren't alone: This is one of several topics in the survey findings where the reality for companies is split fairly evenly. As many companies saw an increase in volume in the last 2 years (35%) as experienced a decrease (34%), while 31% reported volume as stable.



top reasons for mobility activity **increasing** over the past two years

	2026	2024
1	expansion into different markets	talent not available locally
2	company growth	company growth

top reasons for mobility activity **decreasing** over the past two years

	2026	2024
1	cost containment strategy	cost containment strategy
2	reduced support/interest in global mobility by the wider business	reducing volume in different markets

reasons for relo

Beyond cost and company growth, it's interesting to see that **"fewer remote workers"** ranked third among the key reasons for a dip in mobility activity. Right behind that, having **"more local talent available"** took fourth place, while **"sluggish company growth"** rounded out the list. On the flip side, for the 35% of companies with more moves, **"merger and acquisition"** was a major driver—tying right back to the top spot: **"expansion into new markets."**

location matters

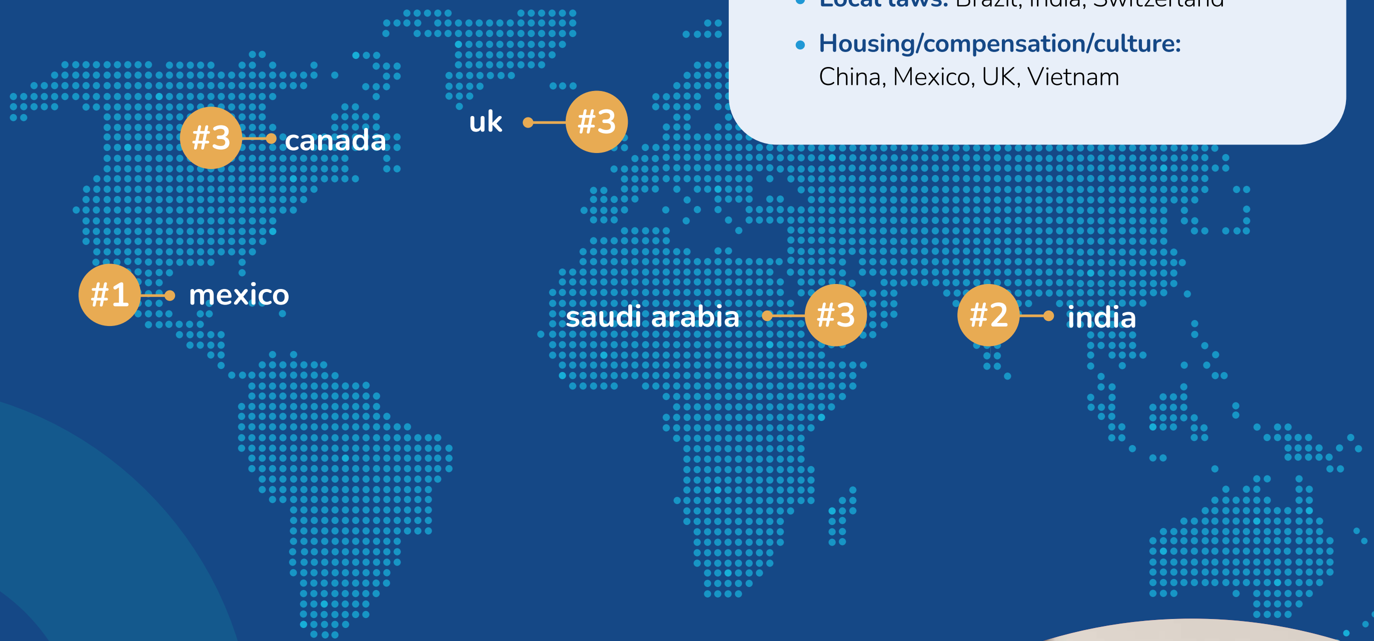
An interesting takeaway from the findings is that some companies and industries are not finding the local skills and talent they need in the countries where they do business, while others are. The types of skills required and their availability in certain locations affect move volume across all industries.

what else is driving a decline in moves?

- fewer remote workers
- more local talent available
- sluggish company growth

where in the world

top five new destination countries:



greatest mobility challenges by location

- **Immigration:** China, Europe, United States
- **Local laws:** Brazil, India, Switzerland
- **Housing/compensation/culture:** China, Mexico, UK, Vietnam

2026 vs. 2024

Just 2 years ago, Vietnam was the hot new relocation spot, leading the pack ahead of Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Fast-forward to 2026 and not one of these destinations makes the top 5. In fact, Vietnam has shifted to one of our most challenging locations for 2026, with “competitive talent landscapes”, “language challenges”, and “immigration” reported as possible obstacles.

canada relocation watch-out

Canada is implementing significant temporary resident reductions under its 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan, targeting a drop from ~7% of the population to below 5% by 2028. Work permit volumes are being moderated, with stricter rules for low-wage and short-term roles, while higher-skilled assignments remain prioritized. Organizations should anticipate tighter compliance requirements and longer lead times for internships, short-term projects, and certain construction roles.

india relocation

get your guide today

mobility mastery

navigating hurdles and harnessing opportunities

key global mobility priorities

1. improve in-house mobility processes and optimization
2. improve the employee experience
3. compliance

key global mobility challenges

1. rising mobility costs/immigration (tied)
2. extended business travelers or remote workers
3. achieving a more flexible approach to mobility/calculating mobility roi (tied)

experience matters most

Employee experience comes up repeatedly throughout this report. For example, it is the top reason why more than half of companies plan to review their policies in 2026.

We also see the key priority—the need to improve in-house processes and program optimization—as the foundation needed to support the other 2 priorities, improving the employee experience and strengthening compliance.

challenge overload

This year's survey serves up a buffet of challenges with 5 in the top 3 alone! Companies are juggling a wide mix, but immigration headaches and rising mobility costs have leapfrogged to the front of the line. Hot on their heels? Extended business travelers (EBTs) and remote workers.

With compliance a key priority, it's no shock that immigration and business travelers and remote workers are hurdles to clear.

> The results from the Cartus Global Talent Mobility Survey reinforce what we have been seeing: mobility challenges represent a series of increasingly tightly interlinked pressures. While immigration compliance continues moving to the forefront—driven by government assertiveness, intensified enforcement, higher costs, and greater policy volatility—ever-growing reliance on business travelers, extended business travelers, and remote workers is amplifying risk rather than alleviating it. As organizations look to recalibrate their models, some might choose to favor short-term and business travel for speed and cost controls, but without strong governance, these approaches expose employers to compliance gaps at precisely the moment scrutiny is rising. The big implications for 2026 include:
>
> - Immigration risk concentrated in major financial/business centers, particularly in the United States, where frequent policy changes, increased enforcement activity, and cost increases intersect.
> - Compliance acting as a strategic constraint, not just an administrative one, requiring tighter tracking, clearer traveler categorization, and increased data governance.
> - Closer alignment between immigration, mobility and business planning as this directly shapes business agility, workforce deployment, risk exposure, and market access.
>
> – Patrick O'Leary, Director, Fragomen

here's the kicker

Business travelers are expected to be the most common mobility move in 2026, according to our respondents, edging out long-term and short-term assignments **(see page 11).** With EBTs a leading challenge, mobility program owners will have their work cut out for them in the year ahead.

focus on flex

Flexibility also continues to be part of the mobility narrative. Achieving a more flexible approach ranks as both the third greatest challenge and the fifth highest priority in 2026. Flexibility is also one of the leading motivations for companies to reevaluate their policies this year. Clearly, flexibility is everywhere and remains an essential topic for HR and mobility leaders to pay attention to. Case in point: Nearly half of all companies (48%) have already embraced, or are gearing up to introduce, flexible mobility policies. Another 23% are contemplating it.

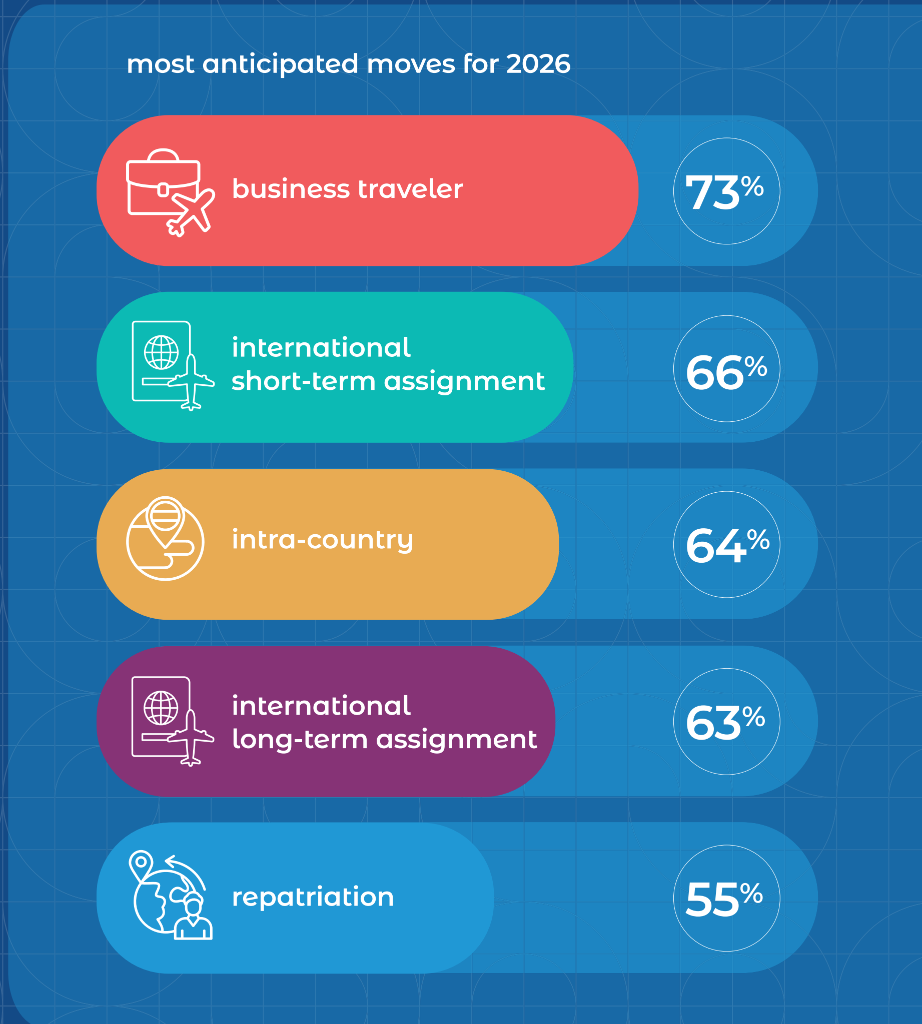
48%

have embraced or are considering flexible mobility

business on the go: which moves will rule 2026?

Business traveler stands out as the most anticipated mobility activity this year, which isn't surprising.

Business travel touches a much larger part of a company's employee population than other mobility types, and while it does require tax and immigration oversight, it is generally less complex and costly than assignments or transfers. In many ways, business travel is a category unto itself.



What has changed is how closely business travel now aligns with other mobility types through shared governance, including areas such as:

- **Traveler tracking and duty of care**
- **Cross-border tax and immigration compliance**
- **Oversight of remote work and extended business travel (EBT), which many companies now manage under the umbrella of mobility**

When looking at the top 3 most anticipated moves this year, we see a trend towards less expensive moves compared to traditional long-term assignments, with international short-term assignments and intra-country moves in second and third position. A clear connection exists between these results and cost containment, which was cited as the main reason for companies reducing mobility activity. Additionally, rising mobility costs were noted as one of the leading challenges in global mobility.

priority moves

When asked which types of moves are a priority for their company, responses indicated the state of change in the mobility industry. Although no strategy ranked vastly higher than the next, the top 3 paint a collective picture of how employees and their families are treated during a move.

1 managed move

The highest-ranked priority is the most traditional approach to relocation, likely due to respondents' strong focus on employee experience and the challenge of increased program flexibility this year.

2 core/flex

In our experience at Cartus, this is the direction we see most mobility owners take when they decide to update or innovate their programs. A core/flex model allows companies to include essential benefits like duty of care, immigration, tax compliance, and assignee support as "core," while offering flexible options tailored to employees' personal priorities—all with predictable costs.

3 lump sum

Cash in lieu of benefits is common for domestic relocations of early career employees and interns or for (seemingly) simple moves. Employees have full control over how to spend the lump sum, and companies benefit from predictable costs. However, many struggle to assess program effectiveness, may overlook productivity loss when employees spend time managing their own relocation, and face difficulties benchmarking lump sums, as covered expenses vary. Accountability is also unclear if problems arise, and the process can be stressful for employees who are not relocation experts.

high-touch moves for executive talent

In a time when talent acquisition and retention are a core business imperative, the ability to attract and retain exceptional leadership is a competitive advantage.

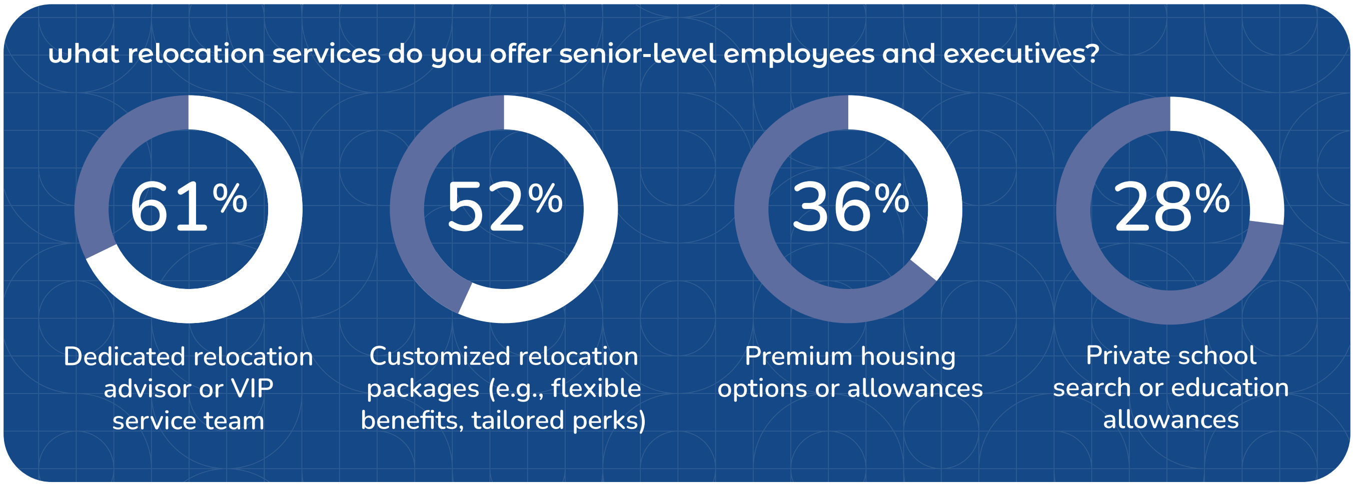
Combine this reality with today's challenges of motivating families to move across a country or borders, and C-suite and executive employees often require their own nuanced, bespoke strategies to secure relocation acceptance.

This year's survey asked companies to identify the move benefits they provide to this mission-critical population. Our findings show that the leading 2 benefits, **dedicated relocation advisor/VIP service team (61%)** and **customized relocation packages (52%)**, involve a high-touch, concierge-style approach.

pricey perks

At a time when cost containment is a priority for most companies, VIP populations appear to be the exception. Pricey perks make the list, too: 36% support premium housing, and 28% help execs with school searches.

Still, nearly a quarter of companies skip special treatment, maybe because their culture is more focused on equity than hierarchy, or they just don't move many senior-level or executive global talent.



measuring the move: what makes a relocation shine?

The foremost priority for mobility professionals in 2026 is improving in-house mobility processes and optimization.

A closely related priority is improving the employee experience. This year's survey strove to answer a new question that aligns with both program optimization and employee satisfaction: Which metrics most effectively define the success of a relocation program for your organization? Responses as follows:

86%
operational efficiency
(e.g., on-time, on-budget, immigration and compliance)

82%
business impact
(e.g., assignment objectives met, improved leadership or market presence)

82%
employee satisfaction
(e.g., employee/family feedback, cultural, personal adjustment)

57%
talent outcomes
(e.g., employee retention post-assignment, career growth)

As you can see, respondents spread their votes pretty evenly across the board, and if you've been in global mobility for a while, you probably just nodded! Relo success comes from many moving parts, not just one magic metric. That's why true program wins require teamwork and lots of resources working in harmony.

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what gets in the way of achieving relo success?*

- cost and budget constraints
- weak value proposition of mobility
- fragmented systems and data
- vendor and service challenges
- unclear strategy, metrics, and roi
- employee expectations and experience
- limited internal resources
- cultural and change management barriers
- decentralization and inconsistency
- planning and lifecycle management gaps

*Collated responses from open-ended question

efficiency is key

Operational efficiency wears the crown, echoing what we learned earlier in our mobility priorities and challenges section **page 9**: From immigration headaches to tax compliance, these nuts-and-bolts challenges are top of mind in 2026.

talent matters

Don't overlook talent outcomes. Even as the lowest-ranked factor, it scored a vote from more than half of respondents. It's a reminder that, while process is king, people still matter. Plus, notice how "improving the employee experience" sits right beside "operational efficiency" on the key 2026 priority list. **Deep dive into this topic on page 31, "Mobility ROI".**

biggest barriers to achieving relo success

survey respondents

fragmented and manual processes, limited in-house resources, and balancing flexibility with compliance requirements

lack of internal resources (i.e. time)

identifying key internal metrics that will define a successful move based on position/location

rising employees' expectations, rising costs, legislative and geopolitical landscapes

driven to adapt: what's fueling mobility policy overhauls?

In today's world, strategies and priorities are constantly evolving, and mobility programs need to keep pace. As a best practice, 61% of companies review every 1 to 3 years, though that number rises to 63% intent in 2026 alone (up 2 percentage points from those who were planning a review in 2024).

Not just a box to check: Policy reviews aren't just something to cross off the list. After boosting the employee experience, they're the second-biggest driver for companies looking to cut costs, ahead of implementing more flexibility.

key drivers for policy reviews include:

employee experience 58%

cost 52%

flexibility 50%

heart of the mobility conversation:
These 3 priorities pop up repeatedly in our survey findings.

from budgets to benefits: getting the most bang for your mobility buck

rising mobility costs were identified as one of the top 3 challenges for 2026

Following are the key considerations to achieve cost savings in global mobility programs:

1. Administrative process improvements
2. Restructure or redesign policy
3. IT enhancements/integration

When it comes to watching the bottom line, every dollar counts, and companies are getting creative with cost control. One of the standout strategies that companies use to manage costs can be seen in the 70% of responses related to redesigning or restructuring a policy (e.g., including a more tiered approach based on the purpose or objective of the move).

tune in to season 5 of cartus' mobility matters podcast, launching in march 2026, where we'll dive deeper into this topic

international assignment compensation: who's running the show?

Cartus is investing in enhanced technology and talent to deliver a stronger, more intuitive user experience, including greater flexibility and advanced features through global compensation solutions. At the same time, Cartus is partnering closely with clients to take on additional tasks, allowing their teams to focus on strategic collaboration with internal stakeholders. Together, these efforts drive greater efficiency, value, and client success.

– Wendy Kosach, Global owner for International Compensation, Cartus

Turns out, the vast majority (75%) of respondents hand off their expat compensation duties to a global tax provider or their relocation management company. Only a quarter keep it in-house.

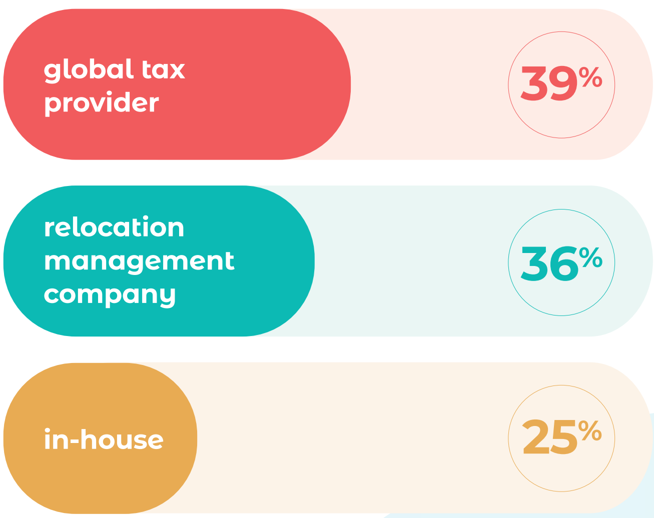
Rewind: Looking at findings from our previous Global Talent Mobility Survey 2024, the story is different: 42% of companies managed comp services themselves. So, what's driving this shakeup? Most likely, it's shrinking mobility teams and a laser focus on efficiency and optimization. (Remember that improving in-house mobility processes and optimization was the number one priority this year.)

What matters most: When it comes to cost projections, here's what mobility professionals say matters most in tech features:

- Side-by-side comparison calculations
- Ability to use cost projections to establish cost actuals
- Ability to adjust/override calculated line items

Features that flop: The least-loved cost projection tool features are branding or logo options, flexible candidate prep, and the ability to update/change tax positions.

who does your expat compensation?



Biggest headaches: For the first time this year, we asked what stresses out people the most about international assignment compensation. The troublemakers? Year-end reporting (35%), cost projections (33%), and balance sheets (15%).

cartus' global automated tax engine solution
empowering wing-to-wing compensation support and compliance

flex appeal: have it your way

Nearly half of companies are already rolling out (or eagerly planning) flexible mobility policies.

A little over a quarter are sticking with their current playbook, and another quarter are considering the idea.

- Yes (48%)
- No (29%)
- Maybe (23%)

What employees want: When it comes to whether employees want more flexibility, it's a split decision. Respondents tell us that almost half (47%) of their employees say, "Yes, please!" to more flexible policies, while the other half (49%) says their current options are fine. Only 3 of 83 respondents wished for less flexibility.

Fueling the flexibility fever: For companies using a core/flex policy, the relocating employee was identified as the person most likely to select the flex benefits. Relocating employees are also identified as driving the priority for flexible mobility, with changing needs and expectations leading the charge.

1. Changing employee expectations/ Changing employee needs (tied) (69%)
2. Budget constraints (49%)
3. Policy exception reduction (43%)
4. Attracting talent (31%)

Tracking 2024: Reflecting the findings from our 2024 survey, 3 of the top 5 reasons for adding flexibility to mobility programs are about attracting and retaining the best talent. Plus! All 5 factors driving a more flexible approach are perfectly in sync with the year's hottest priorities and challenges spotlighted on **page 9**.

learn more

[case study: flex mobility lessons from an energy industry leader]

adding flexibility to meet changing and emerging employee needs is one of the main strategies for inclusive mobility

inclusive mobility

how relo programs are keeping up with employee needs

It is powerful to watch the shift over the recent years. Now that most global companies recognize that Talent strategy must be embedded in all areas of the business, Inclusive Mobility is no longer a side aspiration; it has become more visible in policy and program strategy. The companies we work with at Cartus aren't letting terminology distract from the mission.

– Lisa Johnson, Director, Global Consulting & Inclusive Mobility Solutions, Cartus

DEI shake-up: Since 2022, Cartus has been tracking how companies line up their mobility strategies with their overall organizational DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) goals. The good news is that we have seen a strong shift towards inclusive mobility initiatives over the last four years, proof that mobility's link to talent strategies and a focus on employee experience are moving hand in hand. Fast-forward to the beginning of 2025, when US federal changes to DEI regulations took place, and we began monitoring whether and how companies switched up their global mobility game.

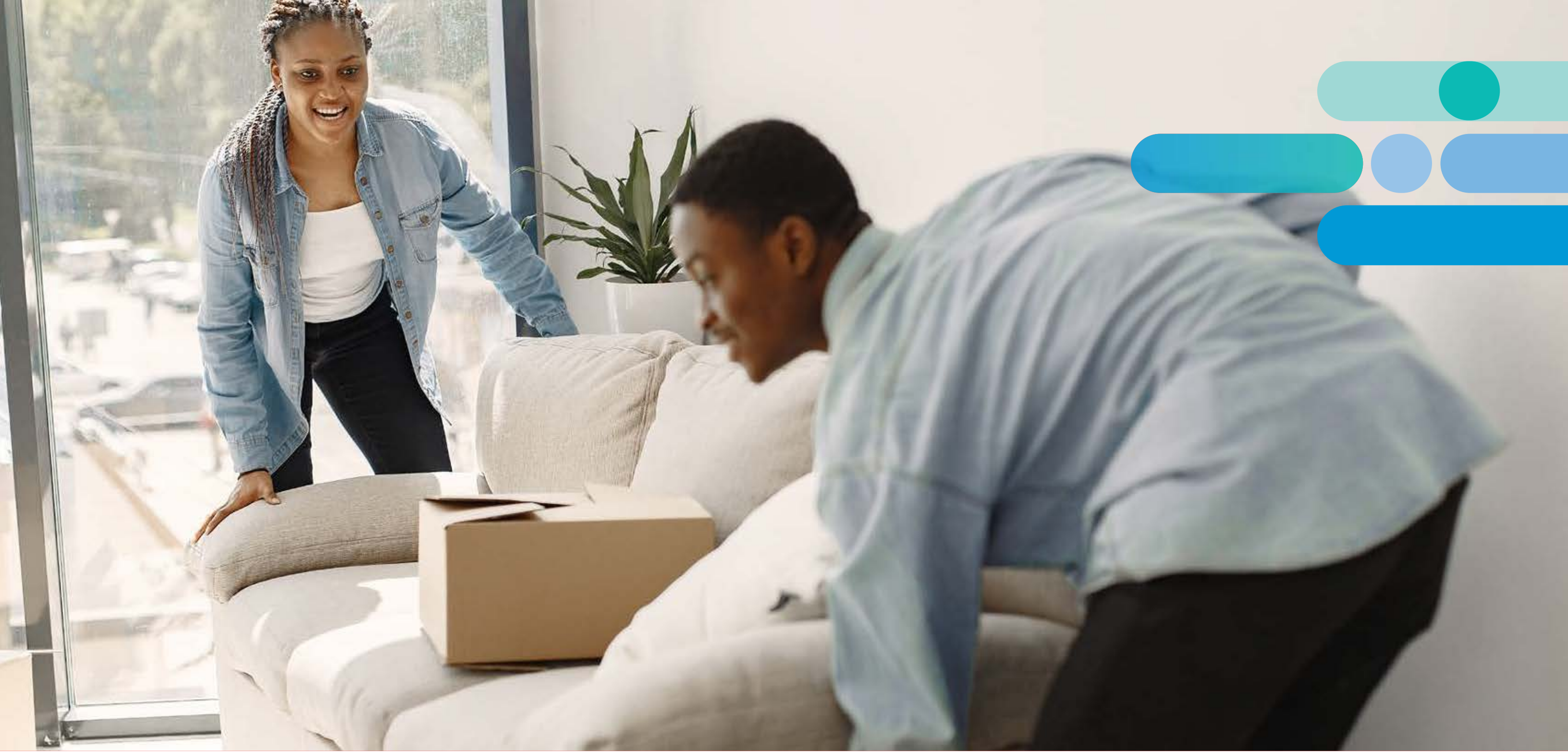
The results are in: Since January 2025, most companies (a whopping 76%) have kept their DEI initiatives rolling; they just tweaked the terminology. Meanwhile, just over 1 in 5 folks aren't sure if anything's changed at all. Only 2 respondents reported scrapping DEI initiatives altogether because of new government requirements.

I hope to diversify the recruitment and selection process... expand the sources of talent, break through the limitations of traditional recruitment... and regularly review algorithmic biases when using AI recruitment tools to ensure a fair and impartial recruitment process.

– Survey respondent

Mobility program inclusion matches the move-to (destination) regulatory requirements. If move-to location recognizes parents of employee as dependent, [we] will include in relocation care scope.

– Survey respondent



think outside the suitcase

When we asked about non-traditional services to woo and keep top talent (and in many cases further embed inclusion into policy), this year's answers focused on making the employee experience pop!

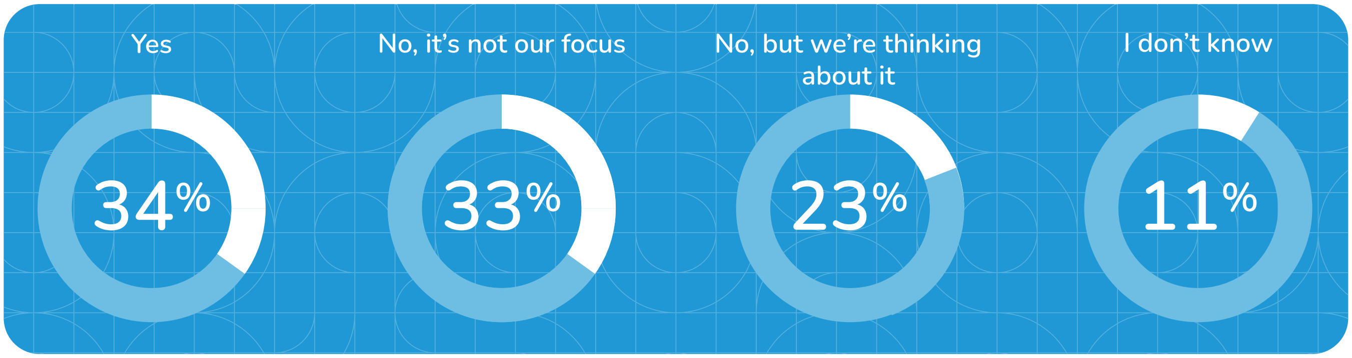
- **Hello flexibility.** Lump sum cash for destination purchases in lieu of shipping.
- **Settle with a smile.** Travel support for family or friends to help with settling in.
- **Planet-friendly perks.** Contributions to sustainable initiatives, because sustainability is more than just a buzzword, especially for the next-gen workforce.

strategy sync

It's surprising to note that only 13% of organizations have formally tied their mobility programs to their talent strategies. On the flip side, a whopping 60% have informal links, which means there is an opportunity for companies to formalize mobility's alignment to talent this year.

More than half of respondents (57%) are either already addressing their employees' emerging needs or considering changes to keep up with what their employees want. This backs up 3 big priorities: employee experience, tying mobility to talent, and making mobility inclusive. Together, you've got the foundations of a mobility ROI strategy.

Does your mobility program tackle the emerging needs of employees in its policies and strategies?



equity matters

When it comes to inclusive mobility, this year's findings demonstrate a real emphasis on supporting all kinds of employees and families. We're talking dual-career couples, employees with disabilities, relocating pets, and even dependent parents. What stands out is that equity matters. For instance, 42% of respondents indicated that their organizations prioritize assisting employees with relocations from lower- to higher-cost areas, reflecting a commitment by companies to support both their people and families in gaining greater access to mobility opportunities.

employee/family scenarios covered in mobility program

58%
dual-career couples
(partners with their own careers)

42%
support for employees moving from low to high cost-of-living locations

37%
pet relocation

29%
employees/family members with disabilities

28%
dependent parents of employees

global moves, local grooves

helping families thrive abroad

Cross-cultural coaching equips assignees and their families with confidence and cultural agility, accelerating integration, reducing risk, and strengthening the organization's return on investment for every assignment.

– Diane Mullen, Manager, Intercultural Academy, Cartus

cross-cultural coaching

The vast majority (76%) offer cross-cultural coaching to relocating employees and their families, up from 69% offering the service 2 years ago.

How is cross-cultural coaching support provided?

- Virtual (60%)
- Hybrid (56%)
- In-person (44%)
- Self-paced (22%)
- Other (5%)

Pick your flavor: Aligning with our survey's key themes of employee experience and flexibility, companies provide talent with a number of learning options. Employees get to choose what works best for them, much like other relocation perks.

The modern family is officially welcome on this journey. It's not just about the employee anymore; 43% offer cross-cultural coaching to spouses and children, while a quarter have widened the circle to parents, caregivers, and other dependents. While a quarter of respondents offer cross-cultural coaching only to the employee and spouse, almost no companies support only the employee.

Policy power-up: For 56%, cross-cultural coaching is recommended or baked into policy. Another 18% make it mandatory, acknowledging how crucial it is for employees to hit the ground running. Savvy companies see cultural competence as smart onboarding, helping families adapt, succeed, and thrive in new environments.

So, what's stopping the rest? More than half say cost and budget issues are the biggest concerns, though the price tag is insignificant compared to overall relocation expenses. Some still don't see the value, but those who have used cross-cultural coaching consistently give it rave reviews, especially at the executive level. A lack of understanding of the value of cross-cultural coaching underscores the ongoing need to educate decision-makers in this area.

a lack of understanding of the value of cross-cultural coaching underscores the ongoing need to educate decision-makers

language-learning solutions

Most companies (78%) also provide language training, up from 47% offering the service two years ago. The days of "English is good enough" are fading fast. Whether you're swapping stories at the water cooler or navigating local customs, learning the host country's language is often necessary, especially in places like Switzerland and Italy, where it's a strict requirement.

How do you offer language support?

- Hybrid (62%)
- Virtual (57%)
- In-person (51%)
- Self-paced (41%)
- Other (3%)

Language training isn't just for the employee, either. Nearly half of companies (49%) extend support to spouses, partners, and children. A smaller slice (23%) stick to employee and spouse/partner, and 20% go big, covering additional dependents like parents or caregivers. Just 3% keep it exclusive to the employee.

Talk the talk: Over half (51%) of respondents say their companies recommend language training or include it in their policy, although only 6% require it. For others, it depends on business needs (20%) or the employee's choice (19%).

Why do some companies skip language training? The 2 big reasons: English rules the roost and cost concerns.

find out more! cartus intercultural trends survey 2026

work without borders

hybrid, extended business travel, and remote worker moves

key definitions

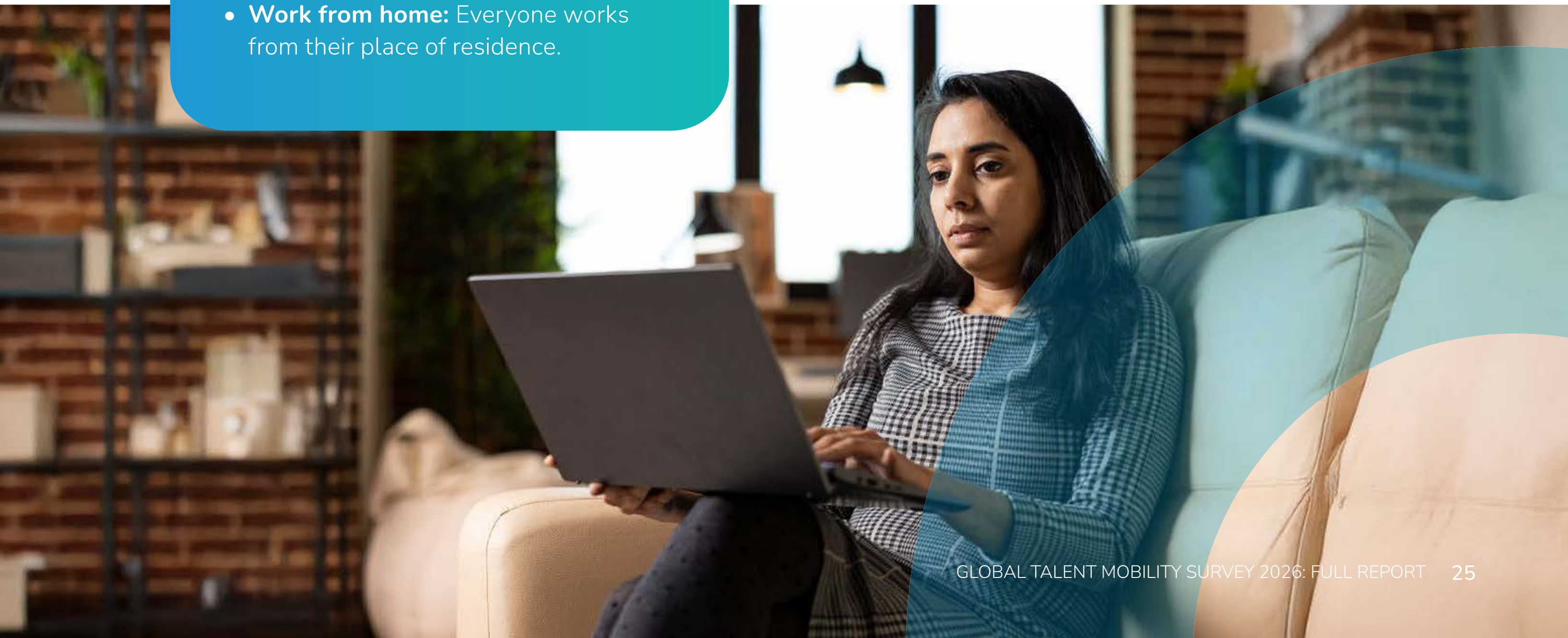
- **Extended Business Travel (EBT):** Business-initiated request for the employee to work from a different business location for a defined period (e.g., employee travels from the UK to France to work from their Paris office for an extended time, typically 30 to 90 days.)
- **Hybrid:** Employees work partly at home and partly in the physical office, 1-2 days a week.
- **Remote work:** Employee-initiated request to work from a location that is different from their permanent residence for a defined period (e.g., an employee based in the US wants to work from Spain for 2 months during the summer).
- **Work from home:** Everyone works from their place of residence.

Amidst the shifting landscapes of corporate relocation, the strategic use of remote work has emerged as a powerful tool for many organizations.

Does your organization have any of the following?

- Hybrid workers (75%)
- Extended business travelers (63%)
- Return-to-office mandates (57%)
- International remote workers (40%)
- None (5%)

With 63% of companies using EBTs and 40% employing international remote workers, it is interesting to note that these move-types rank among the top 3 challenges for survey participants in 2026.



local leaps: intra-country moves

Domestic moves are maturing fast in our industry. A solid 68% of companies now report intra-country relocation outside the United States.

That's not just about cost savings but also about finding local talent and delivering a smoother, more consistent employee experience globally.

Top 5 non-US domestic move countries

- India
- UK
- Canada
- Mexico
- China

Nearly 65% of companies surveyed have domestic moves in non-US countries.

2026 vs. 2024: 2 years ago, 75% of companies had domestic move policies. Fast forward to today, and that number jumps to 89%. Companies are clearly stepping up their support for relocating employees.

How are domestic moves administered in your organization?

- A combination of Global Mobility and local HR (41%)
- Centrally administered by Global Mobility (33%)
- Administered by local entities (26%)

Most companies lean on their global mobility teams to manage moves. Of those with a local-only approach, 47% are thinking about switching to a more centralized style. Accountability, compliance, and a better employee experience are the reasons driving this shift.

Relo woes: 22% of companies admit to having failed assignments. The top reason being employees and their families unable to settle in the new location, which is the same challenge encountered for international (cross-border) assignments.

Lessons learned: Tracking failed moves and measuring their impact is growing in importance and highlights the need to identify ways to strengthen both the pre-assessment phase of the relocation process and the support provided to talent and families once they have moved.

This section excludes US domestic moves. See Cartus US and Canada domestic mobility survey 2025.

plot twist

although over half of companies (52%) don't have a formal strategy for choosing candidates, 34% do

ready, set, assign!

smarter candidate selection starts here

As Cartus and the wider mobility industry shift their focus toward maximizing ROI and building more strategic mobility programs, candidate assessment and selection is another way companies are tying mobility directly to their talent game plan.

Does your organization assess risks/employ risk mitigation strategies when selecting assignees?

- No (49%)
- Yes (36%)
- Don't know (15%)

More than a third are crunching numbers and working out risk-mitigation strategies when sending people on assignment, but most companies keep their focus narrow, checking compliance boxes like tax and immigration only. More than a quarter (28%) assess and aggregate unintegrated key data sources, and just 10% have an integrated tech solution to access data. This is an area to watch as technology options evolve.

Zoom out: With a clear urgency to meeting employee expectations and improve the overall relocation experience, the message is clear: leveling up your candidate assessment, tackling risks head-on, and picking the right people is a winning move for your company.

the power of data

cartus data insights dashboard

humans + high-tech: the ultimate mobility dream team

When it comes to helping employees through a relocation, companies are all about flexibility and offering choice, while making sure the experience is top-notch. Most organizations (68%) strike a happy balance, offering a mix of personal touch and smart tech.

Here's the twist: A third of respondents have a human-centered approach, and no respondents said they had a technology-only solution. It's a clear sign that not everyone is ready to ditch traditional support for the latest tech trends.

listen in...
global mobility: ai and the future of work podcast

AI and cutting-edge technology are revolutionizing the global mobility industry, streamlining admin work and delivering powerful, data-driven insights. This frees up mobility teams to focus on strategic impact and prioritize employee wellness. While tech tools tackle the everyday grind and reveal new opportunities, at Cartus, it's our people who build the trust needed to support customers through a major life event like relocation.

– Kim Long, VP, Transformation, Cartus

42% use ai technology

49% do not use ai technology

9% remain undecided

where are you on your ai adventure?

While its full impact on global mobility is still playing out, there's no denying AI is poised to shake things up.

We wanted to know: Are mobility teams jumping on the AI bandwagon to boost efficiency? Turns out, it's a split crowd. Nearly half (49%) haven't taken the plunge yet, but 42% are already riding the AI wave.

For those who've embraced it, AI flexes its muscles to streamline processes and keep communication slick. When we dove into the responses from global mobility teams, AI use cases fell neatly into 2 big buckets: process efficiencies (e.g., automation, bots, data analytics) and communication and knowledge sharing (e.g., summarizing key data, drafting documents/videos, query responses).

how is ai supporting you?

survey respondents

"ai mainly enhances the efficiency of global mobility teams through 3 major approaches: breaking down information barriers, automating processes, and optimizing resource matching

data analytics

automate workflows, facilitate request review, and approval process

sustainability in motion

making every move matter

> Sustainable performance in mobility goes beyond a company value; achieving in this space helps ensure relocation remains practical, viable, AND attractive to employees. How do we get there? Relentless focus and boundless innovation.
>
> – Andy Conduit-Turner, Director, Sustainability & Strategic Development, Cartus

slow start but starting to grow

Just like the push for inclusive mobility, Cartus tracks how corporations are tying mobility to their big-picture sustainability goals. Although mobility specific goals are not very established in many companies, it's quickly climbing the priority ladder. Why? Partly because it's "the right thing to do," but mainly due to 2 bigger forces: First, ESG efforts and values are ways to attract fresh talent (especially younger generations); and second, many governments and industries are rolling out new regulations and standards.

Encouragingly, 26% of respondents already reported an extensive policy or formal goals that touch all areas of the organization, including the mobility function. Over half (53%) have a business-wide policy, but mobility currently has none or limited engagement. Only 8% don't have a policy but 13% don't know if they do, suggesting misalignment between mobility and ESG owners.

The majority of companies remain at an early stage; 61% currently have no sustainability metrics or initiatives connected to mobility. However, there is progress: 38% report having established targets, contributions, or independent initiatives related to sustainability.

Picking partners: More than half (59%) say that sustainability performance matters when picking partners and making procurement decisions.

tune in... green relo dreams – sustainability in motion podcast

repatriation done right: mobility roi

Earlier in this report, we highlighted what drives successful relocation programs (see page 14). Now, we're going one step further by digging into how businesses track international assignment success. Specifically, what happens to employees once they finish their global stint: do they repatriate, settle locally, or exit the company?

Top ways companies measure assignment success

1. Completing the assignment (48%)
2. Employee experience – sentiment (46%)
3. Meeting assignment objectives (41%)
4. We don't formally measure assignment success (41%)

ROI roadblocks: Measuring mobility ROI is one of the top challenges for 2026, and yet, only 12% of companies ask about previous international experience in exit interviews—a simple, budget-friendly step that could jumpstart ROI tracking.

Here's the bright side: A quarter of companies offer repatriation coaching (training and formal debriefs) for globe-trotting employees and their families. This is up just 4 percentage points when compared to our 2024 survey results.

Those who offer this coaching are savvy organizations who know the power of supporting career transitions and unlocking new skills. Organizations that value international experience build stronger, more globally skilled and competent teams. With 75% still skipping this support, there's an opportunity to prove how coaching can supercharge a talent-driven mobility strategy.

With 18% of respondents reporting they had limited or no knowledge of this type of support, it's clear there is a need for greater education in our industry when it comes to strategic support mechanisms available.

trending positive

a few companies shared that they are implementing repatriation in the near future

the future is now

2026 is your springboard to reinvent how you move talent around the globe

Keep costs smart, put people first, and tackle mobility's challenges head-on with creativity and flair.

ready to pressure-test your mobility playbook?

Contact your Cartus rep, email cartussolutions@cartus.com, or visit cartus.com.

cartus

cartus.com
cartussolutions@cartus.com