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WHITE PAPER

Applying an Ecosystem Approach to Global Mobility Management

How integrating the entire assignment lifecycle will add value to your business.



Introduction

Global mobility teams at multinational companies today face increased pressure to do more with less.

Beyond being challenged to deliver faster moves and ensure a positive user experience, these teams are responsible for managing a host of compliance and regulatory issues. Plus, for each different type of mobile employee, these teams must also interact with multiple stakeholders to deliver all the services associated with mobility management.

With more and varied types of mobile employees, today's global mobility teams are faced with increased scrutiny from tax and immigration authorities. They must also manage the safety and overall experience afforded the assignee — all while keeping the company's reputation top of mind.

Keeping up with the details is never easy. Yet surprisingly, many corporations today are not fully leveraging available technology to make the process of managing mobile employees more productive. At most companies, global mobility is a business function managed by a small staff that just “gets it done” through manual processes and individual heroics. For companies to stay competitive, a more strategic approach is needed.

Fortunately, there is one: An “ecosystem” approach that leverages web-based platforms to connect all the interdependent people, processes and systems involved in every move.

By seamlessly linking global mobility's data to the rest of the company's technology solutions, while also connecting with outside partners, mobility teams supporting employees sent to work in foreign countries can gain end-to-end visibility into all the details of each assignment. Global mobility management becomes easier, enabling faster moves and greater transparency to the process.

With a flexible global mobility platform that integrates the myriad technologies used in different parts of the assignment lifecycle, companies can significantly reduce administrative tasks. This frees time and allows all stakeholders involved in the process to focus on more productive activities. And that means more time to be pro-active with business partners, as well as greater opportunity to improve the experience for individual assignees.

This White Paper explores how organizations stand to benefit by treating their global mobility program as part of a living ecosystem which, once connected through a flexible web-based platform, can make managing the assignment lifecycle easier and more efficient while adding measurable value for their business.

The State Of Global Mobility Management

There are a variety of global mobility technologies on the market today. However, most vendors don't offer a fully connected platform that unifies a company's far-reaching activities.

Global mobility services touch and involve many different internal and external stakeholders. In addition to working with colleagues in human resources, accounting, security and logistics, mobility teams also engage with an extensive external network of relocation planners, moving companies, immigration authorities, health care and insurance providers, cultural trainers and many other experts. In any one employee move there can be upwards of 20 interdependent players both internal and external. These players all have a role to play, but most focus on the specific service they are providing without concern for the broader business process that's at work.

If managing all the moving parts isn't challenging enough, global mobility teams today are pressured to do more with less, typically with limited staff and small budgets. The demands on them are high: Key stakeholders inside and outside the business expect accountability and accurate reporting. Service providers want direct communication with assignees and more clarity on tasks and deadlines. Assignees expect and deserve personalized service despite circumstances that can change quickly. Meeting deadlines is critical. Missing them can prove costly.

Global mobility teams need complete visibility across the assignment lifecycle to support individual employee, HR and line manager expectations. But instead, most teams are hampered by manual processes, held back by inefficient systems and inundated with disparate data. Forced to hunt for data in multiple places, mobility teams struggle to understand the exact status of any move at a given point in time. This also makes it nearly impossible to deliver any form of integrated reporting. Vendor management remains a time-consuming administrative process, overly focused on discerning the status of a case instead of being proactively engaged on service improvements.

Assignees or other types of mobile employees often face a situation where they feel they are "project managing" their own move. Inundated with data requests from a variety of

sources, and with little understanding of how all the services interact, assignees can feel left in the dark, and frustrated by the need to provide the same data over and over again.

In short, the assignment lifecycle today tends to be focused on low-value repetitive tasks instead of strategic business partnership. Relying on inefficient processes and siloed technology solutions wastes time and talent, increases costs, and leads to organizational frustration about the speed at which employees can be deployed.

To bridge the gap between global mobility's many responsibilities and the high expectations of other key stakeholders — especially assignees — adopting an ecosystem approach can help. An integrated platform that connects assignees, vendors, suppliers and all touch-points across the assignment lifecycle can improve overall transparency for stakeholders, provide better management reporting, free up time for strategic activities and deliver an assignee-centric experience.

The Risks Of Maintaining The Status Quo

Let's look first at what happens if your company doesn't change its approach to global mobility and sticks by the status quo. Simply put, organizational inefficiency will persist. By not moving to adopt an ecosystem model soon, a variety of existing business risks are likely to become even more pronounced:

- **High costs.** When global mobility staff are burdened with mundane, repetitive tasks, they can't provide the personalized services assignees need and deserve. Manual processes slow decisions, overburden assignees and engender potentially costly mistakes. Companies waste time, money and resources that could be put to better use.
- **Lack of visibility.** Data scattered across disparate systems cannot be easily accessed and understood. Slow response times and unclear answers frustrate assignees and others. Global mobility teams and other stakeholders have no clarity on where a project stands at any given time.
- **Process inefficiency.** Sporadic requests that come randomly or too late mean assignees end up repeating tasks they should only need to do once. Reviews,



approvals and permissions take too long. Reporting becomes overly time-consuming and less reliable.

- **Frustration.** Too much time is spent troubleshooting individual cases rather than pro-actively anticipating problems and solving them before they arise. Staff expertise goes underutilized and assignees are burdened with too much repetitive work, leading to frustration.
- **Weakened relationships.** Vendors may struggle to deliver on what they promised if they don't have the information and access needed to do their job. Other business relationships can suffer if the global mobility team's response time and service levels are lower than expected.

These and other risks cause confusion and inefficiency for companies and their assignees. Without access to data and expertise that helps them do their job, global mobility teams will be unable to accountably serve their stakeholders. Without clarity on the terms of their engagements, vendors and partners may underperform. Management may never truly know the cost/benefit of a given employee assignment. Delays and surprises can cause undue stress, worry and frustration. Mistakes add to costs and increase the risk of potential fines and legal consequences.

All this amounts to lost value - in terms of time, money, relationships, reputation, and the opportunity to create a positive experience for assignees and other stakeholders. These risks are all avoidable. And they can be overcome by managing global mobility not as a tactical manual function but as a purposefully integrated ecosystem that connects data, applications, relationships and expertise.

Trends Shaping The Future Of Global Mobility Management

The timely opportunity for companies to streamline and strengthen their global mobility programs using an ecosystem approach is being shaped by several key industry trends:

International assignments are growing more complex.

Mobility teams, their vendors and partners often need to react quickly to changing circumstances. Governments may modify compliance requirements without notice; an emergency may call for adding a specialized vendor immediately; travel or shipping plans may need to be changed due to weather; or management may unexpectedly request a custom report. Manual, fragmented global mobility processes are simply not adequate for supporting these complex situations.

Data-driven insights are critical for all stakeholders.

Increasingly, management teams are looking to data for insight into the workings of their business. Being able to quickly provide meaningful reports and analysis is key to fostering global mobility's role as a trusted advisor.

Communication is essential to faster decision-making.

Businesses today operate in an ultra-connected tech-driven world. Global mobility solutions must be able to support faster communication of data to enable businesses to make decisions faster so they can deploy talent where needed as rapidly as possible.

Personalized service is expected.

The importance of identifying and retaining top talent cannot be underestimated. Highly personalized service is now expected, not the exception, and a smooth-running global mobility program is essential to delivering a rewarding assignee experience. Whether a company sends one employee on a multi-year assignment or multiple graduates on shorter rotations, keeping these employees satisfied, safe and secure is essential.

Smart companies realize they gain competitive advantage by getting the best person for the job into the right place to do it. These trends are shaping the future of global mobility for companies entrusted to manage mobile employees. Fortunately, thanks to today's technologies, there is a way for companies of all sizes to stay ahead.

A Better Alternative

Imagine the added value of having your extensive network of colleagues, assignees, vendors and partners unified through integrated web-based platforms that put information and answers at everyone's fingertips. Standardized integrations can connect global mobility with corporate finance and HR systems. Similar integrations can be built out for key partners and service providers. Whenever anybody needs information relating to a given assignment, it's available to them on-demand through a self-service portal, with a clear dashboard and an intuitive role-based interface.

Data can be shared fluidly, stakeholders can access what they need when they need it through one single, trustworthy system. Nothing is manual, everything is automated. The data is reliable and updates occur in real-time. The system is open, easy to update, and easy to use anytime from anywhere.

By integrating all the data, applications and professional expertise that comprises your global mobility ecosystem, the results are powerful: Faster decisions that save time, save money and create value. Individual assignees get the personalized service and peace of mind they deserve. Global mobility staff have greater visibility and are more productive. Vendor management is simpler. And internal colleagues and outside business partners alike find it easier to work together.

Adopting an ecosystem approach allows you to connect all the various players involved in the mobility process. By placing your mobility management platform at the center of the ecosystem, everything connects to one place, providing a powerful and extensive technology solution that can accommodate change as quickly as it comes.

Companies wanting to improve their global mobility performance should act now to reevaluate their programs and examine the value today's extensively connected platforms can deliver. Many new innovations are available. The ecosystem approach is one of them, and forward-looking companies are beginning to harness its potential.

How An Ecosystem Approach Adds Value

By introducing an integrated, connected approach to managing your global mobility program, an ecosystem approach can rapidly improve results and add value to your business.

Companies no longer want one huge enterprise software application that purports to solve everything. Instead, companies want multiple best-in-class solutions that are interconnected and accessible through one place. This approach allows teams to work with systems that were purpose-built for the task rather than suffering through systems that deliver poor experiences by trying to do too much and are costly to maintain.

For their programs to be successful, global mobility teams need reliable data, trustworthy applications and expertise on-demand. They need flexibility and choice. An ecosystem configuration provides a steady flow of real-time information that everyone can access, use and update as needed, leading to the best decisions possible.

Under this more streamlined, integrated technology approach, global mobility professionals, assignees and their far-flung ecosystem partners can now work together, share information, and track developments as a case progresses.

They can also:

- Access all data, applications and partner expertise through a dedicated portal.

- Control processes and coordinate planning through real-time communication.
- Complete required tasks without repetition.
- Know costs in advance, and identify savings opportunities.
- Reduce administrative headaches.
- Streamline program metrics, measurement and reporting and adopt data analytics techniques to anticipate problems in advance
- Deliver more personalized service.
- More readily understand and comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure all stakeholders have ready access to the most current data and reports.
- Add or remove business partners as situations dictate.
- Make it easy for assignees to complete required tasks.
- Reduce IT costs and save money on customization/ implementation/updates.

At its heart, the ecosystem approach delivers a flexible method for bringing different systems together and sharing data. In practice, it connects the all people who depend on each other and makes them individually and collectively more efficient. This enables global mobility teams to do more with less. Even better, it helps ease the burden on the

assignee, and allows everyone involved in the assignment lifecycle to engage in higher value activities.

Choosing The Solution Partner That's Best For You

When evaluating solution providers, companies seeking to adopt an ecosystem approach for their global mobility program should look for the following in any potential partner:

- A clear product vision / roadmap for the future.
- Proven corporate mobility experience.
- Predictable business performance, with consistent profitable growth.
- Open systems technology that easily integrates across disparate systems.
- A category leader that is on the forefront of industry change.
- Loyal, satisfied customers. How long have they been customers? If they've lost customers, why?
- Implementation, education and training capabilities.
- Additional expertise in related areas like policy consulting, taxation, immigration, etc.
- An extensive partner network of stable companies.



Equus Software: Leading The Way In Developing An Ecosystem Approach For Global Mobility Management

Equus Software leads the way in global mobility technology, pioneering new products, automation and processes for companies around the world. With more than 300 clients, Equus values long-term relationships and has a proven ability to deliver innovative solutions that deliver increasing business value.

The Equus Ecosystem leverages nearly 20 years of experience in global mobility to deliver a technology solution that connects the entire assignment lifecycle and provides greater insights, streamlined processes, improved visibility and better communication. Functionality spans all areas of global mobility including human resources, finance, vendors, partners and more – empowering organizations to run smarter while providing assignees with a single portal to access all assignment-related information. Data is shared in real time with existing providers and new ones can be connected easily. Human Resources systems can be “called” to retrieve data, eliminating the need for manual data entry.

This depth of functionality and open integration stand the Equus Ecosystem apart.

Equus Ecosystem Features

Integrations – Connect various technology platforms, such as HRIS and provider systems, to communicate and share data via secure web services, eliminating the need to rekey information while improving data accuracy

Integrated Management Reporting – by having all key data points stored in one platform, mobility teams have real-time visibility into the status of any move, without needing to search through various status reports for key information.

Assignee Portal – Reduce the stress of a move by providing employees all their assignment-related information in one place, providing full transparency into the status of their move while enabling a productive work experience.

Vendor Management – By leveraging a centralized database, vendors no longer need for to produce multiple custom reports or to manual key data into their systems, reducing errors and freeing up more time to focus on strategic activities.

Streamlined processes – To help all involved parties manage and execute while eliminating duplicative tasks.



Summary

As the war for talent intensifies, organizations increasingly need to support a variety of different types of mobile moves, from business travel through traditional longer-term assignments. Each of these situations needs to be uniquely managed by global mobility professionals to most effectively accommodate every assignee’s personal circumstances.

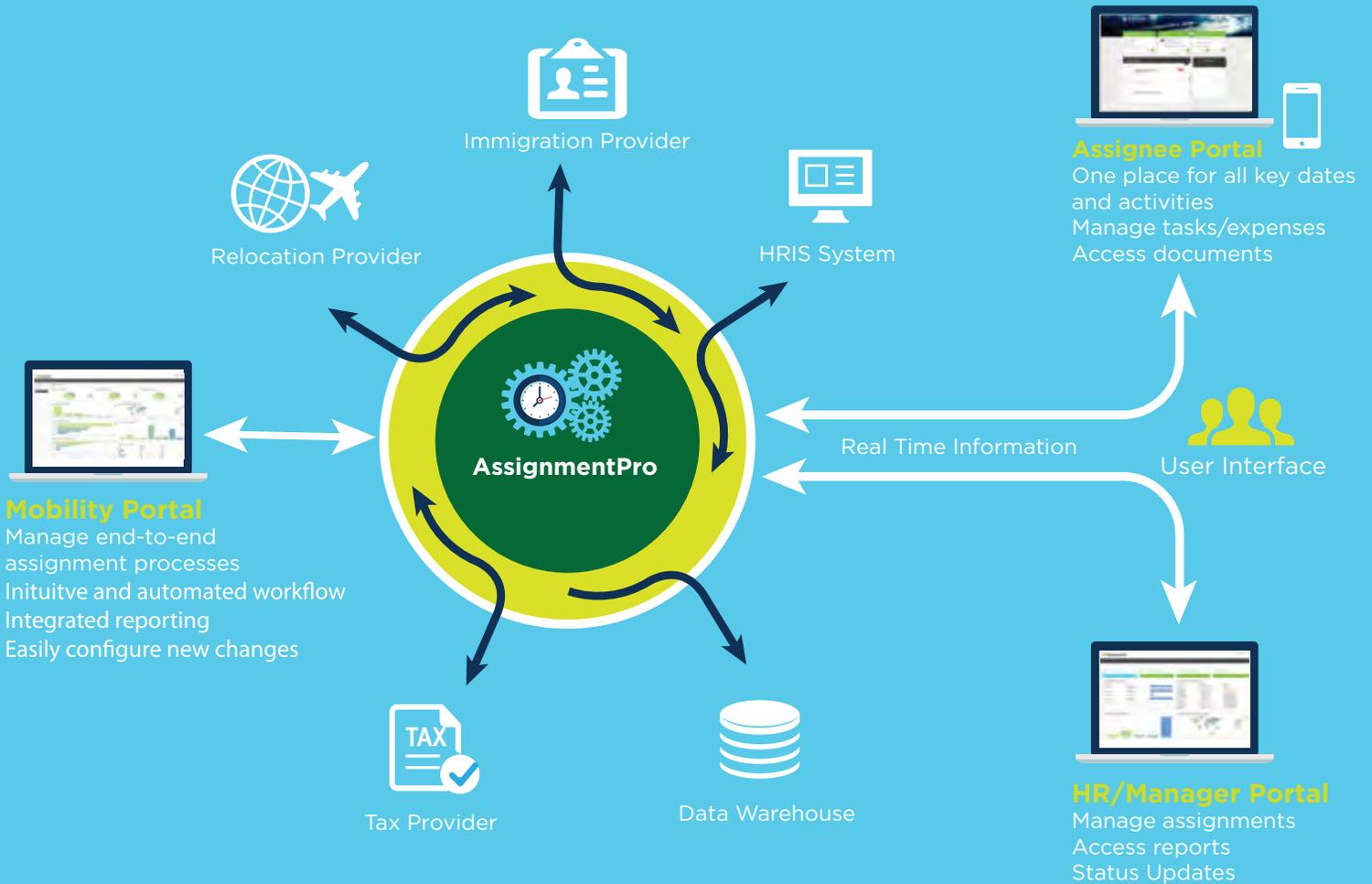
For many companies wrestling with the demands of mobile talent management, global mobility needs to be transformed from a mere transactional function to truly being a strategic business partner. Organizations have a choice: maintain the status quo by relying on outdated systems and manual processes, or embrace technology solutions that enable a more effective approach.

By integrating all the interdependent parts of a company’s assignment lifecycle, the Equus Ecosystem empowers global mobility staff with the data and resources they need to be successful. It adds value to the business by creating an improved experience not just for assignees and global mobility professionals, but for all stakeholders inside and outside the company.

To learn more about the Equus Ecosystem, visit the Equus Software website --- www.equusoft.com

The Equus Ecosystem

With AssignmentPro, your mobility team drives a complete, interconnected system. AssignmentPro provides an interface for vendors and applications in real-time, and it's easy to add or change them. Portals for the Assignee and the HR/Manager create a space to track assignments and access documents and expenses.



Equus Software is the global leader in cloud-based international relocation and mobility solutions. More than 300 organizations around the world rely on Equus tools and technology to automate mundane, transactional work so that global mobility teams, talent management professionals and other key stakeholders can focus on adding value to the business. Founded in 1999, Equus has a proven track record for delivering cutting-edge talent mobility solutions, continuous innovation and exceptional customer service.

UNITED STATES

DENVER (Headquarters)
1809 Blake Street
Suite 200
Denver, CO 80202
+1 (303) 292-4200
+1 (303) 296-6030 Fax

DALLAS
5601 Granite Parkway
Suite 260
Plano, TX 75024
+1 (214) 989-4339

UNITED KINGDOM

1 Norton Folgate
3rd Floor
London, E1 6DB
+44 (0)20 3540 6248