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BEST PRACTICES IN GLOBAL MOBILITY FOR SUPPORTING LGBTQ+



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At our latest DE&I summit, we brought together **Michael Piker**, Global DE&I and Reward Director at Flutter Entertainment, **Monica Stancu**, Diversity, Inclusion & Well-Being Manager at Lloyd's, and **Danielle Hartmann**, Global Diversity & Inclusion Partner at Roche. They shared some very personal experiences from their own global assignments, as well as some ideas that are being implemented within their respective organizations.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES & HARD QUESTIONS

After sharing his experiences about rejecting nearly half of his global assignments because he could not bring his husband, Michael kicked off our discussion with a few questions for participants regarding LGBTQ+ employees:

Have you had assignees turn down assignments when the host country does not recognize same sex immigration?

32% said "yes," while 20% said "no,"; however, nearly half (48%) did not know. This brought to light the reality that many employees do not disclose their sexuality for fear of professional discrimination or potential career consequences.

How can companies create a culture safe enough for employees to share this openly when considering a global assignment?

According to the charity Stonewall, a 2018 study confirmed that 35% of UK employees do not share their sexual orientation for fear of discrimination within the workplace. When this dialog is open, Michael suggested ensuring policies support couples, even when they are not part of the majority demographic. This includes supporting the needs of the partner finding employment or with integration, whether the marriage is recognized in the host country or not. Establishing this transparency is important for a company to accurately record the reasons for possible assignment rejection. Danielle Hartmann, of Roche, stressed the need to create an environment within the

company conducive to open and honest conversations early in the relocation process.

Have you had assignees turn down assignments when the host country does not recognize same sex immigration?



■ 47% YES ■ 20% NO ■ 32% DID NOT KNOW

The second question addressed the mobility services a company contracts:

Does your company's current RMC/DSP adequately support DE&I Assignee needs such as accessibility, same sex partner/wife/husband immigration support, and career support for relocating same sex spouses?

Fortunately, nearly half (48%) said “yes,” with 14% saying “no,” yet again 36% of respondents “are not sure.” This is important information to keep “front and center” during all ongoing DE&I efforts and while crafting inclusive policy.

Danielle Hartmann is an American working in Switzerland for the last eight years. She was excited to be able to offer her children the opportunity to live abroad as she had with her own father on international assignment when she was a teenager. Her partner was on board with the move, and despite going to Switzerland on a local contract, she was still given ample support for her relocation and integration, namely also finding the best education options for her then-eight and thirteen-year-olds. Cross border remote work was also the

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initial solution for her partner's career, but professional career support helped with this process and decision-making throughout the transition.

When women reject an assignment, almost *80% of the time the reason is the partner's unwillingness due to his/her own career. In 30-40 years, relocation policies have changed very little, but families have changed dramatically - with both partners working. Even in 2022 having the woman be the primary breadwinner makes the family non-traditional.

*NetExpat / EY Relocating Partner Survey

EASY DE&I STARTING POINT: GENDER DIVERSITY

Monica Stancu, of Lloyd's, described their efforts to promote gender equality. Lloyd's has focused initial DE&I strategy on this easily globally measurable target.

Currently, women are 52% of Lloyd's workforce with 40% in leadership. This was achieved through a strategic action plan which involved the Edge Certification (edge-cert.org). Lloyd's examined their practices prior to inviting the Edge auditor. Those results were the basis for their action plan focusing on Recruitment, Development, and Rewards.

For recruitment, they worked to 1.) avoid using subjective terms and superlatives in job descriptions (must be measurable), 2.) reevaluate how much experience a candidate really needs (to allow for transferable skills from other

industries), and 3.) use more inclusive and less “masculine” language in their job descriptions (i.e., “strong, competitive, warriors”).

ONCE YOU HIRE MORE WOMEN, HELP THEM THRIVE

Once women join the organization, they are given tools to thrive. Women are encouraged to voice their needs to their manager (examples: disability, family, health issues). A flexible working policy allows female employees to address those needs as they arise. The company's Culture Engagement Survey reassesses their success or failures annually. Lloyd's Advance Program targets the career development of women within the organization, creating a support system for future leaders at all levels, including sponsors, mentors, and line managers.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LGBTQ+ WORKFORCE THROUGH RELOCATION

DE&I strategies for better support of LGBTQ+ employees is also important, however data is not as transparent as it is for gender. Danielle Hartman explained some of Roche's strategies for addressing LGBTQ+ needs within global mobility. At Roche they maintain a map of the **world** detailing local policies regarding LGBTQ+ laws in each nation, because while a company and its mobility team may be supportive, local host law can be the barrier to inclusivity and equity. The company needs to openly

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discuss with the relocating employee how to handle a challenging host country. Such discussions depend on an inclusive company culture: creating an environment which fosters open conversations early in the relocation process.

CONCLUSION: DETERMINE WHERE YOU ARE AND DEFINE WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

In December 2020 Roche launched its 4 pillared Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with its focus on *patients*: diversity of clinical trials, access to medicines; *people*: representation within the organization; *culture*: a place where each can thrive as their authentic self; and *society*: seeing the company's responsibility for advancing change. Roche has set ambitious 10-year

goals for D&I. They want their **leadership** to be as diverse as its workforce, and its **workforce** to reflect the diversity of **society**. This encompasses ambitious goals such as a 2% increase in female executives globally and a 1% annual increase in underrepresented nationalities (i.e., Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America).

They admittedly did not meet these benchmarks the first year, but leadership reflected on this, seeing 90% of executives based in US or Western Europe. Most mobility tended to be US or Europe outbound and that may need to be somewhat decreased to increase experience from other nationalities.

These efforts have also opened dialog from and about mobility around the following topics:

- A desire to return home to growth opportunities, both personal and professional.
- Having high-level leadership in locations other than headquarters
- Leadership succession in smaller, less-lucrative locations globally when offering international assignments

None of these issues has an easy, one-size-fits-all answer, but the **awareness and dialog** around it **are great first steps**.

These point to the key takeaways for DE&I within the context of global mobility of taking **ownership of this topic, however complex, and to have empathy for the experience of your colleagues**.

3 Suggestions to support same-sex couples through global relocation:

