



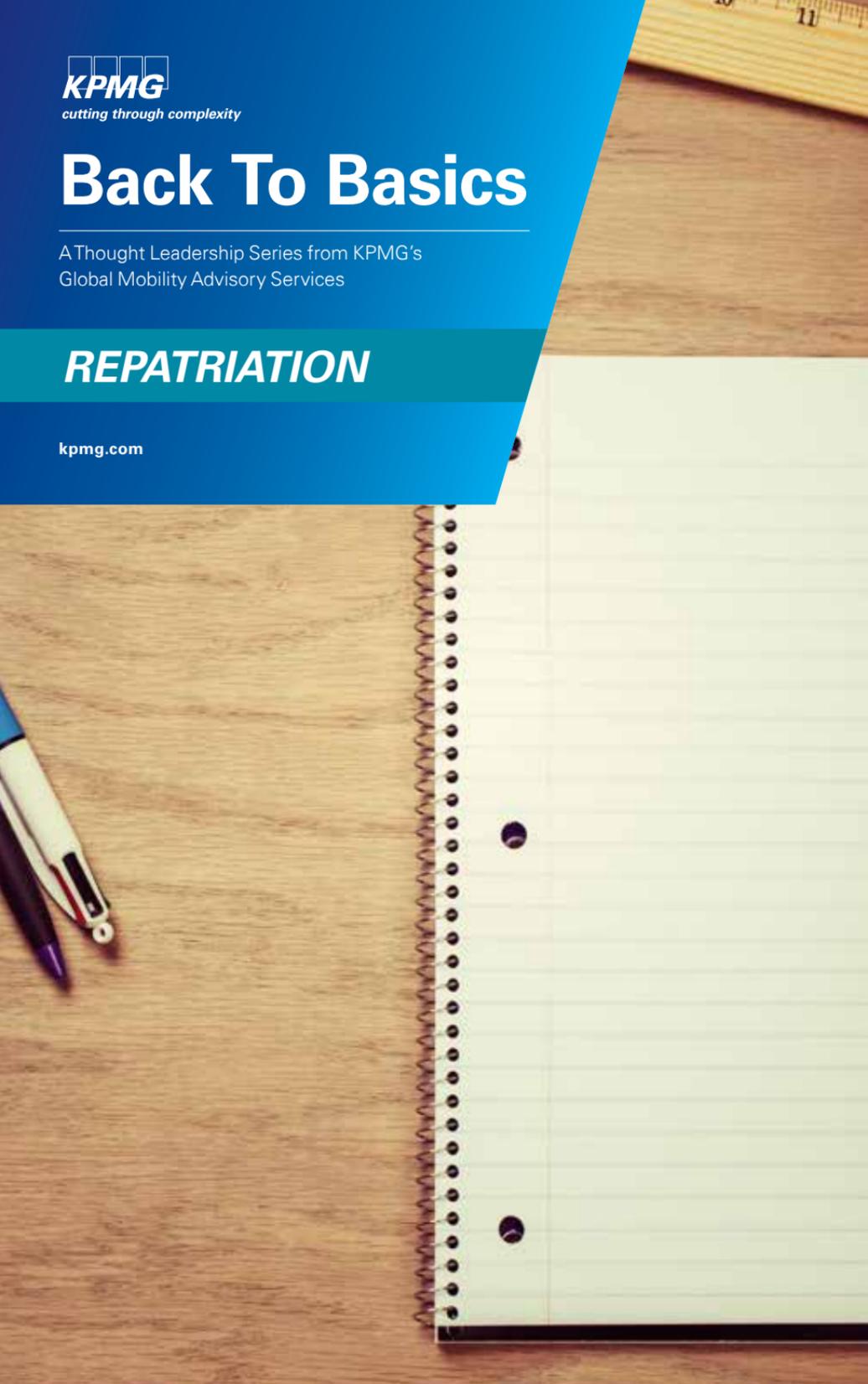
cutting through complexity

Back To Basics

A Thought Leadership Series from KPMG's
Global Mobility Advisory Services

REPATRIATION

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About KPMG’s Global Mobility “Back to Basics” thought leadership series

KPMG’s Global Mobility Advisory Services team is publishing a series of articles on key global mobility policy provisions prevalent within most of today’s multinational organizations’ programs. Our “Back to Basics” series examines such policy elements from a foundational level, with a view to help HR professionals to better understand a provision’s intent and design, options available, and to achieve alignment to larger global mobility objectives. Whether you’re new to global mobility or if some time has passed since you last thought through a particular provision, this series of articles is for you. Additionally, other teams that support global mobility in your organization (e.g., Finance, Payroll, Tax, Legal, or Host Country HR) may benefit from better understanding global mobility’s approach when managing international assignments.





Repatriation

International assignments typically follow three phases of the assignment life cycle, Preassignment, During Assignment, and Post Assignment and each phase of the life cycle has its specific processes, actions and tasks. A key—and often overlooked—process during the assignment life cycle occurs towards the end of the “During Assignment” phase. There are several options at the scheduled end of the international assignment:

- ☑ The assignment could be extended and the assignee would remain in the host location for a longer period,
- ☑ The assignment terms could be changed to a new policy,
- ☑ The assignee could be selected for a sequential assignment to a new location,
- ☑ The assignee could be localized and become a local employee, or
- ☑ The assignee could repatriate back to their home country.

This issue of “Back to Basics” focuses on **repatriation planning and logistics**. Repatriation is defined as the return of the assignee to the home country at the completion of their assignment. Successful repatriations typically address two aspects: **repatriation move logistics** and **repatriation planning**. Repatriation move logistics include all components that are required to physically move the employee and family back home. We will discuss the key components of the move logistics in this article, but also want to emphasize the importance of effectively *planning* the repatriation and the steps that successful organizations are taking to help ensure successful management of this process.

Why do organizations repatriate assignees?

Most organizations define an international assignment as a temporary move from a business unit in one country to a business unit in another country with defined goals and the objective for the assignee is to return to the home country business unit. (Please see sidebar for scenarios that often don't include relocation support.) As such it makes sense that organizations provide the logistical support to repatriate the assignee (and their family, when accompanied) back to the home country or point of origin prior to the assignment. Typically, the repatriation provisions mirror the benefits and allowances provided at the start of the assignment when the assignee and family embarked on the assignment. Examples of these items are the following:

- ☑ Repatriation counseling with international assignment program contact
- ☑ Tax provider departure meeting in the host country
- ☑ One-way return flights home
- ☑ Reimbursement of en route travel expenses (taxi and meals)
- ☑ Repatriation planning trip
- ☑ Vendor acclimation services
- ☑ Excess baggage reimbursement
- ☑ Shipment of household goods at home, with increased limitations set at the initial move
- ☑ Temporary living, if needed
- ☑ Miscellaneous relocation allowance
- ☑ Destination services, if moving to an alternate point of origin.

The list is by no means all inclusive, but should provide you with a robust starting point when developing a repatriation package.

In addition to the logistical support outlined above, organizations provide repatriation support in the form of **repatriation planning** to help ensure the newly acquired skills and global experience of the assignee are utilized after the assignment. International assignments are expensive and organizations intend to do their best to protect their return on investment, or ROI. A well executed repatriation planning process is a key component to achieve this objective. Successful reintegration of the assignee supports the organizations globalization goals and helps to ensure that their investment in the assignment is fully realized.



To Repatriate or Not To Repatriate

The intent of the assignment plays a part in whether or not repatriation planning is integral to the organization. Some may have a corporate culture and/or business strategy that do not require focusing on the repatriation planning process. Reasons for this may be, for example:

- "Career assignee" or "Internationalist" assignments
- Industry requires rotational assignments (e.g. one month at post, one month at home, and so on for a certain time)
- Transition from project to project in one country to another country
- International assignments are infrequent; the business had a requirement for an isolated project.

As we've suggested, retention is a key targeted outcome of the planning process and companies need to establish their own definition of assignment success and work toward achieving it. Some typical success factors could be:

- The assignee will continue within the organization and apply their global perspective and experience to the overall business strategy.
- In addition, they would also promote the success of the international assignment program and encourage

other employees and business units to explore these opportunities and extend their global market reach.

- In today's global business environment, successful international assignment programs serve as an excellent recruiting tool.
- The repatriated assignee can elevate the organizational impact that supports international business success.
- Successful assignments can lead to consideration for accepting other assignment opportunities in the future.



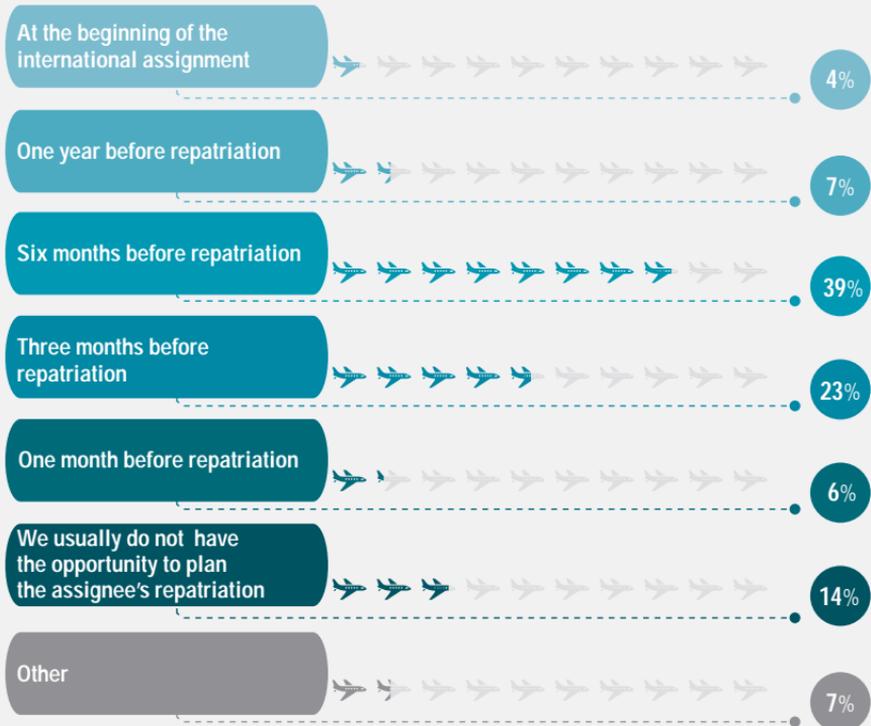
Timing considerations

Organizations offer repatriation planning resources throughout the assignment to keep the assignee connected to the home country. The old adage still holds true that repatriation planning should start with the assignment initiation. However, typically the majority of the efforts will shift into high gear about three to six months before the anticipated assignment end date.

Reality check – 2013 GAPP snapshot

Based on KPMG's 2013 Global Assignment Policies & Practices (GAPP) survey, 39 percent of organizations begin the repatriation process approximately six months before the assignment end date and 23 percent kick off their process at three months before the assignment end date.

How far in advance do you begin planning the assignee's return to the home country?



Source: KPMG International, GAPP Survey 2013.

Repatriation planning: Communication and beyond

Another important piece of the repatriation puzzle is ongoing communication with the assignee throughout the assignment. It is important to discuss topics like the assignee's and the company's role in career management and opportunities after the assignment early on with the assignee. Staying in touch with the assignee throughout the assignment is important as well as educating the assignee on resources available to them. Additionally, there are forms of assistance that the organization can implement or provide throughout the assignment to ease the stress of repatriation. Those include, but are not limited to:

Home leave. As stated in the prior issue of "Back to Basics: Home Leave", the provision is granted to have the assignee and family maintain their personal relationships and business contacts during their assignment. It is a trip taken back to the home country provided to the assignee and accompanying family, typically once every 12 months during the assignment.

Resources and materials. Assignees should be made aware of the resources that are available such as online portals, newsletters, company handbooks, or even other assignees. During regular touch points while on assignment, mobility managers, mentors, and other company contacts should remind the assignees of these tools and resources.

Mentoring. Mentors in the home country location can be a great asset to the assignee and support a successful repatriation. Whether the organization has a formal or informal mentoring program,

a mentor can assist with many different aspects to support the assignee during their time in the host country. They can be the "connector" to the home organization, assist with performance management and career goals as well as providing regular updates in respect to home company developments. Overall they can help the assignee to fight "out of sight, out of mind" and be their voice in the home organization.

Business unit manager support. The home business manager should have formal communications requirements, or "pulse checks", along with scheduled meetings during their home leave as part of the repatriation planning process. In addition, the home business manager is typically the person that is responsible for the performance management process with the assignee. Therefore, discussions surrounding the assignee's career aspirations and goals upon their return should be addressed during these in-person meetings and communicated throughout the assignment period.

Talent management. The international assignment program offers a pool of employees that have a unique set of skills and experience. Therefore, talent management should be aware of these of individuals and should seek to fill opportunities internally with them prior to seeking external candidates. Throughout the assignment, the assignees should be aware of new opportunities posted and coordinate with their business unit or sponsoring department on their career expectations and prospects once they repatriate.

Company/vendor acclimation programs. The organization may encourage the assignee to share their international experience via informal lunch sessions or advertising in the company newsletter. Vendor acclimation programs are sometimes provided to assist not only the assignee, but also their family in the reintegration back to the home country. These programs are reverse cultural training programs and they offer services intending to assist the family with transition back home.

Repatriation planning trip. Organizations offer this anywhere between three to six months prior to the repatriation date to reconnect with work, family, and friends. The trip should be provided in coordination with a business trip home to meeting with the home business unit/sponsoring unit and maybe talent management to explore options and job opportunities.

Family Matters...

Organizations can be mindful of whether the assignment start date and end date coincide with the start and end of the school year. This can be addressed with the repatriation planning so the impact on the accompanying children is considered at the start and they do not have a disrupted school year, if possible.



Measuring Repatriation Success

Data and metrics have become a key component to understanding the many aspects of an international assignment program's effectiveness and relevance, repatriation metrics included. An organization also needs to define how they measure success, which directly correlates to the targeted repatriation outcomes mentioned earlier. For example, organizations are tracking metrics on retention rates and promotion rates. Successful retention, for example, could be defined as retaining and promoting assignees for a specified amount of time after the assignment. These rates should be compared against domestic parameters and ideally be the same or better.

There are some organizations that are currently not measuring the effectiveness of their repatriation process. In our GAPP Reality Check on the following page we have

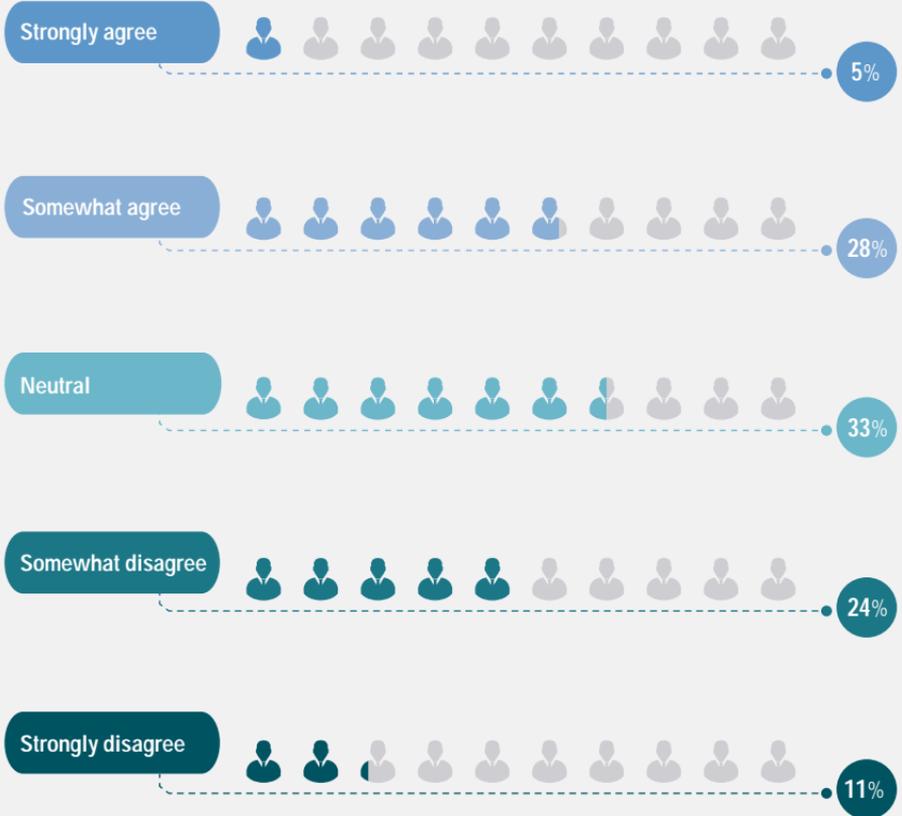
asked the question whether organizations manage the repatriation process well. 35 percent thought that they did not manage this process well and 33 percent were neutral. These respondents could be neutral to the question because they may currently not have metrics in place to measure repatriation success. This may be because these organizations do not have the bandwidth to add this to their list of responsibilities, nor the process and technology to support the effort of tracking. No matter the reason, improving the overall repatriation process and reducing neutral sentiment should be a goal. It is important in the current mobility realm to understand the intricacies and areas of improvement of your international assignment program and this offers one of the many ways it can be achieved.



Reality Check – 2013 GAPP Snapshot

Based on KPMG's 2013 Global Assignment Policies & Practices (GAPP) survey, 33 percent of organizations believe their organization manages the repatriation process well, where 35 percent responded they do not manage the process well.

Do you agree that your organization manages the repatriation process well?



Note: Total may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: KPMG International, GAPP Survey 2013.

Homework

Identify and interview four prior assignees that have repatriated and ask them about their experience in the repatriation move and repatriation planning process.

ASSIGNEE #1

- 1. Has the assignee exited from the organization since their repatriation?**
- 2. Was anything discussed during their exit that could have been addressed during their repatriation planning process?**
- 3. How would the assignee rate their overall repatriation experience?**
Rank 1–5 (1 is Excellent and 5 is Very Poor)
- 4. Why did they choose that rank? Request 3 reasons and examples to support the rank.**

ASSIGNEE #2

- 1. Has the assignee exited from the organization since their repatriation?**
 - 2. Was anything discussed during their exit that could have been addressed during their repatriation planning process?**
 - 3. How would the assignee rate their overall repatriation experience?**
Rank 1–5 (1 is Excellent and 5 is Very Poor)
 - 4. Why did they choose that rank? Request 3 reasons and examples to support the rank.**
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The results of these interviews can help provide insight on potential improvements to your current repatriation process and offer a starting point for discussions for change.

ASSIGNEE #3

- 1. Has the assignee exited from the organization since their repatriation?**
- 2. Was anything discussed during their exit that could have been addressed during their repatriation planning process?**
- 3. How would the assignee rate their overall repatriation experience?**
Rank 1–5 (1 is Excellent and 5 is Very Poor)
- 4. Why did they choose that rank? Request 3 reasons and examples to support the rank.**

ASSIGNEE #4

- 1. Has the assignee exited from the organization since their repatriation?**
- 2. Was anything discussed during their exit that could have been addressed during their repatriation planning process?**
- 3. How would the assignee rate their overall repatriation experience?**
Rank 1–5 (1 is Excellent and 5 is Very Poor)
- 4. Why did they choose that rank? Request 3 reasons and examples to support the rank.**

CONCLUSION

Repatriation is a mobility term that not only refers to the repatriation logistics, it also includes the repatriation planning process. This process is continuous and should be part of the efforts throughout each phase of the assignment life cycle. The organization as a whole should help ensure they are focusing on their repatriation planning process and engaging all of the necessary stakeholders. These stakeholders should take ownership of their respective roles in the process and then review their data and metrics to measure their success and identify areas of improvement.



If your organization...

- has a globally mobile workforce
- has international assignment programs that need help with managing their assignee populations
- has international assignee program that do not have documented policies, or have not recently updated or benchmarked their policies
- needs to understand their current international assignee program resources, identify gaps, introduce technological resources, and improve work flow
- needs to improve reporting and tracking processes and procedures that address stakeholder needs in a timely manner, and help improve guidance and information sharing throughout the organization
- wishes to improve and streamline their current global mobility processes and procedures
- recognizes a need to institute improved governance to build a more sustainable and efficient international assignee program and manage potential exposures

KPMG Can Help

KPMG has over 100 professionals that provide Global Mobility Advisory Services (GMAS) around the world. Our services include:

- Global mobility advisory and international HR consulting
- Assignment administration and outsourcing services
- GMAS professionals are particularly skilled at:
 - developing policies
 - managing international assignee populations
 - developing and implementing tailored approaches to help solve today's global mobility issues
- Global Assignment Policies & Practices (GAPP) survey, benchmarking analytics, satisfaction and pulse surveys
- Communications and change management
- Program and process optimization and technology workflow

Contact us

Ben Garfunkel

**Partner, National Service Line Leader,
International Executive Services**

T: 973-912-6433

E: bgarfunkel@kpmg.com

Achim Mossmann

**Principal, Global Mobility Advisory
Services Leader**

T: 212-954-6812

E: amossmann@kpmg.com

kpmg.com

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