

transcript

mobility matters, episode 3: top 10 ways to make your global mobility program more inclusive – part two

WITH KAREN WILKS AND LISA JOHNSON



karen:

Welcome to Mobility Matters, the official Cartus podcast, where we promise you insightful expert, and above all honest, conversation about global mobility and talent management. So, join us for another episode as we delve deep into mobility's hottest topics and trends. Let's get started. Hello, and welcome to Mobility Matters, the official Cartus podcast. I'm your host, Karen Wilks, Vice President of Strategic Growth, and my pronouns are she/her, and today the second and final episode of our mini-series *Top 10 Ways to Make Your Global Mobility Program More Inclusive*. If you missed it, part one looked at the first five tips and I encourage you to go back and take a listen. Today we will be exploring tip six through 10. And leading this discussion is our resident DEI expert, Lisa Johnson, Director of Global DEI solutions at Cartus. Welcome, Lisa.

lisa:

Thank you, Karen. And my pronouns are she/her. And welcome back to all of you who joined us in episode one. And you've come back for the second episode in this two-part topic where we're sharing some of our favorite actions when it comes to creating a more inclusive global mobility program. And as Karen said, we are doing this in the form of tips. And that means there's going to be something for everyone.

karen:

Thanks, Lisa. Great to have you here again. Perhaps we should kick off with a rundown of what we discussed in our previous discussion.

lisa:

Definitely. So, on our first episode, we covered what you and I both consider "getting started" tips. Although I'm confident that many of you listening who are already making strides in creating an inclusive mobility strategy, were able to grab a few new ideas. They included:

1. Connecting with your company's DEI team, leadership, or champions.
2. Developing and practicing your elevator pitch, easily articulating why DEI matters in your mobility program.
3. Starting to measure your assignee population's diversity, and expanding what you measure.
4. Establishing global mobility as an ally. And that's upskilling you and your team. What makes you an ally to others? And how do they know that you're an ally? What visible signs does your program policy or team have that shows your "ally" status.
5. And finally, we talked about conducting a policy review for inclusive language and pronouns. And we emphasize that if you did it a few years ago, you kind of need to do it again, because this is an evolving area, and DEI and inclusive mobility change and grow and get better.

So, for today's episode, Karen and I are going to cover five more of our favorite tips. And we want to remind you, our listeners, that some of you are way ahead of most companies in terms of progress. And for some of you, you have not made any changes in this direction. So, adding a DEI lens to your Global Mobility Program are just a few changes, but also to remind you, our research and our experience shows that for a little more than half of you, you've already made some changes. So, you're kind of there in the middle.

And no matter where you are on the spectrum from just getting started to being innovators and leaders in the inclusive mobility space, there is always room to progress more. It's not a one and done or a checklist or, "Oh yeah, I did that a couple of years ago," most companies have goals of progress on DEI. And that includes putting dates on measuring that progress, like, "By 2030, we're going to do X in terms of the percentage of women in our leadership group or on our board," or, you know, whatever it is for each company.

So, DEI mobility is already for most of you, I would guess for 95% of you a little behind the organization's priorities for your organization for your company, right. So, there's always room to do better. And if you're a leader in this space, keep leading. So, as we share these tips on today's episode, we're sharing some of our favorite actions and asking you to leave the podcast with at least one action that you can get started on tomorrow. And go ahead and check off those tips that we share that you've already accomplished. It always is important to celebrate progress and milestones. So, Karen, are you ready? We have five more tips to get to our 10 tips and why don't you kick us off with tip number six.

karen:

Thanks, Lisa. I am ready. Tip six is to focus on your benefits and support in your program, and identify which ones are inclusive and support your DEI goals and which ones could be modified or expanded. The key is really to make these explicit and make the connection for your employee at Cartus. For our inclusive policy, we are adding the DEI icons next to these benefits that support DEI mobility. It's kind of like the green icons that you see for sustainability benefits, right? Have you added any kind of new support for single parents? Do you have partner support or accessibility support for employees or family members with disabilities of any kind? What in your program is inclusive or new to address your diverse employee needs? If you don't have anything, let's do something this year. Right?

lisa:

Absolutely. And as a reminder, two of your most traditional policy benefits in international assignment or permanent transfer programs, cross-cultural training and language training, are what we consider anchor benefits for DEI mobility. When your employees are moving, how do they get ready to integrate into the new culture and understand the local norms? Where do your employees ask questions specific to their unique concerns about adjusting to the new location and the work environment? It's cross-cultural training and language support.

Clearly, if your employees are moving to a location where the language is different, and they've not studied the language, then, of course, basic language training is not only important for inclusion, but for safety and belonging, duty of care, right.

But if you have assignees, and we find that many of your assignees who are going through our language programs with Cartus may already know the language in their host location, especially when it's inbound to the UK or the US or Australia, where English is the local language, because a lot of people have studied English their whole lives at home or in university. But we hear a lot of feedback in focus groups and in our coaching, that employees want to further their language skills so that their ideas get heard, or they can inspire as a manager or a leader, or bring their whole selves to their teams, right? It's not just speaking a second language, it's saying, I feel like I brought my whole self here with me. And it's an equity issue, if they get talked over in a meeting, if their ideas get taken by somebody who communicated better, or if their performance is connected to their ability to communicate.

So, I can't overemphasize how important that is for cultural diversity and bringing people fully onto your team, that sometimes we will push away and say, "Oh, no, I got English, or I speak that second language." But really, it's about equity and being heard and included and feeling like you're your whole self in the meetings.



karen:

Thanks, Lisa. That's a really key point, really, don't underestimate the power of cost, cross-cultural training, and language support as core parts of your DEI mobility strategy. Lisa, that also came up a lot at some DEI mobility workshops we ran at WERC® and BAMM, didn't it?

lisa:

Absolutely. It was a theme in every single breakout group as the most common way to support diverse employees of all types. So, let's move on to our seventh tip. And that is know the power of ERGs. How many of you listeners have employee resource groups in your organizations? You may call it something else, but they are increasingly common and gaining strength as being central to many companies' corporate cultures.

karen:

Yeah, I have to say, at Cartus and at Anywhere, which is our parent company, our ERGs are thriving. We have senior level sponsorship for each one. And a cool and important ERG-led initiative is happening every week. It's so awesome.

lisa:

I totally agree. So here is what is hopefully an "aha" moment for many of you listening today. ERGs are fantastic to tap into during a relocation. You have a group of people with some shared identities or shared experiences and employees can ask fellow members of the ERG if anyone has had an assignment before, or if there are people in the new location who can be a resource to them.

ERGs are great for the employee and for the Global Mobility team as a location or as an outlet to share some updates or get input from that group. Or, you know, maybe you're making changes in policy or in the program and you want to get some insider knowledge from an ERG group. Don't underestimate the power of employee resource groups as allies to mobility. It's just very exciting when you think about some of the new ERGs that are coming out around neuro-inclusion, right? Or just many different ways that companies are expanding these communities within their organizations. Maybe we need a whole podcast episode where we talk ERGs and mobility?

karen:

We definitely do. But let's move on to tip number eight.

lisa:

Okay, so we're on tip number eight. And it is really about making sure that your supply chain knows about your DEI mobility goals, and is driving ahead with you. How often do you talk about it with your supply partners, right? So, tell your relocation management company and the other partners that you work with about your DEI mobility goals. Ask them how they can support your initiatives, learn about anything they can already do to support you and your employees, and ask them to share their goals for continuing their own evolution in being inclusive mobility supply partners.

karen:

One area that came up in the recent workshops we conducted with corporate mobility leaders and supplier partners was how critical immigration is for all kinds of assignments or transfers, but especially for LGBTQ+ moves. A great tip is to ask your immigration partner to create a stoplight or traffic light guide for the locations where you move employees.

The guide has a red, yellow, green concept and helps your global mobility team stay up to date on locations where it's safe for members of the LGBTQ+ community; locations where it's legal for same-sex partners to accompany employees, which, frankly, is only 34 countries in the world; and places where it's illegal, dangerous, or even criminal. And, by the way, Estonia just became the first ex-Soviet state to legalize same-sex marriage. So, on January 1 of 2024, the numbers will go up to 35 countries where it's legal.

lisa:

You know what, Karen, our ninth tip is such a great segue from tip number eight. It's short and sweet. And that is to keep DEI mobility on your agenda. Will it be once a month? Once a quarter? Twice a year? DEI mobility confidence for your team, and I like to really think about the way that DEI mobility confidence, kind of upskilling everyone right? It can only be gained if there's a regular drumbeat of discussion, or goals of bringing in new ideas. It's not one and done.

And you really have to have the ability to bring out some of that, like the information you just shared, Karen, about locations and numbers of countries where it's safe or legal to bring same-sex marriage partners in for assignments, those kinds of things, that's that DEI confidence that we're talking about.

karen:

I couldn't agree more, we have to keep that drumbeat going.

lisa:

Okay, we are now at our last tip, I can't believe it, Karen, it's gone by so fast here. But listeners out there, we're at tip number 10. And we decided to end with a tip that is what I consider "next level" in terms of innovation and leading edge for merging your company's DEI initiatives with global mobility. So, for our last tip, in our two-episode series, we want to end by highlighting the importance of inclusive Selection Managers, those people in your organization deciding who gets opportunities, and inclusive Receiving Manager support. How are your assignees or transferees onboarded in the new location? How does that team really value and incorporate the new voice that is coming onto the team as a result of the assignment?

karen:

So let me jump in here. We've looked at so many companies, DEI initiatives, and they're all about creating and embedding a culture of inclusion across the organization. Does that sound familiar to any of you listeners out there? And we know that when people get an international opportunity, their careers have an advantage, they often end up on the leadership pipeline.

lisa:

You know what, Karen, it's actually a fantastic way for us to come first full circle from that first episode where we talked about measuring the diversity of assignee or transferee populations, isn't it? Addressing unconscious biases, making sure decision-makers have diversity as part of their goals, too. At Cartus, we're really excited because we just launched two new workshops and coaching that supports ways to ensure that selection and onboarding in the new location, increase the employee experience when arriving in that new location and having inclusive behaviors.

So, these are what I always consider pivotal roles in your Global Mobility Program, to take the program to an innovative level, and to make it far more aligned with your organization's larger initiatives around DEI. So, our tip for all of you is that if you're ready to make a difference in terms of who gets international opportunities in your company.

And in terms of how assignees are onboarded and integrated into the new location, you have to think outside of the box and use that ally status that we talked about in the first episode to influence managers and leaders on either end of the Global Mobility journey to adapt inclusive behavior and ally-ship too.

karen:

Great. Thanks, Lisa, you've shared some great insights with us. And as you mentioned, it's gone by so fast, and we've come to the end of our Part Two special. But before we close, it's that time again, Lisa, where I ask you, what has been your "wow factor" and listeners, by that we mean, what has been the key takeaway from this discussion that will really help you in your day-to-day roles?

lisa:

Okay, and I love this wow factor concept as we're spending this year talking about employee experience, right, Karen? It's just such a great way to think about things. So let me find my wow factor. And I have to say that the last time we spoke on our first five tips, I cheated, and I chose five wow factors.

karen:

You did.

lisa:

Guess what? I can't help it. I'm choosing all five again. And I promise next time, I'll whittle it down for us, but I have five.

1. So first, focusing on your benefits and support in your program and identifying which ones are inclusive and support DEI goals.
2. Knowing the power of employee resource groups, those ERGs as allies to your Global Mobility Program.
3. Making sure your supply chain knows about your DEI mobility goals and is driving ahead with you.
4. Keeping DEI mobility on your global mobility team agenda. To keep that confidence up, right? Your DEI confidence on the team.

5. And finally, considering “next level” in terms of innovation and leading edge for merging your company’s DEI initiatives: with global mobility, you would never want someone in your organization who is so excited to be a part of your company culture and all that you’re doing around inclusion in the workplace to accept an international assignment, come into the Global Mobility Program, and find that it looks, feels, and sounds different from the rest of the organization. So that alignment is so critical for the employee experience.

karen:

Thank you, Lisa. Next time though, I’m going to hold you to just picking one, so be warned.

lisa:

Okay, you know what, Karen, it’s been so fun to talk to you as we went through our top 10 tips for incorporating DEI into global mobility programs.

karen:

It’s been great. Thank you, as always, Lisa, and to our listeners, thank you for taking the time to join us. We hope that you found this session both informative and entertaining. And, until next time, thank you and take care.

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