



COVID-19 WHITE PAPER SERIES

Digital Transformation Accelerates Talent Mobility Recovery

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Nearly half a year after the first reports of COVID-19 cases, organizations are still operating under business continuity plans and preparing for a new normal. Technology has been an indispensable enabler of the dramatic shift in the working environment for most employees. As the world looks cautiously ahead to recovery, the pandemic has become a catalyst for digital change in the work environment of the future.

Since before the onset of the pandemic, organizations in all sectors have been on a journey of digitization, recognizing the profound impact of this transformation on business models and processes. The long-term repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic are accelerating digital transformation within the mobility

arena, driven by new mobile employee behaviors and expectations. Future-focused mobility service providers, such as BGRS, are similarly driving digital transformation of our clients' and customers' experience.

BGRS's "Leading a Talent Mobility Function During the COVID-19 Crisis" white paper examined organizations' duty of care to its mobile workforce and emergency responsiveness planning for global disasters. This white paper will provide insights into how digital capabilities can equip organizations to meet their specialized duty of care and, at the same time, empower Talent Mobility during the recovery period and beyond.

DIGITIZATION ENABLES TALENT MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION

COVID-19 has impacted many organizations and business models may consequently forever change. For Talent Mobility functions, applying the many learnings from this pandemic may lead to redefining their strategy as they guide their organizations through the recovery period and thereafter into the new normal.

The COVID-19 crisis is presenting Talent Mobility with an opportunity to demonstrate its strategic support in global workforce planning and global talent development. Talent Mobility will be expected to partner with the business leaders and Human Resources (HR) to develop global workforce strategies that reflect the right combination of virtual work arrangements, physical presence in the company's offices, and the international temporary and permanent relocation of workers to meet business needs. Mobility teams must ensure that their organizations do not lose sight of global talent's value to the company's recovery efforts.

Digital innovations and transformation will be the game-changers for a successful, post-COVID-19 talent mobility strategy, empowering Mobility teams to take their rightful place as strategic advisors to the business. Digital delivery is the centerpiece from which the following components of this strategy should emanate.



Key Components of Digitally Driven Talent Mobility Recovery Strategy

■ Data-driven Decision Making

Mobilizing a global workforce often comes with a higher cost than deploying and developing domestic talent. As the pandemic evolves, businesses will demand data-based rationale for sending employees on international assignments and transfers. A primary benefit of digital transformation is the ability to capture and centrally house complete, accurate data for analytics. Meaningful data will inform organizations when making decisions on how mobility should be integrated into workforce planning. Business leaders will be equipped to understand program performance and how to balance the cost of mobility in meeting their business targets. Sentiment analysis drawn from the data can also provide information on how the mobility experience is meeting the expectations of their employees.

■ Improved Risk Management Through Technology

Digital capability to manage risks associated with business travel is now critical. With the growing confluence of immigration and tax interests in host countries, organizations need to exercise greater control over how they manage, track, and monitor the movement of their business travelers. There are many consequences of inaction ranging from financial sanctions to negative effects on corporate reputation. In addition, digital tools are especially valuable

during times of emergency when organizations need to know the locations of their travelers and provide stranded workers with guidance and additional support services. Digital tools, such as BGRS's TripWise, provide the solution for complex business travel governance and risk management.

■ Omnichannel Employee Experience and Support

The COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the criticality of information flowing quickly to employees through multiple channels. With digital enhancements, organizations can interact in the way that is most convenient and preferred by the employee, thereby enriching their experience and providing immediate support in an emergency.

■ Flexibility and Scalability

The pandemic has demonstrated that one-dimensional programs are not flexible enough for the diverse needs of today's mobile workers. Digital tools, such as core/flex technology, enable organizations to offer flexible and scalable benefits to employees. The value of offering choice and prioritization of needs, especially in times of crisis, has never been higher.

■ Program Affordability

Mobility programs and the internationally skilled workforce will always be vital to meet global business objectives. But as organizations look to adjust operating costs, flexible program design gives the business needed agility to scale without sacrificing the employee experience.

“Many corporate clients we partner with recognize that the new ways of working represent technology innovation opportunities. They are assessing how to keep pace and deliver strong business results in a fast-changing environment. They are re-evaluating their talent mobility strategies, decisions around data management, and partnering with providers who can deliver an outstanding customer experience, underpinned by a robust technology architecture.”

- Joe Genautis
Chief Information Officer, BGRS

Dynamic Digital Ecosystem Ensures Readiness for COVID-19 Recovery

For years, continuous improvement exercises have centered on repetitively restructuring the content of services, the “what,” to optimize costs. With the focus on digital capabilities and the employee experience, the “how” has come to the fore as the central theme in improving the delivery model. As newer, increasingly technology-savvy generations enter the workforce, digital innovation will continue to be the axis around which the experience will revolve.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put mobility operating models to the test. This development compounds the intense focus on the customer experience and talent mobility transformation. With mobility programs and their complexities progressively rising in visibility to senior leaders, many companies have turned to relocation management companies (RMC) for innovative digital delivery solutions in lieu of expending in-house resources.

Similarly, BGRS has been on a digital transformation journey to better support the delivery needs and expectations of our customers. As a foundation for digital transformation, we leveraged a globally integrated delivery platform, ReloAccess, and its global data repository and analytical capabilities. Our multi-year digital transformation journey is focused on intelligent business automation, supply chain integration, digital enablement, successful client adoption, and cloud technology.

In the following section, we address how BGRS's digital transformation benefits our clients during, and after, the COVID-19 crisis.

Process Automation

Often the first step in a holistic digital transformation, robotic process automation (RPA) relies on a digital workforce to manage repetitive processes. Typified by manual, labor-intensive workflows due to the multiplicity and complexity of its programs, the mobility industry is now leveraging RPA. With the application of rules and logic, RPA mimics keystrokes and eliminates the need for individuals to perform high-volume, low-value, and repeatable tasks.

The mobile employee, like today's typical consumer, wants the ability to access information through a variety of channels – email, phone, mobile app, live chat, and/or chatbot. As organizations progress along their digital transformation journeys, they can offer choice through omnichannel employee support. As an example, RPA-enabled chatbots can be deployed to instantly answer employee queries. Service providers with an established RPA infrastructure will have the ability to offer improved accuracy and reduced cycle times to clients and their employees, a clear benefit in times of crisis.



“BGRS’s multi-year technology strategy focuses on leveraging cloud technology, systems integration, intelligent automation, and a personalized data-driven customer experience.”

- Joe Genautis
Chief Information Officer, BGRS

Systems Integration

Advancements in cloud technology have enabled organizations to implement digital ecosystems much more rapidly and cost-effectively than in the past. The COVID-19 outbreak is testing organizations’ ability to expeditiously adapt their business delivery model to allow employees to work remotely and seamlessly deliver services to customers via digital solutions. This digital conversion is predicted to result in changing consumer and business behaviors and preferences. Organizations that have invested in modernizing their infrastructure will emerge from the pandemic with a clear advantage.

A global supplier network plays a critical role in the overall success of talent mobility programs. With many suppliers involved in end-to-end mobility delivery, mismanaged processes will lead to a negative customer experience. Given the numerous home and host country locations, the complexities and logistics related to international moves, collaboration between service partners is paramount. BGRS manages a carefully curated network of mobility suppliers who provide a vast array of services. Managed networks offer clients superior supplier performance and costs managed through volume leveraging.

As part of our digital transformation strategy, BGRS has built application program interfaces (API) with suppliers in key service areas. Utilizing our integration platform, BGRSxChange, allows for secure, bi-directional data sharing in real-time as well as driving

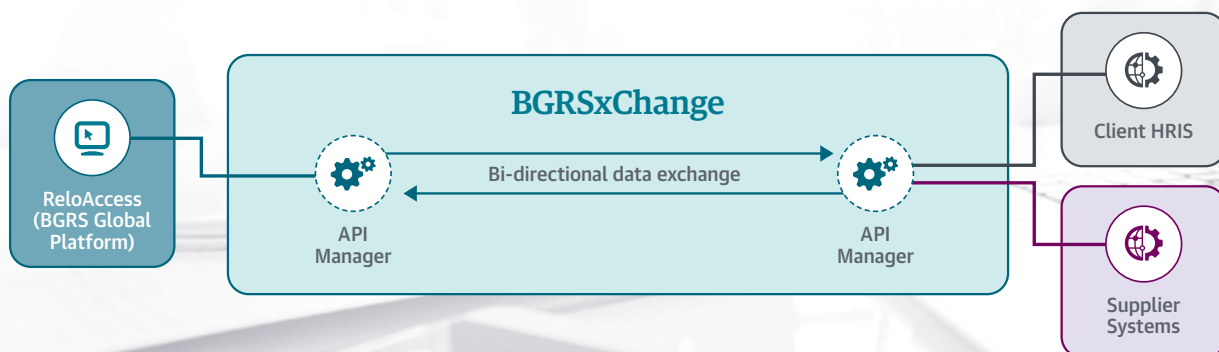
connectivity, operational efficiencies, and clear benefits to our clients, such as:

- Faster flow of information and better digital experience for the employee
- Reduction of manual and email steps in the business process flow
- Greater accuracy by eliminating duplicate data entry and human error
- Improved data security, integrity, and compliance
- Ability to drive the performance of the supplier partners

One of the biggest challenges brought on by COVID-19 for many mobility teams is the inability to ascertain the needs of employees in the context of their unique personal, familial, and health circumstances. Data on service selections, behaviors, preferred methods of interaction, and feedback can all be collected from digitally-enabled processes. On a globally integrated platform into which mobility suppliers are connected through API, data mining techniques can identify patterns and issues in workflow. These findings can provide a robust basis to design more responsive service delivery models to effectively address emergency employee needs.

BGRS’s Integration Platform for Suppliers and HRIS

BGRS conducted a Pulse Survey of our Client Services Account Directors for 40 of our largest clients in April 2020. Of these, 77% reported their clients were continuing with assignment planning for already initiated employees, with plans to move forward as soon as travel restrictions are removed. Additionally, two-thirds of surveyed organizations expect to move forward with new assignment authorizations once travel bans are lifted. BGRS continuously analyzes upcoming move patterns to prepare for the anticipated influx of volume. From efficiencies gained through supplier systems integration, BGRS is prepared to support our clients as they resume their activities.

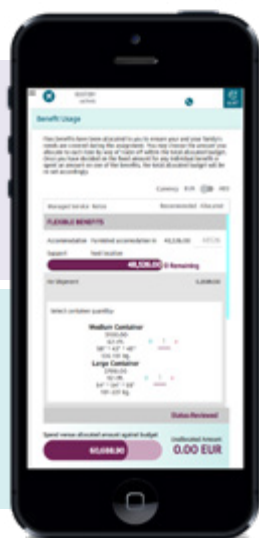


Scalable Flexibility

Configurable flex benefit controls allow clients to design structured choice to relocating employees

Configurable Recommendations

Robust digital infrastructure allows clients to design a budget framework based on historical data to simplify employee choice



Unique Employee Experience

Flexible benefits provide a truly personalized and tailored experience for employees through an easy to use user interface

Detailed Tracking

Flexible benefit interface provides detailed budget vs. actual tracking to assist clients in making informed decision to continually refine their program

REBOUNDED MOBILITY PROGRAMS THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Innovative and agile mobility programs will increasingly be demanded to support economic recovery. With the waves of reductions in force and furloughs expected to continue in certain industries, Talent Mobility will be expected to work alongside HR to reassign and redeploy internal talent across geographies and borders. Mobility teams will need to develop new programs or modify existing mobility programs to align with business resources without compromising the employee experience.

Core/flex programs have emerged as a way for organizations to enhance their mobile employees' experiences through tailored benefits options and for the businesses to optimize their investment. Programs with core/flex structures enable highly personalized benefits selection, scalability, and budgetary control by offering a combination of essential benefits along with the option to select additional flexible benefits to optimize their mobility experience.

Flexible models have historically been complex and burdensome to administer. For those reasons, organizations have not been able to realistically convert to and extract full benefits from this type of program. Recent technological advancements have produced sophisticated digital tools, such as BGRS's market-leading core/flex technology. With its ReloAccess technology platform, BGRS is an industry leader in offering this flexible program solution. Its digital infrastructure allows the business to adjust budgets as needed and employees to then allocate funds from their allotted budget to secure the benefits most important to them.

The core/flex program model can be particularly effective in emergency situations, such as the current pandemic. Since the beginning of the crisis, interest in BGRS's solution has dramatically increased with mobility managers recognizing the agility and convenience a core/flex model can deliver to their mobile workforce. The technology enables the employee to redistribute their allotted funds toward emergency services as needed. For example, an international assignee with an immuno-compromised accompanying family member in the host location may choose not to return for a home leave visit and instead utilize home leave funds for alternate services. Core/flex models also allow organizations to rapidly issue additional funds to assignees for emergency support as needed. These additional funds can be used in a myriad of ways, from securing home office furniture or technology to support mandated work from home arrangements, to cover auto rental if the employee is no longer comfortable relying on public transportation, or to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks or shields.

It remains unclear how the COVID-19 crisis will unfold in the coming months, and organizations are developing short, mid, and long-term workforce scenarios as contingency plans. As Talent Mobility contributes to this work, migrating mobility programs to core/flex design should be considered to provide the business with agility and employees with choice and convenience.

LEVERAGING A DIGITAL SOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE INCREASING COMPLEXITIES OF BUSINESS TRAVEL

Governmental stay-at-home orders and lockdowns have resulted in business travel coming to a virtual standstill. As most countries are now cautiously beginning to implement a multi-phased approach to reopen their economies, experts in the travel industry are optimistically predicting domestic and international business travel will rebound within the next year. While teleconferencing has proven to be generally effective to accomplish work during the pandemic, it is not seen as a complete or permanent replacement for personal interactions required for other critical aspects of business. Mergers and acquisitions may impact companies which have been devalued due to the economic fallout of COVID-19. Complex planning needed for definitive agreements to meet regulatory standards for these kinds of restructuring deals will almost always necessitate in-person conferences.

In the last decade, Talent Mobility has progressively assumed responsibility for international business travel as part of its functional scope. With its long history of managing compliance matters for international assignees and transferees, Talent Mobility can be seen as a partner in managing similar risks associated with global travelers. International business travel has gained notoriety in recent years as host jurisdictions are tamping down on violators and recognizing enforcement as lucrative sources of

national revenue. However, Mobility teams have encountered technical limitations with their internal travel systems which inhibit adequate tracking, monitoring, and reporting of their travelers. The compliance risk in today's environment of heightened scrutiny requires a more robust digital solution. More and more, organizations are turning to powerful and innovative technology, such as BGRS's TripWise, designed to manage business travel, immigration, and tax compliance. This technology integrates with human resource information systems (HRIS), travel, immigration, and tax partners' systems through API connections, allowing real-time analysis, tracking, monitoring, and reporting of the traveling workforce.

For some organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted weaknesses in the oversight and ability to meet the company's duty of care to business travelers. Implementing an employee-facing, self-service business travel solution can swiftly connect employees to the organization's immigration and tax providers for services. The technology can also track presence in host countries, domestic states or provinces, offer on-going traveler support, and communicate travel guidance. As Talent Mobility teams are asked to become more strategic and innovative in preparing for the new normal, a technology solution can serve as the basis for a compliant program.



In the recovery period of COVID-19 and thereafter, compliance associated with business travel may likely be more complex and onerous than before, when travel resumes, organizations will need to be better informed. As countries seek to limit their residents' exposure to COVID-19 and adopt protectionist postures, a higher legal burden of proof for immigration applications and more rigorous medical clearance procedures will likely be instituted. Immigration status and physical presence for tax thresholds will need to be carefully monitored to proactively address individual and corporate risks. Protocols should be enacted to remain in close contact with traveling employees, stranded individuals in host locations, and to ensure compliance of stealth travelers. A digital business travel tool will be an essential solution to address these needs for Talent Mobility teams moving into recovery after COVID-19.

CLOSING

As the world looks forward to the easing of the global healthcare crisis, Talent Mobility should begin planning for its own COVID-19 crisis recovery. The challenges created by the pandemic are accelerating digital change and mobility teams should leverage this momentum for their recovery strategy. We provide you with three key considerations:

- Talent Mobility should consider how a digital foundation in program delivery will best serve the requirements of the business and impart a richer experience for the mobile workforce.
- The challenges created by COVID-19 have highlighted the criticality of omnichannel support of employees during emergencies. An advanced digital support model will be an expectation of employees in the post-COVID-19 environment.
- Organizations can derive a wealth of digital transformation benefits from RMCs like BGRS. Through process automation, systems integration, and digital program innovations such as core/flex and business travel solutions, Talent Mobility teams can evolve their mobility programs to exceed the expectations of their customers in the new normal.

In these uncertain times, Talent Mobility has an opportunity to shape its future. With the right focus on a digitally centered delivery model, Talent Mobility teams can emerge from COVID-19 as a stronger strategic partner providing unwavering support to the business in and outside of crisis times.



ABOUT BGRS

BGRS develops and implements comprehensive talent mobility solutions for corporate and government clients worldwide. Our Talent Mobility Consulting practice empowers clients to leverage their investments that bridge Global Mobility and Human Resources. By combining deep industry experience and unparalleled insights on the future of talent mobility, we enable our clients to design mobility programs that empower them to attract, retain and develop top performers. With more than 1,400 people across six continents, we blend global perspective with local market strength. To find out more, visit www.bgrs.com

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