



# 2026 Global Mobility Blueprint

**Results, Insights and Strategic Tools**



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# Welcome to the 2026 Global Mobility Blueprint

**Each year, we survey global workforce mobility leaders to understand what's new, what trends are continuing, and what priorities will shape the movement of talent over the next twelve months.**

While many industry reports share trends, this document takes it a step further. We've designed it as a true blueprint—a practical tool to help you build and enhance your own global mobility program. As you navigate through the report, we invite you to think of it not just as something to read, but as something to *use*. It's designed to help you create a strategy that aligns with your own organization's unique goals.



We recommend a two-step approach to get the most value out of the report.

## ➤ Step 1: Read and reflect

As you navigate through each section, pay close attention to the "Build Your Blueprint" content. Consider how the trends, data and analysis presented relate to your own organization.

- Do the top priorities identified match your own?
- How does your policy flexibility compare to the benchmarks?
- Are you facing challenges with technology adoption or resource allocation?

## ➤ Step 2: Complete as you go

Use the provided "Your Global Mobility Blueprint: 2026 Strategy Worksheet" to actively engage with the content. We suggest filling it in as you go, thinking about:

- 1 **Defining your own priorities:** Start by outlining the top mobility goals for your organization. Do you anticipate any major developments or changes that might shift them later this year?
- 2 **Assessing your current state:** Use the findings in the report to honestly evaluate where your program stands today, and whether you need to make any changes in how you define success.
- 3 **Identify challenges and plan your actions:** As you explore sections on policy, technology, and support, note your biggest obstacles and brainstorm actionable steps to address them.
- 4 **Measure success:** Think about how you will measure the impact of your new strategies, and at what critical points along the journey.



By the time you finish the report, your worksheet will serve as a foundational plan—**your blueprint**—for a more effective and strategic global mobility program in the year ahead. We are excited to provide you with this tool and look forward to seeing how you build what's next for your organization.

# Your Global Mobility Blueprint: 2026 strategy worksheet

Use this guide to reflect on the insights and action items presented in the following pages. Fill in the sections below to tailor your mobility strategy to your organization's unique needs and objectives.

## 1 Define your priorities

What are the top 3-5 priorities for your organization's talent mobility strategy this year?

(Examples: Improving employee experience, supporting talent attraction and retention, enhancing policy flexibility, etc.)

Priority 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Priority 5: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Assess your current state

Using data like annual business reviews, employee feedback surveys and retention rates, evaluate where your organization stands today in the following areas. (Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 = Needs Improvement and 5 = Excellent)

Employee relocation experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Alignment between HR and overall business goals: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy flexibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Data collection and reporting: \_\_\_\_\_

Integration of technology and AI: \_\_\_\_\_

# Blueprint worksheet continued

## 3 Identify key challenges

What are the biggest obstacles your organization faces in achieving its mobility goals?

(Check all that apply or add your own)

- ☐ Competitive compensation and benefits
- ☐ Meeting unique employee demographic preferences
- ☐ Repatriation and succession planning
- ☐ Addressing high housing costs or low inventory
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 Action plan

Based on the insights and trends shared in the report, outline 3-5 actionable steps your organization can take to address your priorities and challenges. (Examples: Conduct employee surveys at different points in the process, pilot AI tools, streamline policies, etc.)

Action 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Action 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Action 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Action 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Action 5: \_\_\_\_\_

# Blueprint worksheet continued

## 5 Measure success

What metrics will you use to track the success of your mobility strategy?

(Examples: Employee satisfaction scores, retention rates, cost savings, etc.)

Metric 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Metric 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Metric 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 Notes and insights

Use this space to jot down additional notes, insights, or ideas as you read through the report.



### Questions?

We're here to help! Contact us to see how you can get the most value out of your Global Mobility Blueprint.

# What's inside?

## An in-depth look at:



Highest and  
lowest workforce  
mobility priorities.



Talent movement  
approaches and  
assignment types.



Most valued mobility  
support services.

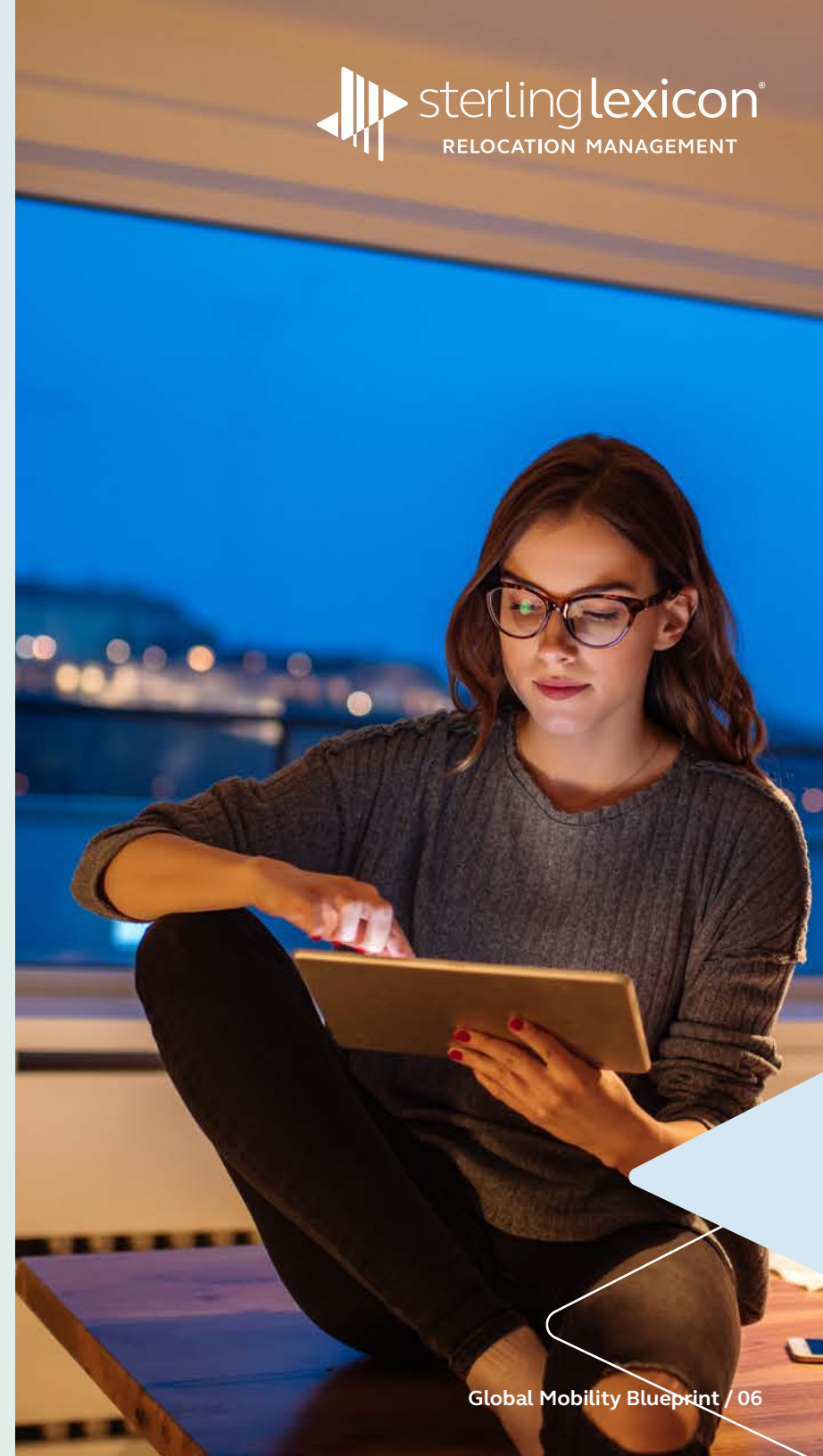


Adoption rates and  
future plans for AI  
in mobility.



"Wish-list" items to  
improve mobility  
programs.

In addition, you'll find analysis of what the numbers are telling us, and some suggested steps you can take to enhance your own program.



# Data highlights

## > **Priorities:**

The desire to improve the employee relocation experience remains a top priority this year, nearly tied with using mobility as a strategic lever for talent attraction and retention.

## > **Assignment types:**

Businesses are expecting to continue to rely heavily on permanent transfers or one-way moves for relocation approaches in 2026, followed by long-term assignments of a year or more.

## > **Program flexibility:**

A high percentage of respondents (**71%**) feel their current relocation policies are flexible enough to keep up with changing demands and meet unique employee demographic needs.

## > **Organizational structure:**

Where the mobility function is housed within an organization seems to be undergoing a slight shift. As in previous years, most respondents (**75%**) still report into HR, total rewards or compensation and benefits. However, we also saw just over **12%** opt for an “other” category - with answers including some dual models (such as a split between HR Services and Total Rewards). For the first time, we saw Finance, a split between HR and Finance and Education appear on the list.

## > **Technology and AI:**

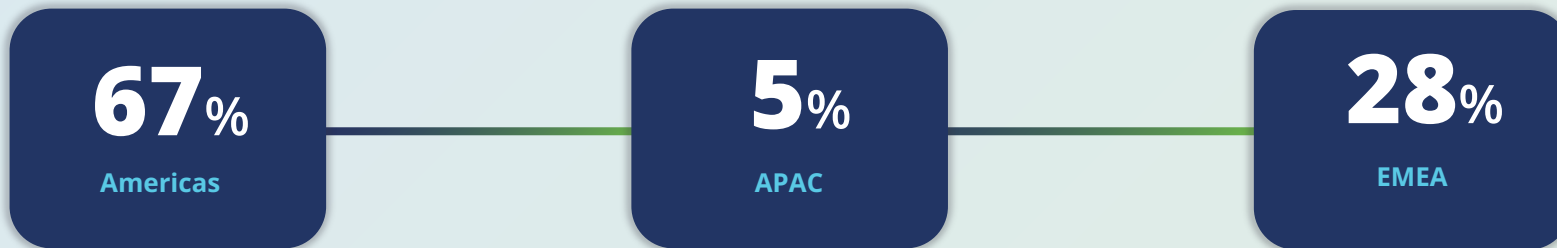
More respondents (**73%**) are still not currently using AI to enhance their mobility programs than those who are. Of the **27%** who do use it, it's primarily to free up administrative time and help answer routine, frequently asked questions.



# Survey methodology and respondent demographics

- The blueprint survey was open to mobility professionals responsible for the movement of talent within their own organizations, either domestically, globally, or both. **Research was conducted over approximately six weeks between December 2025 and January 2026.**

There were just over 60 participants representing more than 20 industry sectors with headquarters in:



Regarding program size, most respondents indicated that they conduct between 1-100 or 101-500 moves per year (39% and 41%, respectively). The number of companies reporting larger volumes of 1,000 or more moves jumped up year-over-year, from 12% to 16%.

# Top priorities in 2026

**We asked respondents to rank a list of mobility-related priorities as low, medium or high on their strategic talent plan for the year ahead.**

Improving the employee experience remains a top goal, in a pattern we see continuing from last year. What's new, however, is that the top two priorities only saw the slightest **(0.25%)** difference in ranking in the “high” column – leading us to conclude that the number-two ranked choice – using mobility as a strategic lever to support talent attraction and retention – is on an even par with the employee experience for getting focus and attention this year.

**The mid-tier priorities** - achieving better integration or strategic alignment between global mobility / HR and other areas of the business and improving data collection, analysis and reporting – remain consistent with last year's results. **Interestingly, improving cost-saving measures fell to a 5th place ranking, down from the second highest priority last year.**

***Improving the employee experience remains a top goal, in a pattern we see continuing from last year.***

# Top priorities in 2026

[McLean & Company's HR Trends 2026](#) report closely aligns with our own findings. It also indicates that businesses are less concerned with controlling labor costs (down to the number six priority from number two last year), and more on:

- 1 Developing leadership skills
- 2 Fostering cultures of innovation and
- 3 Providing great employee experiences.

Business leaders likely recognize that a meaningful focus on employee wellbeing and positive experiences is essentially a cost-control strategy – given that poor experiences drive turnover and risk the loss of valuable skills and knowledge.



# Top priorities in 2026

Global mobility professionals are placing high importance on the following core areas within their talent strategy



It's also interesting to see what respondents regard as their lowest priorities for the next twelve months. Revamping global compensation models, fostering sustainability / ESG in global mobility and using mobility to drive diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives were the three areas most likely to be deprioritized this year. That suggests that companies feel their salary levels are competitive but may be looking at other incentives to support the high-value goal of attracting and retaining top talent.



## Building Your Blueprint: Actions to Take



**You've heard it before – what doesn't get measured doesn't get done.** To truly improve the employee experience, you first need to understand how your organization – and your people – define what a positive experience really looks like. You'll need to objectively assess current feedback to identify the strengths of what's working well and how to fix what may be falling short.

**Be sure you are measuring sentiment at different points along the journey, too** - feedback can look very different at different moments in time, depending on what your employees are grappling with and how much support they are getting.

**The same holds true for augmenting your organization's talent acquisition and retention strategy.**

As your business looks to assess skills gaps and develop regional strategies for operational or talent growth, you can provide meaningful data to help guide investment decisions: availability of skills and eligibility to perform given roles in specific locations, the number of employees in leadership development pipelines, current leaders who can draw on change / people management skills and cross-cultural competencies based on their own global assignment experience, and the various compliance requirements to set you and your people up for success.

**Consider a re-assessment of your benefits to go beyond financial compensation and healthcare and find ways to help employees address some of the other pressing needs they are experiencing at their individual life stage.**

**Tap into your mobility partners to provide you with the right data** – and the human analysis of what it all means to your company, business and talent goals, culture and employee population.

# Assignment and support types

As we saw last year, respondents overwhelmingly expect to use the permanent transfer or one-way move most frequently in 2026, **followed by long-term assignments (LTAs) of a year or more and some local hires. That decision is no doubt tied as much to an assessment of the required resources to manage each type of move as it is to local market conditions and the businesses' strategic goals.**

A significant number of global mobility professionals **(57%)** continue to regard LTAs as demanding the greatest investment of time, human, financial and technological capital. **Only 13% and 11% feel that one-way moves or short-term assignments of less than a year demand the most to manage, respectively.**

Regardless of move type, a large number of companies **(41%)** will rely most heavily on offering the types of traditional benefits outlined in [the list on page 15](#) to support them, while some **(22%)** are willing to consider introducing more personalization into their offerings. Interestingly, even though only **27%** of respondents are currently using AI to enhance their mobility program, **21%** see embracing it or other technology features to achieve greater efficiencies in their programs as having significant value this year.



This certainly suggests that greater and faster AI adoption rates are ahead for the workforce mobility industry. For more on technology and AI, [see the section that starts on page 17](#).

**27%**

of respondents are currently using AI to enhance their mobility program

**21%**

see embracing AI or other technology features to achieve greater efficiencies in their programs as having significant value this year

As with the question of priorities, we also asked respondents to rank how frequently their mobile population uses various types of relocation support. The top three most relied upon benefits include:

- 1 Help with immigration
- 2 Assistance securing temporary accommodation
- 3 Shipping of household goods

# Assignment and support types

As noted earlier, the top types of global deployments respondents expect to use the most this year include permanent transfers or one-way moves (47%), followed by long-term assignments of a year or more (23%). The next closest choice was the use of local hires, but at a significantly lower percentage (10%).



Global workforce deployment types anticipated to be used most frequently in 2026



**47%** Permanent transfers/  
one-way moves

**23%** Long-term assignments  
(1 year +)

**10%** Local hires



Other scenarios companies anticipate incorporating into their talent strategies this year

**8%** Short-term assignments  
(<1 year)

**6%** Project-based assignments

**3%** Cross-border commuters

**2%** Remote workers /  
international business travelers

**1%** Other\*

*\*Included categories like developmental  
and hybrid assignments*

# Assignment and support types

Top-ranked categories of relocation support benefits most frequently offered to and used by mobile employees (highest to lowest):

- 1 Immigration
- 2 Temporary accommodation
- 3 Household goods shipping
- 4 Settling-in services
- 5 Home search (permanent)
- 6 Area orientation visits (in-person)
- 7 Area orientation (virtual offering)
- 8 Education support/school search
- 9 Home sale or purchase program
- 10 Intercultural training
- 11 Spousal/partner support
- 12 Language training
- 13 Mortgage assistance



## Building Your Blueprint: Actions to Take



As the permanent or one-way move remains the top assignment type of choice, it's worth looking at this through the lens of the top two priorities: improving the employee experience and boosting talent attraction and retention. It is clearly regarded as one of the more cost-effective and resource-efficient options, but might be worth a closer examination to determine **A)** what percentage of the moves truly remain permanent, or whether any assignees ultimately return or move onto a new location, and **B)** to what extent do the experience and the support services provided directly contribute to positive employee sentiment and retention.

Ensuring you and your stakeholders have a good handle on the true costs and the ROI of each assignment type – and which ones might work better in one region over another – can help inform talent strategy recommendations that make the best business sense.

# Policy and benefit flexibility

Despite the many headwinds and rapid changes that business leaders and talent mobility teams have faced over the last several years, most respondents (71%) indicate that they feel they have enough agility in their suite of relocation policy approaches to meet current demands and facilitate different types of moves. That figure is up from 64% who felt their policies were adequately flexible last year. This is supported by the fact that respondents indicated they have policies in place to address 14 or more different scenarios that go beyond some of the more typical assignment types we see in [the pie chart on page 14](#), to address things like hybrid work, developmental or rotator postings, graduate or intern programs, “workation” and self-initiated or voluntary moves.

Of the 29% who feel they could use more flexible approaches, their greatest challenges center around:

**39%**

Keeping up with competitive compensation and benefit models

**33%**

Meeting unique employee demographic preferences

**33%**

Having solid repatriation strategies or succession plans in place

Once again, the fact that revamping global compensation models ranked very low on the priority list suggests that companies are looking beyond salaries to design a more competitive or tailored suite of benefits overall.



## Building Your Blueprint: Actions to Take



While flexibility is essential, overly complex or nuanced policies risk becoming cumbersome to manage, highlighting the importance of a balanced approach. It's wise to regularly review and streamline policies to maintain flexibility without adding unnecessary complexity. Explore how you can offer innovative, non-salary benefits to attract and retain talent, such as hybrid work support or career training and development opportunities. Conduct employee surveys or focus groups to better understand the unique needs and preferences of different demographics and career or life stages.

To help strengthen repatriation and succession planning, have clear strategies for career progression to ensure long-term employee satisfaction and retention. With change management being one of the most in-demand skills needed today, assess whether you are adequately tapping into the unique expertise and experience that your mobile employee population can offer here. See more on [developing expatriates as champions of change](#).

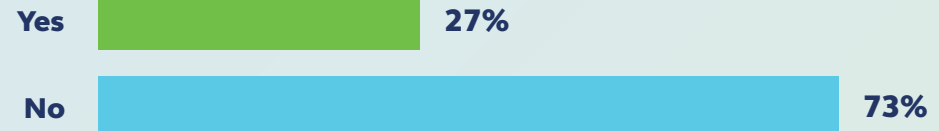
# Technology and the use of AI

Interestingly, the adoption rate of AI as an enhancement to mobility programs specifically is still relatively low, with 73% of respondents indicating they are not currently using it for that purpose. Of the 27% who do, it's primarily seen as a tool to help free up administrative time by answering routine, frequently asked questions, to analyze large quantities of data for better reporting, or to record and improve communications with internal stakeholders and relocating employees and families.

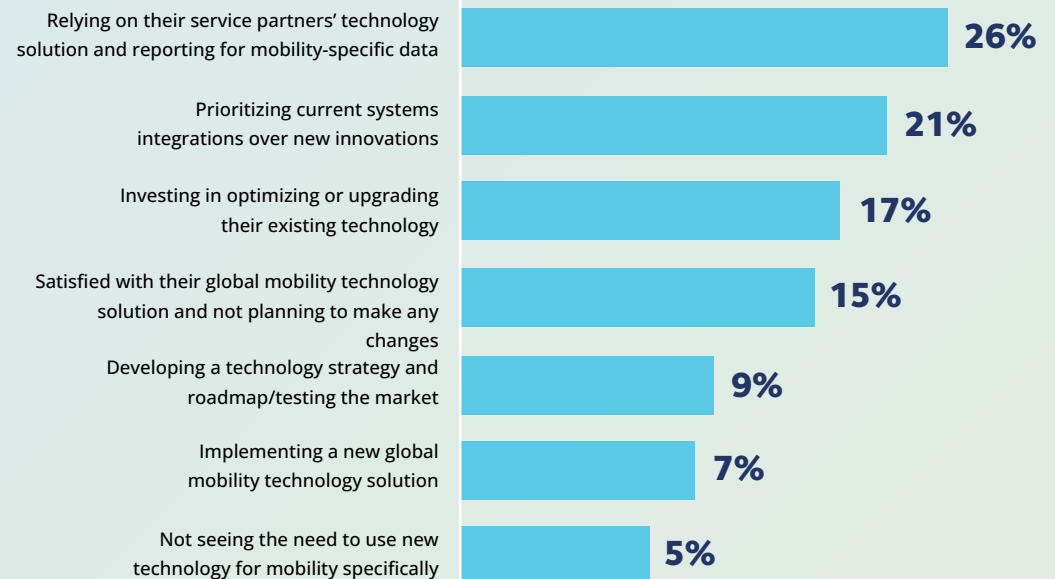


## > Technology and AI

Are you using AI to enhance your mobility program



## > There are likely several reasons for these responses, based on our findings about planned tech strategies for 2026. Companies are currently:





## Building Your Blueprint: Actions to Take



With more rapid and expansive adoption and use of AI in HR and global mobility largely viewed as a "when, not if" scenario, now is the time to prepare for greater IT-HR integration. Enhanced cross-functional alignment and collaboration have long been reported as priorities, so you may already be well on your way to success.

**Stay informed about advancements in both generative and agentic AI to remain competitive in the evolving HR landscape and consider providing training and resources to HR and mobility teams to better understand AI's potential applications and benefits.** If your organization is on the newer end of its use, perhaps you can pilot AI tools in specific areas, such as data analysis or communication, to test the waters and assess impact.

**Collaborate with IT to develop a long-term strategy and create a roadmap for AI adoption, ensuring alignment with broader HR and mobility goals and establishing clear guardrails for its safe and effective use.** Treat these decisions just as you would any other area of critical compliance and data security - with cross-functional input, buy-in, and continuous measurement.

**Finally, consider working with your service partners to leverage their technology experiences and explore how their solutions are incorporating AI to enhance mobility programs.** Participating in technology-related focus groups or beta tests and accessing partner-provided reporting and tools could be good steppingstones toward broader AI adoption.



# Technology and the use of AI

It's worth noting that another reason for the relatively low AI adoption rate in this space is that organizations could be at varying stages of the maturity cycle when it comes to embracing it. Many may still be in the exploratory or testing stages, assessing AI's capabilities and setting guidelines around its safe and effective use.

That is likely to change in future surveys, however, as HR and IT become more firmly integrated and the HR function more broadly embraces the use of both generative and agentic AI. ADP's research into top trends shaping the workforce and HR technology in 2026 found that **64%** of IT leaders predict a complete IT-HR merger within the next five years.

# What would make global mobility professionals' jobs easier in 2026

When asked what would be at the top of their list if they could have one thing to improve their global mobility program, respondents' open-ended comments reflected three core themes:



## Greater simplicity

- A centralized global mobility model
- Better integration across systems to streamline information sharing, reduce duplicate requests and improve communication
- A “one stop shop” model or tool for total assignment management, integrating services like immigration, payroll and tax



## More resources and support

- Greater buy-in from leadership and other stakeholders
- Additional head count
- Increased budget
- Improved alignment with greater company talent acquisition and retention initiatives



## Better insights and reporting

- Projecting / estimating costs
- Measuring employee experience
- Assessing mobility program ROI



**Need help achieving better organizational alignment?**

[See our tips](#)

# What we can conclude

Our 2026 survey highlights a clear focus on enhancing the employee relocation experience and leveraging mobility as a strategic tool for talent attraction and retention. While cost-saving measures have taken a bit of a backseat, flexibility in policies and alignment with broader HR strategies remain critical. Permanent transfers and long-term assignments continue to dominate mobility approaches, with traditional benefits like immigration support and temporary housing leading in usage.

AI adoption in mobility programs is still in its infancy, with most organizations relying on service partners or existing systems. However, as HR and IT functions converge, AI's role is expected to grow, streamlining processes and improving data insights.

Respondents emphasized the need for simplicity, stronger leadership support, and better reporting to elevate their mobility programs. These findings underscore the importance of integrating technology, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing employee-centric strategies to meet the evolving demands of global talent mobility.



# Data Appendix

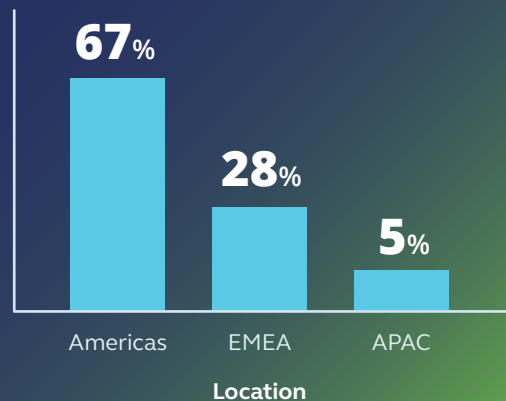
## 2026



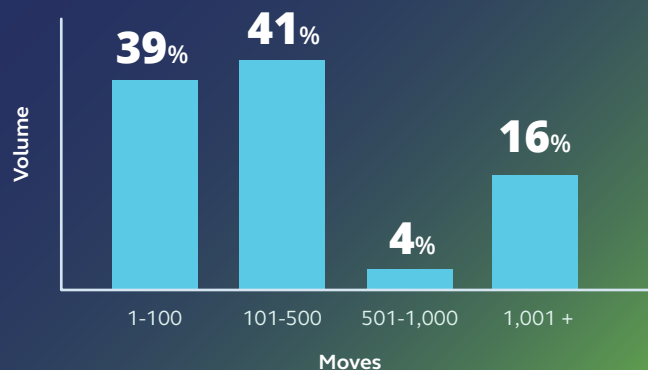
# Respondent demographics

20+ industries represented

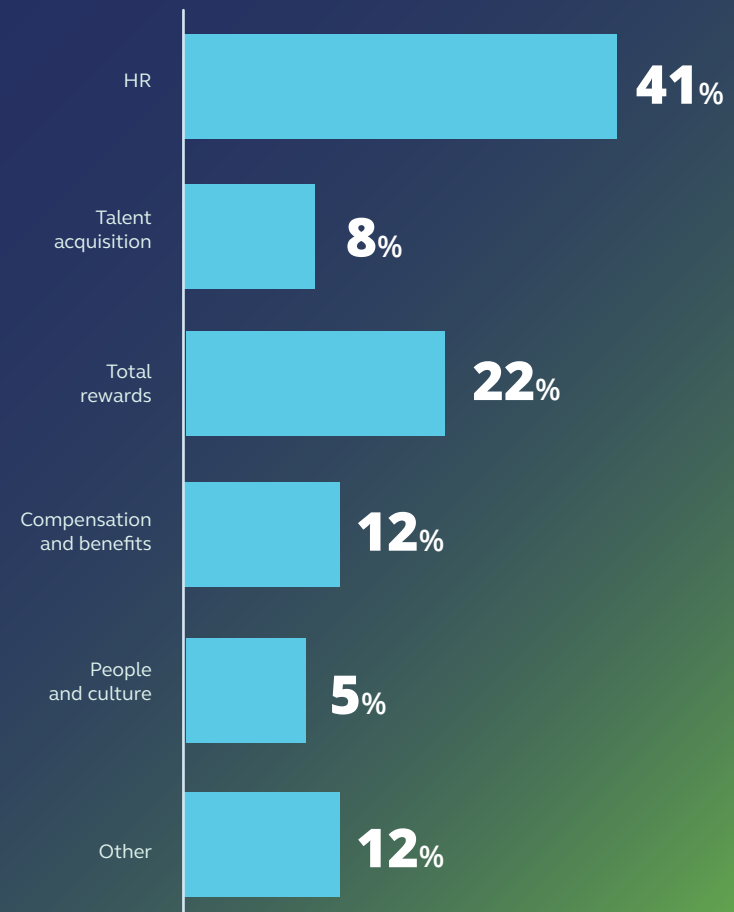
## > Regional HQ location



## > Annual mobility volume



## > Where mobility is housed



# Mobility program information

Top global mobility priorities:

Percentages of respondents ranking the following priorities as high and low in choice matrix

## ^ Highest-ranked

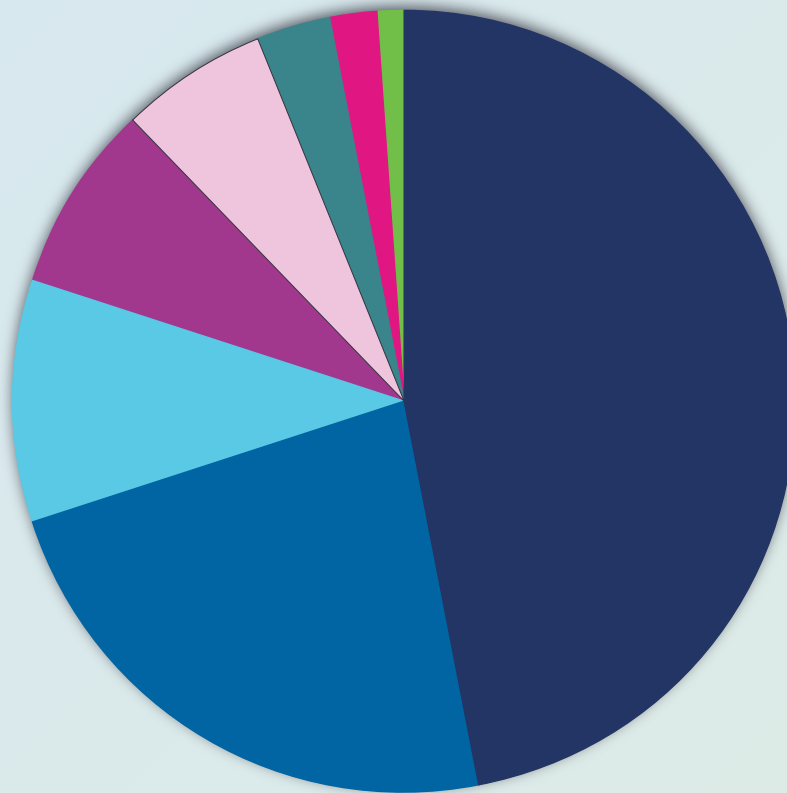
|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Employee experience                   | 62% |
| Talent attraction and retention       | 62% |
| Cross-functional alignment            | 52% |
| Improving data analysis and reporting | 50% |
| Cost-saving                           | 46% |
| Alignment with talent management      | 42% |

## ▼ Lowest-ranked

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Revamping compensation models         | 63% |
| Sustainability / ESG                  | 58% |
| DE&I                                  | 53% |
| GM center of excellence               | 47% |
| Employee well-being program           | 45% |
| Investing in HR / mobility technology | 44% |

# Mobility program information

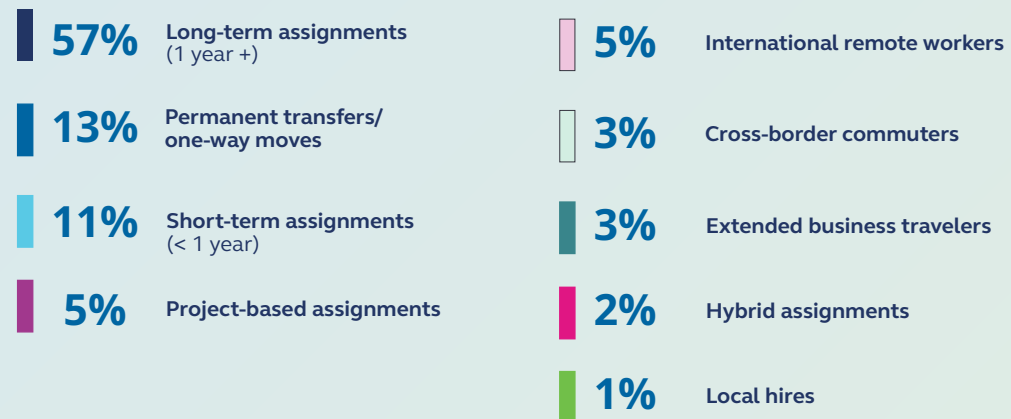
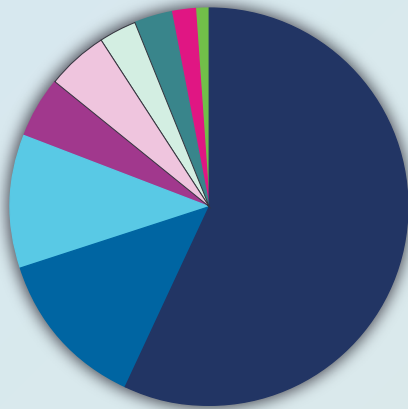
Global workforce deployment types anticipated to be used most frequently in 2026



*\*Included categories like developmental and hybrid assignments.*

# Mobility program information

## Assignment types deemed to require the most resources to manage



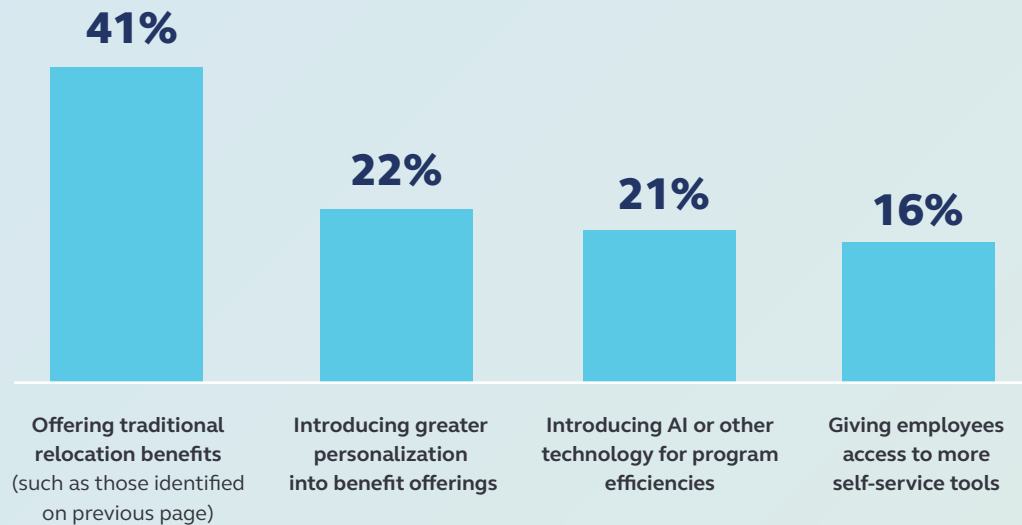
## Top-ranked categories of relocation support benefits most frequently offered to and used by mobile employees (highest to lowest):

- |                            |                                       |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Immigration              | 5 Home search (permanent)             | 9 Home sale or purchase program |
| 2 Temporary accommodation  | 6 Area orientation visits (in-person) | 10 Intercultural training       |
| 3 Household goods shipping | 7 Area orientation (virtual offering) | 11 Spousal / partner support    |
| 4 Settling-in services     | 8 Education support / school search   | 12 Language training            |
|                            |                                       | 13 Mortgage assistance          |

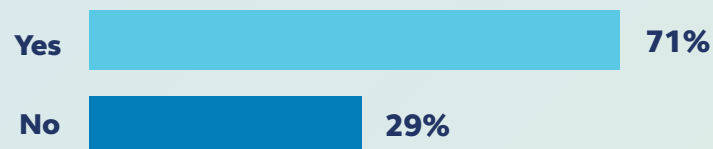
# Mobility program information



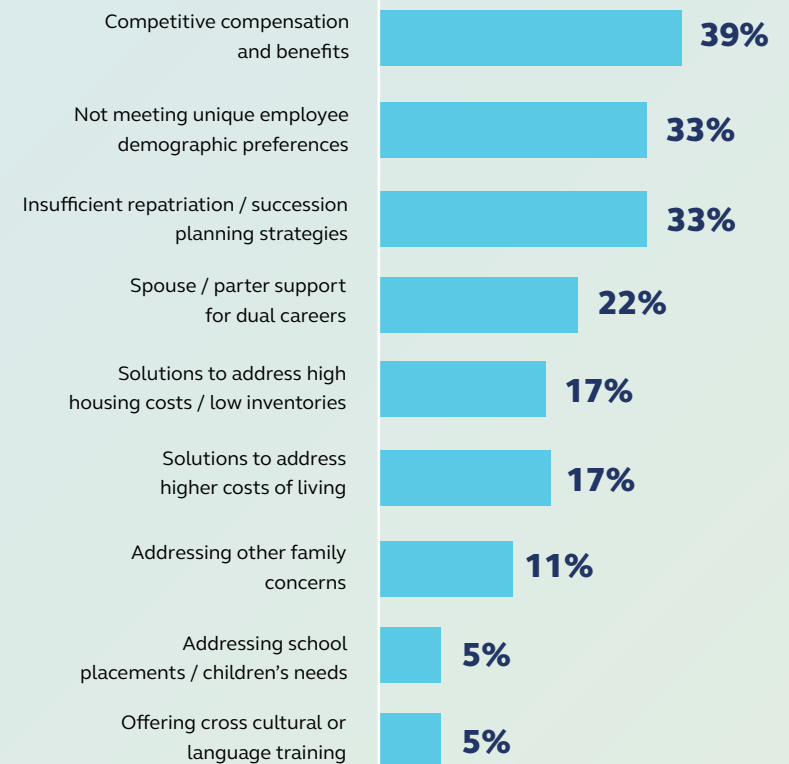
Talent mobility approaches perceived to be most valuable in 2026:



Are your policies flexible enough to meet current requirements / the pace of change?



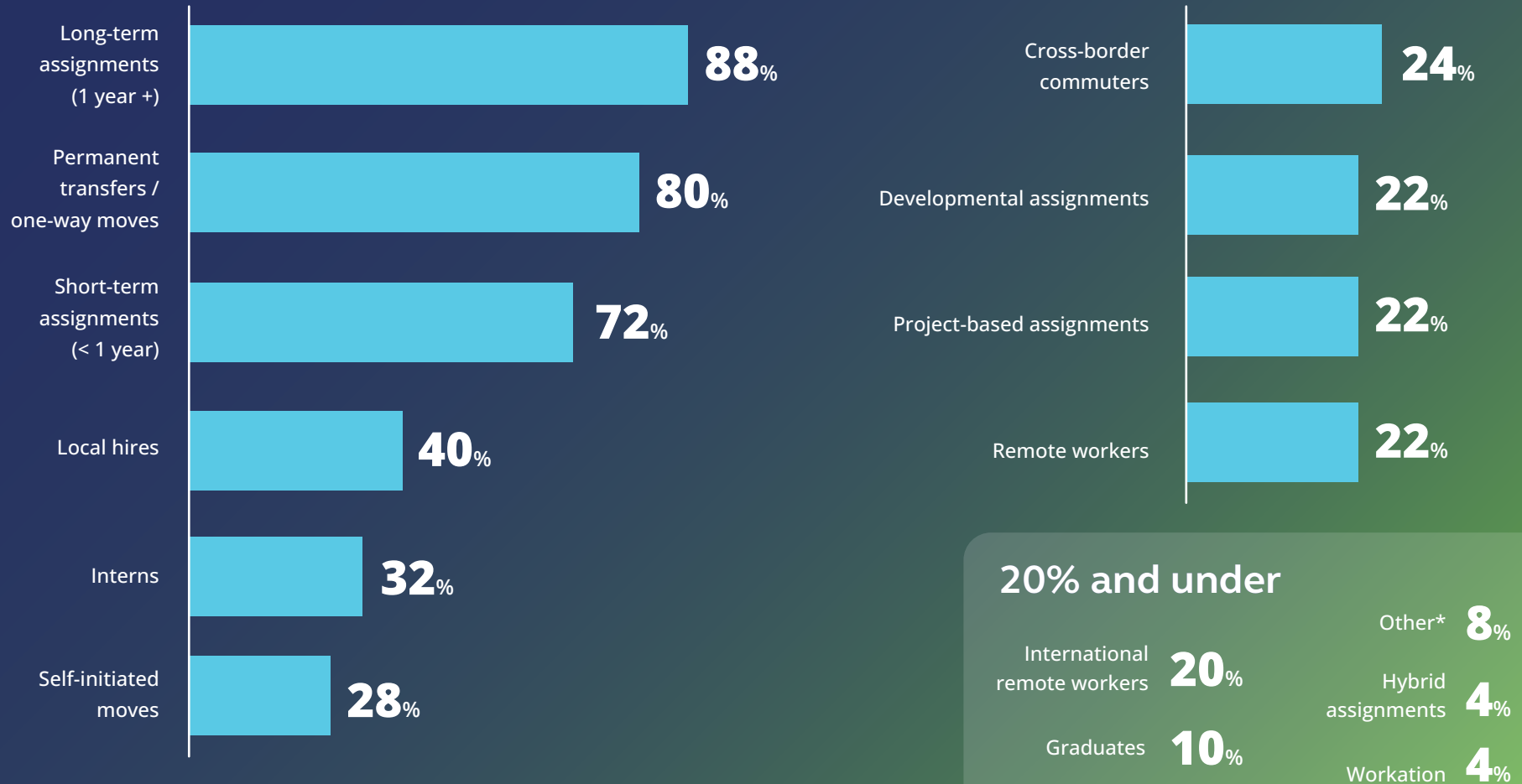
If policies are not flexible enough, where are you experiencing the biggest obstacles?



*\*Responses do not equal 100% due to the availability to select multiple answers*

# Mobility program information

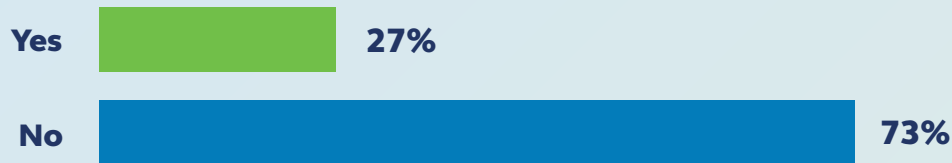
## > Types of policies respondents currently have in place



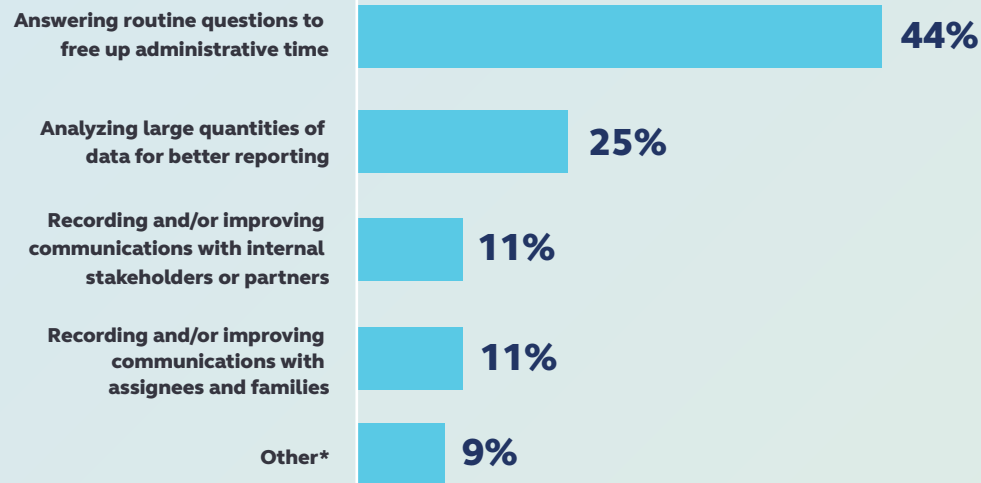
\*Responses included categories like global nomads, co-ops, rotators, lump-sums, and in-house or domestic only policies.

# Technology and AI

## > Are you using AI to enhance your mobility program?

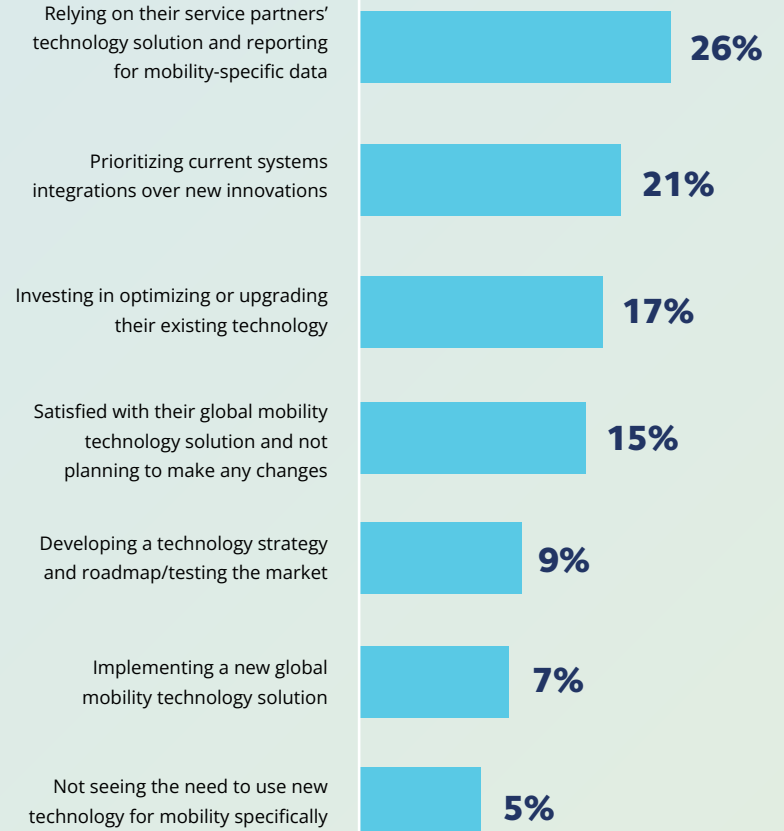


## > If yes, what is the *primary* use?



\*Responses included things like "all of the above," or "currently exploring its use"

## > There are likely several reasons for these responses, based on our findings about planned tech strategies for 2026. Companies are currently:





Need help designing  
a Global Mobility  
Blueprint specific to  
you and your goals?

**Contact Us**

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