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**With Companies Sending More Employees Overseas on Assignments This Year, the Question is: 'What's Their Strategy for International Employee Mobility?'**

*New Report by Brookfield Global Relocation Services Finds Companies With Overseas Workforces Shifting Focus to Ensure Assignments Support Strategic Objectives*

Woodridge, Ill. (June 14, 2010) – During the depths of the global economic crisis, containing corporate costs was the driving factor behind companies' decisions about sending employees on overseas assignments. Now, with fresh statistics showing companies increasing assignments this year, they are refocusing their programs to ensure they clearly support strategic business objectives, according to a new report from Brookfield Global Relocation Services (<http://www.brookfieldgrs.com>).

During the first quarter of this year, Brookfield Global Relocation Services surveyed senior mobility managers from multinational firms to determine the direction and nature of mobility strategy within their companies.

The report, aptly titled *"What is Your Strategy for International Employee Mobility?"* found that one of the key outcomes of the global economic downturn has been the emergence of the international employee mobility practice as a strategic partner for international companies, impacting purpose, function and alignment of the international assignment program.

"What we are seeing and our 2010 Global Relocation Trends Report indicates is that overseas assignments are staging a comeback: 44 percent of multinational firms expect to send more employees on assignment this year," said Scott Sullivan, executive vice president of Brookfield Global Relocation Services. "Human resources executives are increasingly looking for ways to address the strategic elements of mobility programs in the most deliberate, efficient and meaningful ways," he points out.

Sullivan said that the link between the international mobility and talent management functions is becoming more critical as both globalization and demographic forces impact companies' success in attracting and retaining talent. Even through the severity of the economic meltdown, filling a skills gap remained the most common purpose for sending employees on assignment, followed by building management expertise.

To that end, Sullivan said that during the global recession, corporate cost-savings was the primary focus. "But we noticed an interesting trend concerning the way mobility leadership within companies were responding to this business change," he said. "With senior management looking at assignments more carefully, many mobility leaders responded by introducing a more strategic approach to assignment decision-making."

Specifically, mobility leaders at companies focused on the following key areas:

**Assignment parameters:** Changes in assignment parameters are one of the first outcomes of change in the strategic approach to international employee mobility. Moves such as cross-border commuters and developmental assignments are not new to many of these organizations. What is new for many of them is their inclusion as an assignment type under the mobility program umbrella.

**Program design:** Learning from best practices and incorporating new ideas where they best serve one's own organization has become a key strategic focus for international employee mobility leadership. Among these are strategies leading to an increased focus on elements such as assignee selection and preparation and repatriation planning. These ideas have now come into their own as organizations focus on the long-term value of assignments to the company's overall success.

**Service delivery:** How international employee mobility delivers its services has been a key focus for years. Does it make the most sense to centralize? Decentralize? Regionalize? These questions speak to the impact that industry-specific factors have on employee mobility. Individual company differences, such as business objectives, corporate culture and geographic location are factors, but the overarching structure of global mobility programs is very similar within industry groups.

**Policy:** Perhaps the most visible sign of strategic orientation is in a company's policy. Almost all of the mobility leaders interviewed identified policy diversification as one of the outcomes of their strategic focus. Major policy strategies taking place include the introduction of commuter assignment policies, localization policies, developmental assignment policies, policies that are talent-driven rather than assignment driven, and, still, cost-optimized policies.

**Assignments as a business investment:** Perhaps nothing speaks as directly to strategy development within international employee mobility as does the representation of assignments as a business investment. Becoming part of the corporate strategy arena, communicating initiatives and value, supporting key business initiatives and bringing new ideas to the table to help solve emerging challenges are some of the ways these international employee mobility leaders are helping their business counterparts to see assignments as a business investment.

**Advice on developing strategy:** Insights provided by industry leaders incorporate just about every element of the international employee mobility arena and serve as a blueprint for others who want to develop and lead a strategy for international employee mobility.

This report is a supplement to the 2010 Global Relocation Trends Survey report, which has been published for 15 years. To obtain a complimentary copy of the Global Relocation Trends Survey or the "What is Your Strategy for International Employee Mobility?" report, go to: [http://www.brookfieldgrs.com/insights\\_ideas/trends.asp](http://www.brookfieldgrs.com/insights_ideas/trends.asp)

The company will host a complimentary Webinar presentation exploring the findings of this study on Tuesday, June 15. Participation in the Webinar is free and limited to the first 100 registrants. To register, go to: [http://www.brookfieldgrs.com/insights\\_ideas/grts/Mobility\\_Strategy.asp](http://www.brookfieldgrs.com/insights_ideas/grts/Mobility_Strategy.asp)

## **About Brookfield Global Relocation Services**

Brookfield Global Relocation Services ([www.brookfieldgrs.com](http://www.brookfieldgrs.com)) is a full service provider of corporate and government relocation and assignment management services to more than 460

corporate and government clients. Brookfield Global Relocation Services manages over 50,000 relocations in more than 110 countries throughout the world, and funds over \$3 billion dollars in relocation expenses annually. Brookfield Global Relocation Services is an operating company of Brookfield Residential Property Services, a leading global provider of real estate and relocation services, technology, and knowledge.

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