

## Executive Summary

# 2019 CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF GLOBAL TEAMS—AN HR PERSPECTIVE

Findings from Spring 2019 SHRM/Globalization Partners Global Teams Survey



**This spring, Globalization Partners partnered with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)® to better understand how companies and human resource professionals see global teams—the benefits and challenges of having employees distributed around the globe.**

The good news is that enthusiasm is high for global teams, with no significant differences in engagement, happiness, diversity or satisfaction with compensation—versus overall company statistics. We found that global teams are in fact less likely to report issues, and have lower turnover than other teams in the organization.

Despite this optimism, however, cross-border teams do still pose some challenges for HR and managers as they navigate legal, geographic, and cultural barriers.

The biggest pain points of managing a global workforce that spans borders revolve around: 1) time zones and communication—problems that can be mitigated by strong processes; 2) employee voice and inclusion; and 3) needing the assistance of legal and culture experts in order to optimize the employee experience for professionals working on global teams.





Here is a brief overview of some of our top findings:

## KEY FINDINGS

**1**

**Global teams are highly collaborative and comparatively low maintenance.** 86% of global teams work together at least weekly, yet they are 12% less likely to report problems.

**2**

**Companies are struggling with language barriers and time zones.** A third of multilingual companies are struggling with language barriers, and more than half (56%) say collaborating across time zones is an issue.

**3**

**Global teams are still struggling with inclusion.** Global employees still lack equal influence and 62% of companies say people in HQ wield more influence.

**4**

**Global employees have lower voluntary turnover, but maybe not for long.** Companies report their global teams have lower turnover, but 40% are having difficulty sourcing candidates.

**5**

**Legal assistance and payroll are the most likely functions to be outsourced by global teams.** Global teams are turning to experts on local culture, finance, and laws.

**6**

**Legal red tape and time zone issues loom largest for global teams.** Dealing with time zone differences and legal concerns top the list for challenges of global teams.

**7**

**Diversity of thinking, creativity, and access to talent anywhere are top benefits for global teams.** Companies see global perspectives and diversity as top assets of global teams.



## CONCLUSION

Overall, there is much to be excited about in these results. Global teams are in high-growth mode and they are, overall, diverse, engaged, happy, trusting, and productive. By and large the results of this survey also complement and reinforce the results of our 2019 Global Employee Survey which gathered feedback directly from employees working on cross-border teams. The outlook for global teams is excellent.

That said, inclusion and navigating cultural and communications boundaries are still an important and potentially game-changing issue for global organizations. HR may not be fully prepared for the willingness of global employees—and in particular younger employees—to move to new companies if they feel it is in their interest or their voices are not being heard. And given the squeeze companies are seeing in even global hiring, this can be a significant issue down the road.

It is important for companies involved in the rapid growth we see reflected in this report to build and nurture their local teams thoughtfully, setting them

up with compliant, equitable systems, demonstrating an understanding of local culture, and establishing communications practices that make them feel valued and heard—across time zones and on par with employees at headquarters.

As the fight for global talent intensifies, companies will likely find that those who master communications and the ability to be inclusive, compliant, and culturally savvy, will be the ones that ultimately win the talent war.

Globalization Partners is equipped to help companies meet these challenges, offering ways to source and hire new global team members, as well as expertise in helping organizations to manage legal, cultural and management challenges across international borders—sourcing the best talent through its RecruitGlobal solution, sidestepping red tape through its Global Employer of Record services and GoGlobal platform, and helping organizations to transition to in-country subsidiaries with its GrowGlobal services—all augmented by expertise in more than 150 countries around the world.

## About the Survey

The 2019 SHRM/GP Global Teams Survey was conducted by the Society of Human Resources Management and Globalization Partners from February 6-March 20, 2019. This is the first deployment of this survey. The final sample of the survey was composed of 464 global human resources professionals, sourced via email to current members of SHRM. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points at a 95 percent level of confidence.

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