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### **CROSSING BORDERS, BUILDING BRIDGES: HOW TALENT MOBILITY TRANSFORMS CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

In turbulent times transparency comes first, and clear communication becomes a robust pillar for organizational changes to face the crisis. Information provided in an accurate, timely, and broad manner is critical to successful resistance and recovery. Additionally, sharing information about decisions, results, strategies, and practices freely with subordinates boosts transparency, which is a key driver of workforce trust. It is common knowledge that in times of uncertainty the likelihood of emerging conflicts is higher than under regular conditions. Nowadays, job safety has become a pivotal dimension of human sustainability and a focus in decision-making. Caring about greater health and well-being, stronger skills and greater employability, and better opportunities along an advanced career path requires flexibility and agility. Foremost, workers need to have a clear understanding of how to achieve it.

Transparent communication is necessary not only for effective leadership but also for multicultural cooperation that is inherent in distributed teams. Besides, it is worth noting that extended work types include gig and contract workers, who are subject to the risk of micromanagement. Given concurrent crises impacting businesses and their workforces, especially labor shortages, technological power concentration, societal polarization, and misinformation, workforce agility supported by strategic leadership and trust can help to overcome barriers and mitigate people risks.

Conflicts at the workplace are a typical phenomenon across all organizational levels arising from a lack of awareness, transparency, and miscommunication. Furthermore, poor management of ethical issues can evoke unconscious biases and even lead to job loss. The digitalization era and transformative technology deployments address a digital-first people approach, adopting AI solutions in the workplace while re-designing the work architecture to focus on hybrid working, comprehensive health and well-being, digitalization, and upskilling. Besides, people crave the peace of mind that comes with job security and financial well-being – staples that become increasingly important during times of upheaval. Executives are also seeking solid ground, focused on keeping their business running by addressing inflation, digital acceleration, and alternative work models. Amid these concerns, HR leaders remain anxious about rising labor costs, managing a remote workforce, and skills shortages [2].

The turbulent business environment exacerbates these concerns, hence a strengths-based approach to building teams can win employee commitment to change and foster an inclusive, agile culture [3]. Strategic talent mobility management can help reduce anxiety and prevent burnout and cut across hierarchical and functional boundaries that may destroy organizational coherence. In a nutshell talent mobility can serve as a guardrail that mitigates conflicts by enabling agility, which increases inclusive and collaborative behaviors, operational efficiency and strategic alignment across diverse business units.

HR leaders are concerned about equipping the workforce to mitigate people risks and the entire leadership aims to keep teams headed in the right direction. In this context talent mobility can be a strong ally by mapping strengths to unique roles and matching talents to roles, creating and socializing a strengths framework while assessing individuals, identifying priorities and forming strength-based teams. This joint effort prioritizes dignity and boosts human sustainability leading to more constructive problem-solving and collaboration. In doing so, talent mobility helps to win employee engagement and commitment.

The main feature of current workplaces is diverse teams requiring breakthrough collaboration that is supported by trust building, negotiation, joint action, and creativity. Working in multicultural environments often bridges different experiences, interests, visions, and decisions. Thus, the senior leadership must focus on reducing polarization and promoting dispute resolution. It is essential to build consensus when there is a willingness to work together, but interests remain diverse and complex [1].

Accordingly, the move toward human sustainability must represent the shift to collaboration sustainability. Here comes transparency, which is crucial for avoiding misinformation and micromanagement. Moreover, a lack of access to information and data often holds back cross-functional teams from making operational decisions. To foster more efficient decision-making at the team level, organizations need to provide teams with regulated access to more and better data in a timely manner and at their intended level of use. For instance, Mars Inc. has empowered employees by granting regulated access to data more broadly across the organization, with the goal of fueling employees' use of data analytics to better understand customers. It has done this by deploying a data science group, Digital Demand and Analytics, to assist teams with data insights. Mars invested in this group by hiring over 100 data

scientists and surfacing hundreds of existing employees with sufficient knowledge of both Mars and data science to help teams solve customer problems [4].

Hence, it is worth mentioning that clear communication and awareness contributes to the employee value proposition through reminding employees of their benefits at multiple touchpoints, via communication channels and senior leadership. Through talent mobility workers can obtain positions that match their skills, determine their technical level through certifications, advance their social capital by engaging with professional communities. Overall, a cross-functional team of diverse employees can help drive operational and other changes in the company. In addition, globally responsible employers should strive to make their employees' learning journey as inclusive as possible.

In conclusion, the ways in which talent mobility can reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding across different organizational levels include:

*Enhancing cross-cultural understanding:* Talent mobility allows employees to work within diverse cultures and work environments, fostering a global mindset that encourages empathy and cultural sensitivity. By collaboration with diverse teams, employees learn how different cultures approach disputes – whether through direct communication or more subtle, indirect methods. This understanding helps in reducing misunderstandings and tensions across multicultural teams, as seen in organizations that prioritize DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) principles.

*Improving communication skills:* Employees exposed to international assignments often gain better communication skills, learning to overcome language barriers, non-verbal cues, and varying communication styles. These skills are essential for dispute resolution in global workplaces, as they help bridge communication gaps that can otherwise lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Additionally, international experience promotes adaptability, flexibility, and agility, which are crucial in managing different conflict styles within teams.

*Advancing conflict management techniques:* Geographical polarization exposes employees to various dispute resolution approaches. For instance, while some cultures may prefer a collaborative approach, others might lean toward hierarchical or mediated resolutions. By embedding these diverse strategies, organizations can create a more robust conflict management framework. Thus, global talent strategies allow companies to develop customized conflict resolution policies that reflect cultural diversity and empathy.

*Implementing flexible policies to address emerging conflicts:* Global talent mobility promotes agile workplace policies that can quickly adapt to cultural needs and conflict triggers, such as team misalignment or value clashes. By promoting flexible policies, organizations provide tools for employees to address and de-escalate conflicts efficiently, benefiting both organizational culture and individual norms. This flexibility demonstrates that companies are increasingly adopting agile talent policies to manage potential workplace conflicts.

*Creating an inclusive and equal workplace:* Talent mobility encourages inclusivity, enabling teams to work toward common goals while appreciating each other's backgrounds. By normalizing cultural exchanges, mobile talent programs foster a sense of belonging that reduces the likelihood of conflicts rooted in cultural misunderstandings. Such inclusive practices help to advance transparency and discourage team members from undermining their colleagues.

These practices can be reinforced by the example of Swiss manufacturer of cough drops and breath mints. To encourage more constructive criticism within the group, the CEO required that leadership team members present detailed financial data on the part of the business they were responsible for. Any issues thus became visible to everyone, providing the opportunity to compare results, ask questions, and critique one another. But the CEO had to model how to have a constructive discussion. While some team members were immediately comfortable with the new approach, others were concerned they would offend their colleagues and needed encouragement to speak up. Still others had to be coached to slow down their delivery of feedback to avoid the impression that they were attacking, which could potentially escalate into a conflict. Thus, it took several months of both individual and team coaching to shift the behavioral norms toward healthy discussion [4].

Hence, integrating talent mobility with conflict resolution policies doesn't just prevent misunderstandings, but it builds an organizational culture that values diversity and promotes equity through respectful and clear communication. These approaches equip organizations to leverage global perspectives effectively in solving internal conflicts.

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