



starting the mobility “recovery” process: *5 tips for moving your program forward after a challenging 2020*

No one in the mobility industry will soon forget the challenges of 2020.

Program managers were tasked with balancing individual risk versus business needs as they navigated through uncertainty. For relocating employees, moving amid a pandemic meant plenty of [disruptions, delays and stress](#).

Not surprisingly, the overarching outcome was a slowdown in mobility activity. With travel restrictions popping up across the globe, many companies decided the best course of action was to pause or cancel many of their planned relocations until it was safer and easier for employees to complete their moves.

This leaves us in an interesting place in 2021 — mobility volume is likely to return, but “how” and “when” are still unanswered questions. Plus CEO Susan Benevides said she expects 2021 to be a “year of recovery,” with 2022 looking more like “normal.”

How can mobility teams shake off the 2020 slowdown and begin the “recovery” process? We’ve laid out five key tips, strategies and considerations for building back your program.

1 Plan for different experiences in different locations

An important thing we learned during the COVID-19 outbreak was that different locations had different experiences. For instance, certain cities were “hot spots” in the early weeks of the pandemic, and then different areas became hot spots later on. Some countries experienced second and third waves, while others “flattened” their curves much more quickly. Travel restrictions constantly evolved.

There were a variety of reasons for all of this, and the recovery from the pandemic will probably look similar. Vaccine distribution won’t be the same everywhere, and the easing of those travel restrictions will be uneven. For mobility programs, this means that the resumption of activity will have to be staggered. You may be able to safely move people into some locations before others. Work with your trusted partners to stay on top of the latest developments and adjust your plans accordingly.

2021 will likely be a year of “recovery” within mobility — is your team prepared?

2 Keep your outlook fairly short and revisit plans often

Speaking of plans, this is a good year to approach planning a bit differently. Instead of a typical 12-month plan, consider setting your sights on a six- or even three-month plan. At the end of that block of time, put together another short-term agenda to keep your team moving forward.

This might feel uncomfortable at first, but it's good practice for being nimble in an uncertain time. As mentioned earlier, the recovery from COVID-19 is going to be uneven and likely take some twists and turns. Learning how to set goals and make decisions without looking too far around the corner can help your program in the long run.

3 Don't get bogged down by past performance or standards

Whatever "normal" looks like at the end of this year or in 2022, it probably won't be the same "normal" as before. This pandemic is likely to have a profound impact on how the world works for years to come.

This means that mobility leaders shouldn't worry too much about how program metrics compare to data from 2019 and earlier. Yes, it's still a good idea to track program metrics, but consider the next few years as a new baseline for what's to come, rather than a continuation of what came before.

There's a silver lining here — creating a new baseline can allow your program to start tracking some areas that maybe weren't tracked before. It's sort of a fresh start from a data perspective, so use the opportunity to calibrate your program for future success.

4 Consider options that can help in tough spots

In 2020, mobility programs had to get creative when it came to managing talent and meeting business needs. In the face of travel restrictions, one solution was the

rise of [virtual assignments](#), which allow employees to work in a different location without physically relocating. And companies that decided to support "[de-locations](#)" helped employees move away from large, expensive cities to smaller, less expensive locations while still retaining their jobs.

As your mobility program builds back, these policies and strategies continue to be useful. Because the recovery from COVID-19 will take time — and we don't know where or when the next global crisis will emerge — it's good to have options for challenges that lie ahead.

5 Embrace change with agility, enthusiasm and optimism

The final suggestion is more overarching, and it's to embrace whatever comes next with agility, enthusiasm and optimism. Dealing with 2020 was stressful and at times overwhelming, but mobility leaders showed that they *can* lead through the toughest of times. Now, as we begin to slowly recover from the pandemic, there is an opportunity for mobility teams to set a new course for the years ahead.

With an agile, enthusiastic and optimistic mindset, this opportunity can be turned into innovative ideas and business success. We're on the path to recovery within mobility — it's time to embrace the moment!

What's next? Check out "[Looking Toward the Future of Mobility After an Unbelievable Year](#)" for four key areas to focus on in 2021 and beyond.

