

March 2011

Pulse Points 2011: Visa and Immigration Challenges



White Paper

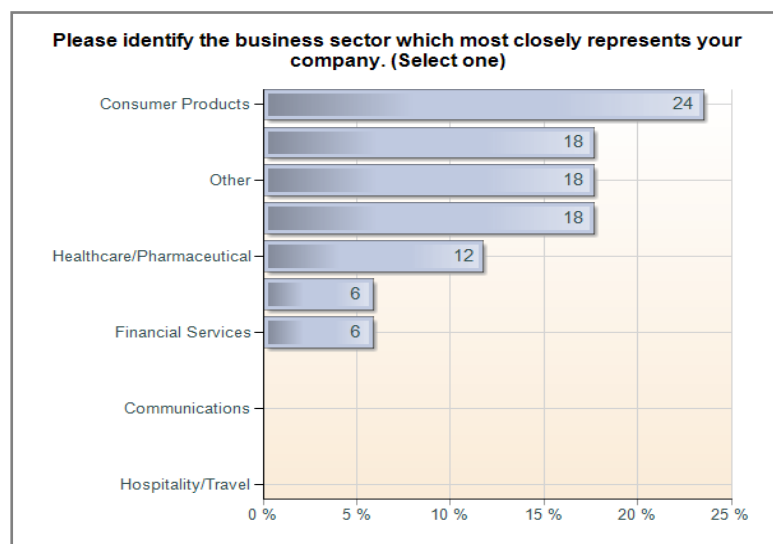
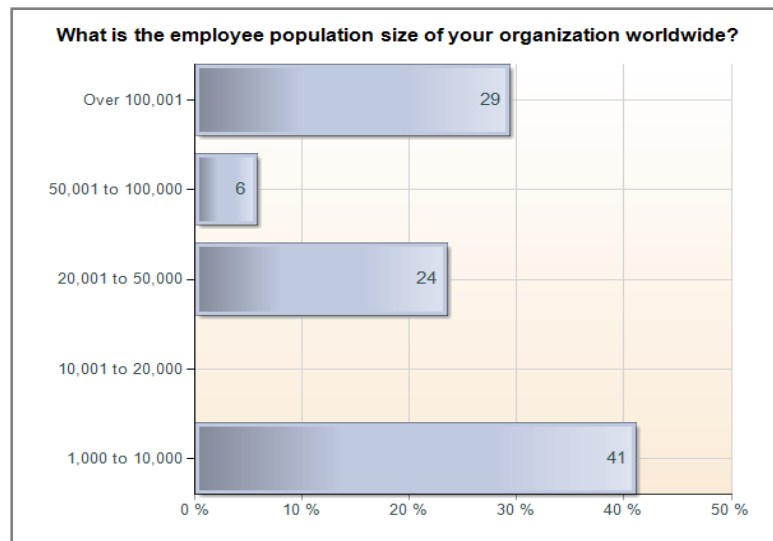
Overview

Because global demand for skilled labor exceeds the supply, recruiting foreign talent is critical. Equally critical is the ability to retain globally competent employees and balance expatriate family needs, while at the same time ensuring your company is in compliance with current immigration policy. Paragon Pulse explored these issues in the January, 2011 Survey “Visa and Immigration Challenges”.

The goal of the survey is to take the pulse of the industry related to various important topics and report back the findings and conclusions, along with Paragon’s proposed solutions and recommendations.

Respondent Demographics

Of the responses received in this survey, the business sectors identified were Consumer Products with the majority, followed by unclassified (“other”), Healthcare/ Pharmaceuticals and Financial Services with companies ranging from having 1,000 – 10,000 employees (41%), to companies with 10,000 – 100,000+ (59%).

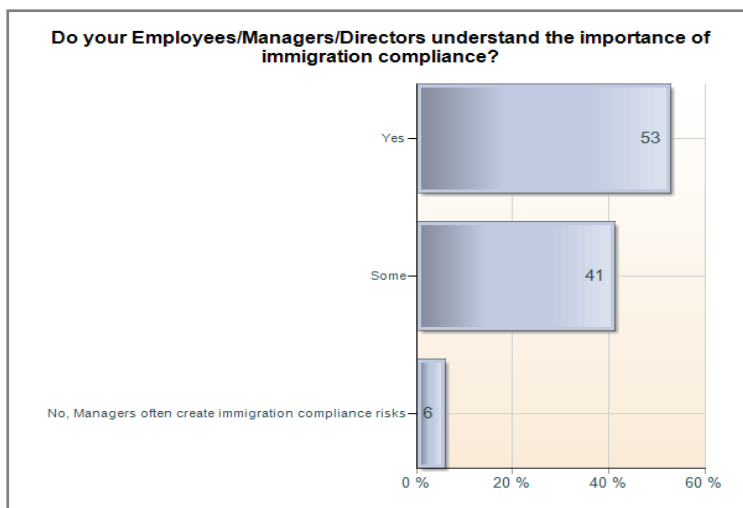
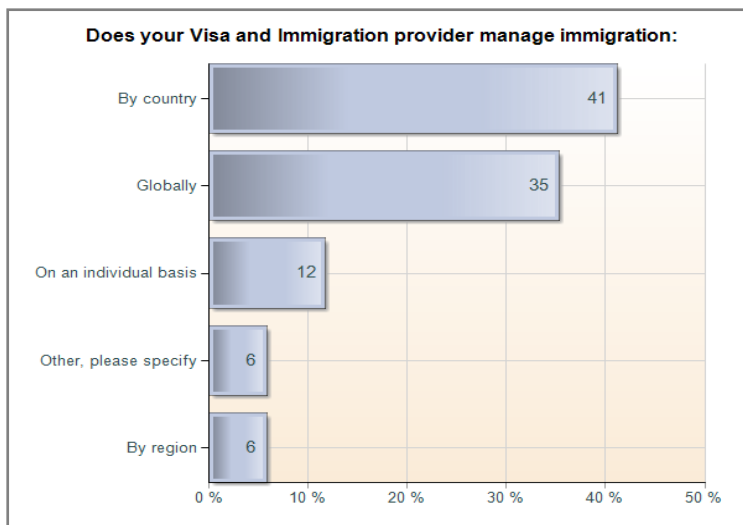
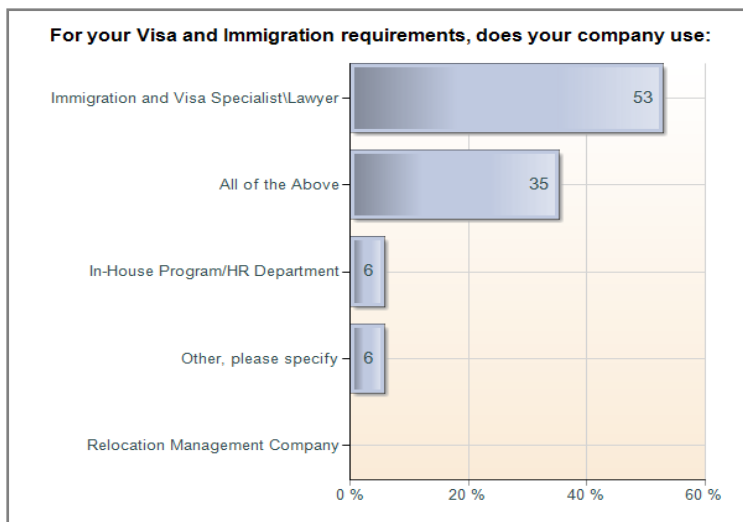


Pulse Point 1

With the increased demand for global talent, corporations must address the need to provide the required expertise to manage immigration requirements for international assignments. A company must be able to identify problem issues **before** a global assignment is offered and accepted. A few of the possible complications and questions to ask before ever offering the move, include:

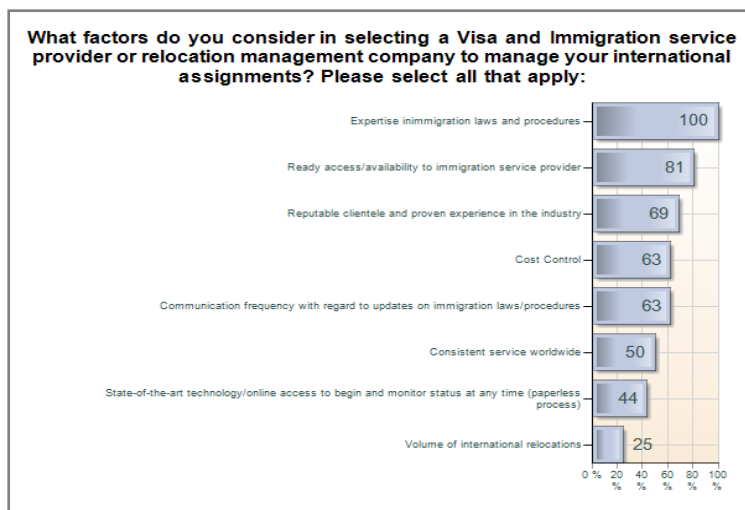
- ◆ Could the employee or family members' nationality be of any concern?
- ◆ Does the spouse want to work in the destination location? If so, what type of visa would be required or is available?
- ◆ Has the transferee or any accompanying dependents ever been denied a visa/work permit or been refused entry or been deported from any country?
- ◆ Has the transferee or any accompanying dependents ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of any crime (other than minor traffic violations, e.g. speeding) in any country?

With more than half of the companies responding that they chose to utilize an Immigration and Visa Specialist/Lawyer, we can rest assured that most companies are placing the correct amount of importance upon this vital requirement. In addition, most respondents indicated that they manage immigration globally and by country. The remaining companies relied on both their HR Department and a Specialist or their HR Department alone. While the majority of companies stated that Employees/Managers/Directors understood the importance of immigration compliance, there are still a select few who indicated that managers often created compliance risks through their lack of knowledge. This presents considerable risk of non-compliance to an employer and can result in failure of assignments, deportation or even in extreme cases, incarceration. Of course, this is where partnering with the right company is imperative, as most immigration firms would work to remedy the situation before the risk became so high.



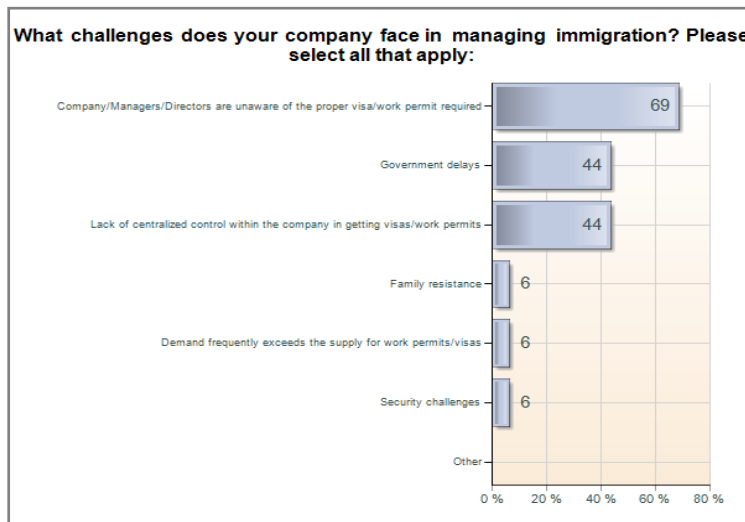
Pulse Point 2

Of the companies surveyed, the most significant factor considered in selecting a Visa and Immigration Service provider or Relocation Management Company to manage International moves was expertise in immigration laws and procedures followed by ready access/availability of the immigration service provider. Cost control and communication, while both very important, came next. The least important factors for our respondents were technology access and volume of international relocations. While technological solutions do not replace the day-to-day interaction with a trusted professional, Paragon considers technology to be a vital component to any selection process. When working in a global environment, with varying time zones and work schedules, being able to access pertinent details of each immigration case cannot be under valued. Consider this when choosing your provider and ask if there is a 24/7 technology solution.



Pulse Point 3

Companies currently face many challenges when managing an international move. One of the biggest challenges identified in the survey was Company/Managers/Directors unaware of the proper visa/work permit required (69%), followed by government delays and lack of centralized control within the company in getting visas/work permits. To address the number one challenge in this category, companies should ask this question when choosing a partner: Does the Visa/Immigration Service Provider offer complimentary training to your staff? There should be an option of hosting either on-site or online training regarding major changes to immigration laws and procedures in your jurisdiction. This helps to alleviate confusion and provides a well-organized experience for your transferring employees.



Pulse Point 4

When asked what locations are the most challenging to navigate, China, followed by India, were not surprisingly, the top two responses. China and India are emerging as economic superpowers on the global economic stage. According to the BRIC economics (Brazil, Russia, India and China) report from Goldman Sachs, it is anticipated that both countries will likely reach the ranks of the largest economies in the world faster than originally predicted; China and India continue to grow at respectable rates. While these two destinations offer some challenges, the opportunities in both locations are abundant. Both countries will continue to be top expatriate destinations due to the overwhelming shift of work to these economies, therefore best practice would be to find a service provider that is experienced in handling the complexities of these two key locations.

Conclusion

With so many variables in global visa and immigration compliance, companies are advised to partner with a global business immigration services provider such as Paragon GeoImmigration (PGI). Paragon GeoImmigration provides a single point of contact for seamless, integrated, consistent business immigration services to companies of all sizes. The partners in Paragon's worldwide immigration network have been painstakingly researched, and each was selected only after a rigorous screening process. PGI continually monitors the partners closely, ensuring rapid response times, consistent service, and quality advice.

PGI's comprehensive immigration services include: obtaining all documents needed for the employee and family to live and work in the destination country; state-of-the-art immigration software that can be used by the employer/employee for an almost paperless process; and knowledgeable staff. The staff has many years of experience in law firms and legal departments managing and navigating the complex world of global immigration. With 24/7 online access, real-time updates, reporting tools for customized reports and online uploading of documents, Paragon GeoImmigration is leading the way in immigration solutions.

Paragon will continue to take the "pulse" on emerging trends and best practices throughout the course of the year. If you are interested in participating in the Paragon Pulse survey, or for further information about Visa and Immigration Challenges, please contact consultingservices@paragondri.com.

About Paragon Decision Resources

Originally founded as a relocation consulting company in 1987 specializing in domestic and international relocation and global assignment program development consulting, our mission is to develop cost effective mobility programs that offer more services to the transferring employee at less cost to the organization. Today we maintain an extensive consulting practice focused on global mobility issues in their entirety. Paragon Decision Resources Inc. (PDR) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Paragon Global Resources, Inc. and is dedicated to strategic U.S. domestic and global corporate relocation consulting services targeted at organizations desiring to fully review their corporate relocation spending as well as supplier relationships.



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