

How Asurion Mastered the Immigration Process from the Inside Out

“We started out as a roadside assistance provider in the early ‘90s, but we transitioned over the years into a technology solutions company,” says Jo Ann Rainwater, senior HR generalist at Asurion. That transformation is a familiar story for companies that have triumphed across the rocky waters of the internet age and subsequent digital boom. The support tech provider pegs itself as “life’s operating system” and rightly so. With 17,000 employees in its offices in the United States, Brazil, Japan, Australia, China and France, Asurion has connected the globe through technology.

“You’ve seen the commercials on TV, where the family’s going on vacation and the dad says: ‘Did we shut the lights off? Did we turn the air down? Did we lock the doors?’ And they do it all from their phones,” Rainwater says. “We are the company that is technical support for consumers trying to connect every electronic gadget in their house.”

Tech companies driving new and innovative solutions often source the best associates from around the world to help them reach their business needs and goals. Asurion ensures it’s not limited by geography.

Early Days as an Immigration Practitioner

Employment-based immigration isn’t taught in most human resource management degree programs. It’s on-the-job learning that equips recruiters and HR managers with the skills to sponsor foreign nationals for various work visas.

Rainwater herself jumped into immigration head first. In July 2015, she joined Asurion and immediately began managing the firm’s corporate immigration program.



ABOUT THE COMPANY

EMPLOYEES 

17,000 WORLDWIDE

12,000 IN THE UNITED STATES

VISANOW CUSTOMER SINCE

APRIL 2014

TYPES OF VISAS SPONSORED

H-1B Person in Specialty Occupation,
Green Cards, L-1 Intracompany
Transfers, Global Work Permits

“The most complex case I handled on my own was my first Japanese transfer,” she says. Blanket L Certification expedites processing time for large, global firms that sponsor multiple L-1 Intracompany Transfer visas each year. “The person I was transferring was in Japan, so there was the time zone difference, there was a language barrier — there were several challenging components in that mix,” Rainwater says.

Rainwater witnessed the complexities of the immigration process firsthand after receiving a Request for Evidence notice (RFE) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).



“I was asked to take pictures of someone’s desk and the work area for an RFE. The demands of USCIS continue to surprise me every day. Why would you ask this on one case and not the other? It’s just the inconsistency from the government.”

“They wanted a lot more specific information than we’ve ever had to provide on any other case, creating additional complexities” she says. “We had to go way beyond the typical job description.”

Developing Efficiencies of the Trade

“What drives me is the desire to get the right skillset for the company and do everything possible to make this an easy process for the associate. I don’t want to let our foreign nationals down. If there is anything in my control, I want to take care of it immediately – even if that means working late or taking work home over the weekend,” she says.

“It affects their lives and their families and in a lot of cases, they have left everything they’ve known and trusted and they put that trust in us to help them move their family to the U.S. or to a new job.”

Caring about the welfare of her foreign workers has translated into a well-managed and efficient immigration process. Rainwater preps her recruiting team to anticipate the documentation requirements of candidates in need of sponsorship.

“I took a compilation of the attorneys’ materials and things I had learned and put it together into a training for all of our recruiters that hire foreign nationals,” she says. Rainwater also developed a checklist to ensure each recruiter understands what materials to gather before work visa sponsorship can begin:

Recruiter Checklist

- Send informational email to HR
- Rainwater provides recruiters with an email template that includes a list of documents needed to complete the hire process. “They have to attach a VP’s approval, which is part of our company policy,” she says. Additionally, she gathers important company

information to fill out VISANOW's — its online immigration service provider — Questionnaire, which replaces the traditional attorney consultation with a streamlined, easy-to-use form.

- Ensure salary meets industry standards
- Ensure job description, resume and mandatory approval emails are attached

Maintaining a Human Touch

When companies have a high volume of immigration needs, sometimes concerns arise that they will lose sight of the human part of the process. In a proactive measure to combat that concern, VISANOW customer relationship manager Natalie Napolitano and VISANOW-affiliated attorney Jake Kanyusik (of GIA law firm) routinely visit Asurion's offices to provide in-person immigration training to its recruiters.

"The remote support is amazing, but the client visits give a personal touch. When [the sponsored employees] connect with that attorney sitting there with their case pulled up in front of them, that's a totally different story. VISANOW is the forcing mechanism between our talent acquisition team, me and our foreign nationals," Rainwater says.



Jo Ann Rainwater HR MANAGER

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Onboarding and immigration for all corporate employees

THE ATTORNEY PERSPECTIVE

"The immigration process is long, complex and bureaucratic. It is easy for a foreign national employee to feel like a number, especially at a larger company. I do my best to personalize this process to ensure the employee is treated like a person. The face-to-face interaction allows us to answer any of the foreign nationals' questions in real time, building a level of confidence and trust in the attorney. Coupling the knowledge of how the immigration process pertains to their particular situation with a strong trust in the attorney as their advocate empowers foreign national employees to be able to focus on other aspects of their life: their work, their family and their goals."

Jake Kanyusik,

VISANOW-affiliated attorney

ADVICE TO EMPLOYERS

My advice to a new company taking this on, or even a new person that's never done immigration, is to trust VISANOW. Hands down, VISANOW is the reason I've got Asurion's immigration program to where it is today. We have a trusted partner in VISANOW. They give us what we need as a company and the beauty of the relationship between Asurion and VISANOW is that we can meet our compliance needs with the federal government but at the same time our foreign nationals don't feel like a number. It allows us to add a personal touch to what we do. I would just tell anyone learning from the ground up to put your trust in VISANOW.