

FALL 2021

Guide to Talent Mobility Technology

Coaching, Mentoring, Developing
and Deploying Talent for Success

Contents

Introduction	3
Evolution of Talent Mobility	5
Business Impact	9
Hiring and Recruiting	10
Employee Experience	11
Diversity and Inclusion	12
Compliance	13
Key Features of the Talent Mobility Tech Stack	14
Development	15
Retention and Employee Experience	17
Internal Movement	18
Executive Insights	19
Selection	21
Conclusion	24



Introduction

Never before have talent flexibility, retention, and mobility been more important in organizations than they are now. The so-called Great Resignation that began in 2021 is expected to continue unabated in the coming years, as employees shift their priorities and expectations of work, as well as the companies they choose to work for. Even during the height of the war for talent, we never saw such a widespread shortage of employees to fill openings. Companies are posting Help Wanted signs and struggling to fill open positions. The Work Trend Index, published by Microsoft, found that more than 41% of people plan to leave their jobs in the next 12 months,¹ with nearly half of those expecting to make a major career shift.

Historically, when markets were tight and unemployment was low, companies focused their time and energy on sourcing and hiring the top talent. While that is usually a great strategy in fairly predictable or cyclical times, at this point in the social evolution it isn't nearly enough. Today's organizations realize that hiring great people is just half of the picture. The real effort should be retaining the talent within the organization that have the skills needed to do the job today and in the future. Employees have been leading the shifting dynamic of work and are looking at their companies and roles differently than ever before. Many are stepping off the corporate ladder and onto the corporate lattice to advance their own skills and experience in a way we have never before seen at such a scale.

While this is occurring, new reporting requirements and social discussions have executives looking in a much more strategic way at numbers related to turnover, diversity and engagement; understanding clearly how each of those relate to their bottom-line results. Where talent is located, how they choose to work, and what skill gaps exist is as important as understanding customer acquisition or supply-chain details.

A key factor of talent health in an organization is movement or employee mobility. Do employees at all levels of the organization have opportunities for advancement? Are there lateral moves available to enhance their skills? Or are you still running with an old-school model, that succession planning is only for top leaders? With the right strategies and technologies in place, mature organizations can identify, redeploy, promote or advance skills for talent as rapidly as they are needed—globally or locally and in a full-time or project capacity.

Aspect43 2021 Buyer Research found that Internal Mobility technology was the number one area of focus for new technology purchases through June 2022. More than 36% of companies surveyed were either buying for the first time or replacing a system that they are currently using. It was also one of the most misunderstood areas of work technology: nearly 25% of companies were unsure what internal mobility technology really meant, looks like, or should look like. As one of the newest entrants into the HR Tech stack, it has experienced significant growth in a very short timeframe.

Today's talent mobility technology stack goes far beyond traditional succession planning or internal job boards in a talent management tool. Now it supports employees through their entire employee journey.

In this guide, we will look at:

- 1. The evolution of talent mobility technology**
- 2. The business impact of talent mobility**
- 3. The product categories in the talent mobility tech stack**



Evolution of Talent Mobility

Talent mobility isn't a new concept, but it is a newer term to identify a more modern, inclusive approach to what we've been doing for years within organizations. Historically, people had career paths based on many years or even decades of service to attain promotions and having arrived at a certain point of seniority, conversations then ensued around succession plans. In some cases, or high potential, or HiPo, employees at various levels of the organizations would have had succession plans made for them as well. It was not at all unusual for all these plans to be visible only to HR and senior management, with supervisors and employees themselves not being included in the discussions. If employees wanted to do something different with their careers, it often meant changing companies, not just roles within their current organizations.

As recently as a few years ago, there was limited technology available to organizations to manage the internal mobility of their employees except for succession planning. Traditional succession planning typically focused on the top 1-3% of an organization, and was conducted as a yearly exercise to identify the next candidate for key C-suite or executive positions. Although this technology has been readily available from many full-suite talent management vendors, our research and experience with corporate teams from small businesses to global enterprises has shown that these solutions were rarely adopted to a full depth of value, and, at best, only provided average ROI for the company. They were often designed more to take a paper process and put it online than designed to provide predictive insights to the organization using it.

Succession Nine Box



In some organizations, they began to expand succession planning slightly deeper into the organization by using and looking at the classic “nine box” of potential candidates for key roles. The nine-box succession plan was typically an annual process that manually plotted potential successors on a matrix of performance and potential. It was often done on paper and kept in a binder on a shelf somewhere. Much like succession planning and traditional performance management tools, most employees would never even know if they were being considered for a move, let alone where on the 9-box they fell.

The early “automated” tools simply put the paper grid online and might make potential suggestions on where an individual might fall on the two axes based on performance review numbers. It was still up to a group of leaders to validate an individual’s placement on the grid, nominate others, or make moves within the grid. Some tools would keep a record of these moves for a potential audit, but it was still an inherently human-biased process. If you happened to have a good relationship with leaders or had been a part of a project that gained you organizational visibility, you were much more likely to appear in a succession plan and to be offered development opportunities to help get you there. Even though they were not conducive to creating diverse and inclusive work environments, these evaluation tools for successors were common at even the largest of organizations.



As the shift to internal mobility via both strategy and technology has been emerging, we have continued to see shortfalls around diversity and cross-department movement.

As the shift to internal mobility via both strategy and technology has been emerging, we have continued to see shortfalls around diversity and cross-department movement. In addition, there has been a true disconnect between the employee-led approach and skills development that would best benefit both the company and the individual. In 2020, we saw a lot of roadmaps begin to be updated and a number of tools get released, with a specific focus on diversity, inclusion and equity as it relates to talent mobility. We are seeing much of that technology hitting the market in the fall of 2021, and even more are expected to be released in the coming 18 months.

Today’s talent mobility tools go beyond simply showing the path to a new role within an organization. The technology now supports every employee along the way to his or her next step. The larger categories of development, retention, movement, and insights are filled with a number of smaller, but robust technology categories to meet the needs of both the employee and the company through the entire mobility life cycle.

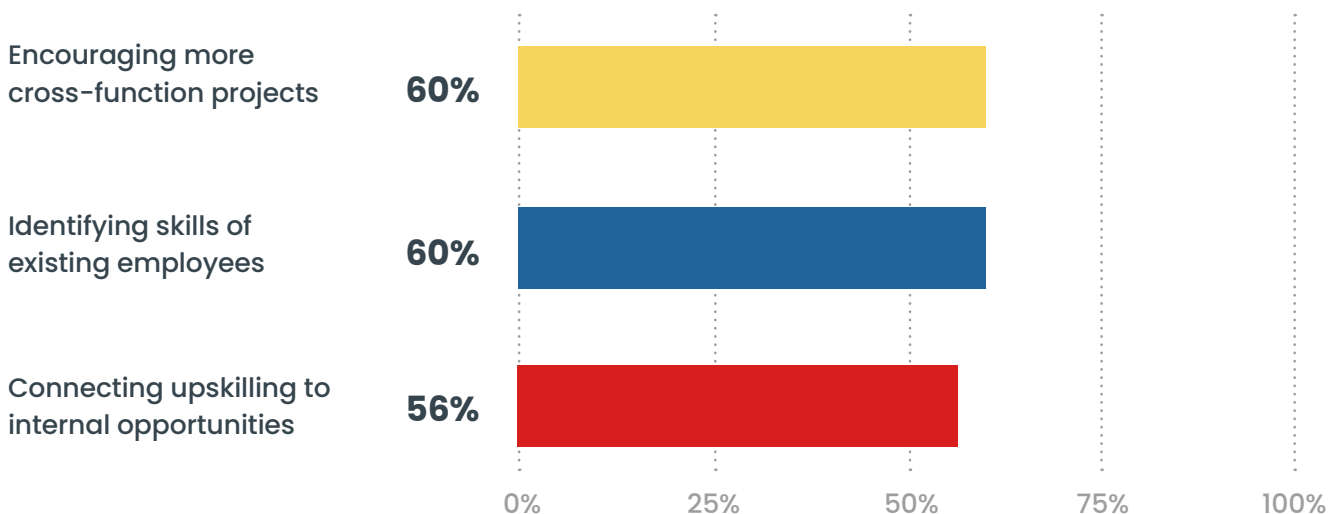
Barriers to Talent Mobility

One of the largest barriers when it comes to talent mobility is genuinely understanding the reasons why people are leaving organizations and how they want to grow within your organization. While engagement and employee experience technology continues to see rapid growth in organizations, we are finding that many companies are not looking honestly at the specific reasons why people are seeking opportunities outside the organization. Instead, they are relying on broad global surveys about retention and employee satisfaction.

Talent mobility is about more than the technology to enable employees to identify, prepare, and move into different roles. It concerns the culture and focus of the company, and the need to make movement a priority for all managers individually, not just a sweeping corporate goal. For example, are you currently looking at your exit interviews, your engagement surveys, and employee feedback, as well as information like your DEI numbers, internal promotions and pay equity gaps? Do you genuinely have a culture that encourages and promotes the mobility and movement of all employees? And does each manager in the organization actually follow that culture, if you do?

Organizations, like people, are not always adept at getting out of their own way when it comes to doing the right thing. While many organizations will (at least) pay lip service to the idea of talent mobility, the majority of leaders are quietly afraid of losing their great team members. In a recent LinkedIn study, 70% of recruiters cited a manager's unwillingness to give up great talent as the top barrier to internal recruiting, followed by 56% citing the lack of qualified internal candidates. The same study found that the top ways to improve internal recruiting were to encourage participation in cross-functional projects, identify and share current skills of employees, and connect skill-building opportunities to internal opportunities.²

Top Ways to Improve Internal Recruiting



Source: LinkedIn, Global Talent Trends 2020

The fact that 56% of recruiters cited a lack of qualified candidates is a huge red flag, which should prompt evaluation and study at the individual company level. If you are hiring roles that more than half of your current employees would not be qualified to fill, there is either a gap in how candidates are being assessed by recruiters and hiring teams, or a serious issue with regard to the effectiveness of your internal learning and development programs. Moreover, this is also a huge red flag for an organization's culture of mobility and retention. Of all the research we found working on this report, that was by far the most startling statistic and the biggest barrier to internal mobility. Our team will be diving back into this result during the remainder of 2021.



Analyst Note:

No technology will be successful without an organizational culture that promotes and encourages internal growth and mobility. Like most employee experiences or DEI initiatives, this cannot be an HR-led program. The technology needs to be encouraged and understood by leadership to be the very best for the business. It also needs to have measurable outcomes and analytics tied to it at multiple levels of the organization.

Business Impact

With the shift in work that is taking place globally, the business impact of retention can be felt in all industries—both financially and culturally. Losing talent that you have invested time, training, and effort into is expensive. The current state of the market means that filling those roles takes even longer, resulting in a much more expensive and time-consuming hiring process than previously experienced.

Among manager-level workers, resignations are up by nearly 12% year over year, with female leaders more likely to not just leave their company, but leave the workforce for good during the pandemic of 2020 and 2021. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to move to a new role within their organization.³

The expectations of how people work—whether remote, onsite, full-time, part-time, or on a contract basis— are evolving, yet most organizations do not offer the mobility options to account for this reality of work in the 2020s. Many are still focused on the traditional full-time roles, outside of hourly or other entry-level roles. As we see more mid- and senior-level people resigning and looking for a change in their work lives, we will also see the forward-looking companies changing their approach and strategy to retain the best and the brightest, regardless of how and where they want to work, or the number of hours they want to work. We also expect to find more project-based and contingent roles available to both current and former employees. This change will maximize the quality and value of the services received, and increase ROI by having a specialist in certain roles versus filling full-time roles with people who may or may not be realistically needed on a full-time basis.

It has often been said that “what gets measured, gets done.” This is very true in the case of talent mobility.



If your organization isn't already looking at metrics around talent movement, hiring, retention and their interdependence on each other, the time to start is now.

An organization's focus on mobility can greatly reduce the top- and bottom-line costs of finding talent, by increasing productivity, and creating engagement and retention. A 2020 study by LinkedIn found that 63% of talent acquisition professionals believe internal recruiting accelerates the hiring process, while 69% believe it speeds up new-hire productivity. In addition, employees stay 41% longer at companies with high

internal hiring compared to those with low internal hiring.⁴ These findings are certainly very encouraging. We know the impact of hiring and promoting internal talent stretches beyond just the perceptions of recruiters and HR teams. When we looked at employees themselves, we see that those individuals who were promoted within three years had a 70% chance of staying with their companies, and those making a lateral move had a 62% chance of staying, while those who did not make an internal job change or were not promoted had only a 45% chance of remaining.⁵

As more companies adopt internal mobility tools in the coming years, it would be beneficial to conduct more research to find out specifically how technology is impacting those lateral moves.



Hiring and Recruiting

Most technology on the market for recruiting and sourcing ignores the key internal talent available for new opportunities. Within most technology, the recruiters have limited or no visibility to internal candidates. Instead, recruiters rely on an employee to actively be searching an internal job board for a role. It is then up to that employee to submit his or her interest for a job, connect their LinkedIn profile, or fill out some other online application, and then be treated (for the most part) like any other candidate from the outside.

The top ways identified by talent professionals for how internal candidates are currently recruited are (a) by finding job postings on internal job boards (72%); (b) by hiring managers reaching out to people they know (50%); and (c) by word-of-mouth (45%).⁶ But obviously these three channels have clear limitations, including the strong likelihood of personal bias. It's happenstance that you know the right person, happen to look at a job board at the right moment, or overhear about a job in the cafeteria. It is not a process or an effective way to create a pool of ready talent, cultivated from the breadth and depth of your organization, that will improve cost and time-to-hire, increase engagement, and reduce turnover.

While the recruiting teams are waiting passively for internal candidates because of the huge technology gaps they have to work around, those same internal candidates are being actively recruited and sought out—by your competition.

One of the most disappointing HR Technology roadmap realities of full-suite, global enterprise players is the lack of connection between their applicant tracking system and the remaining talent management tools. While selling the promise of full-suite solutions, the areas of talent acquisition and internal mobility are often the least developed, although still built to what would have been considered MVP (minimum viable product) status versus best-in-class options. Most still lack the ability to do even basic reporting and sourcing of internal talent, forcing talent acquisition teams to purchase a number of supplemental tools to do things that a core solution should have been able to do in 2010. We have seen and worked on a number of solid roadmaps that would correct this issue for large employers, only to see them placed on hold or delayed at exactly the point where they were needed the most. We expect to see acquisitions and partnerships play out quickly in coming years to address this gap in full-suite roadmaps.



Employee Experience

One of the defining characteristics in talent management over the last decade has been the shift to focus on the employee experience. Employees are in the driver's seat, and organizations are finding themselves struggling to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce. Organizations rising to this challenge, however, not only have happier employees, but they are also reaping significant business benefits as a result. One study found that among companies with a greater focus on employee needs over organizational needs, those businesses were 1.5 times more likely to be high performing in overall business performance and workforce productivity.⁷

The elements of mobility—an individual's skills, capabilities, and desires, along with manager skills in developing talent—are highly personal and vary widely. That is why it is so crucial to look at all the elements of the talent mobility tech stack. They go beyond an internal job board, or a long-standing mentorship program. Finding tools that can assess skills today, build them in multiple ways for the future, and help shift organizational mindset around mobility through measurement of business outcomes requires many technology capabilities. Luckily, providers in the space are becoming increasingly proficient in bringing them together in an easy-to-use and intuitive way.

Analyst Note:

Digital Transformation and the Return to Work

A big topic of conversation in the business world right now is returning to work. This idea is a misnomer to be sure, because most of us continued to work, just as much if not more than ever, in some manner throughout lock-down and quarantine. What many employers discovered is that by jumping in with both feet to digital transformation, their staff was ready and more than capable of rising to the challenge. This accelerated need to become more digital was largely successful, keeping people safe and productive. But now we see a potential backslide as organizations focus on return to work. Many are missing a huge opportunity to boost engagement and productivity through hybrid work models. And most are going to miss out on keeping women in the workforce. Due to the reality check of the pandemic, one in four women are considering leaving the workforce, or downshifting their career. This increases even more when you look at working mothers, women in senior positions, or Black women.⁸

We clearly have the tools to understand what roles can be performed remotely, and how we can help vulnerable talent share job responsibilities in order to attend to other responsibilities outside of work. But we seem to be ignoring these tools and this opportunity.

Analyst Note (cont.)

Nearly half of organizations reported that 50% or more of their roles are capable of being performed remotely on a permanent basis, but 49% are not making changes to roles, work, or teams to enable working from home, and just 24% are analyzing the skill gaps required to support digital transformation.⁹ Without tapping into this opportunity to rethink the where and how of work, we could lose a significant and important part of our workforce.



Diversity and Inclusion

A common reason managers claim to resist talent mobility and internal hiring is that they feel it makes it harder to maintain or improve their organization's diversity and inclusion goals. Yet the traditional approach to internal mobility has been poor (at best) for both diversity and inclusion. Without an approach that keeps diversity and inclusion front and center, it's easy to fall back on old patterns, such as moving only those people you know and have personal experience with. This approach means you are undoubtedly missing out on huge numbers of people who may sit in different departments, teams or locations. And with remote work, this is even more likely to be true.

Technology *can* help you "see" everyone, and make internal development and recruiting more inclusive. For example, an informal mentoring program may seem to check the box for that capability, but it can do more harm than good.¹⁰ Without a plan or structure in place, only people who are highly visible in the organization may be mentored. And, of course, don't forget that the coaching skills of leaders may be widely variable. Without transparency around how to progress at your organization, you could be missing out on a whole generation of talent. Today's coaching and mentoring technology is often technology-based and available to a much wider range of employees and levels helping more people from all backgrounds, genders and races to prepare for the next steps in their careers.

Using technology to democratize access to development opportunities, stretch assignments, coaches and mentors is the only way to build a deep bench for roles up and down the organization. It also builds trust in the system. By analyzing mobility data against diversity and inclusion goals, making the path to promotion transparent, and building

"A lack of trust is one of the key reasons talent mobility fails."

Tracey Parsons, CEO and Co-Founder, Worqdrive

networks of individuals who will vouch for the skills you have, organizations create a community committed to moving up the best talent and providing opportunities for all. It shows your employees that everyone has a more fair and transparent opportunity for movement and development.



Compliance

With the growing focus on human capital management reporting, including new mandates from the SEC (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission), being able to report on how talent is evaluated and moved up in an organization is increasingly important. Beyond traditional reporting like the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) requirements, being able to track and measure how people get opportunities for advancement will be critical moving forward. The only way to keep up with this level of reporting is by leveraging technology or employing a huge number of in-house analysts.

Key Features of the Talent Mobility Tech Stack

The talent mobility tech stack does not necessarily represent new concepts when it comes to finding and developing internal talent. But for many, the idea is new to extend it beyond executives or top performers and beyond a set career path, and to leverage technology to increase the reach of mobility throughout the organization.

Like all segments of HR Technology, the broader talent mobility technology category is all about focusing on the capabilities and functionality that matter most to your organization and understanding that you likely won't find everything you want from one provider.

Think about your employees and what may work best for them. The “right” technology stack for a consulting organization with all college-educated employees and an average age of 36 will be a wholly different technology stack from a hospitality company with high turnover and a large hourly workforce under the age of 25. Both need solutions; they just need them in different priority orders.

The purpose of the tech stack model is to give an overview of available technology for you to consider. This list is not inclusive of every technology subcategory that could exist in the talent mobility category, but instead, it highlights the ones where we are seeing rapid advancement, innovation and adoption at both the SMB, Midmarket and Enterprise levels.

This can be used as a starting point to understand the general landscape of talent mobility tech, divided into four main areas: Development, Retention and Employee Experience, Internal Movement, and Executive Insights.



Talent Mobility Tech Stack

Development

The development of internal talent is critical to talent mobility. When we think back to the earlier statistic cited—that recruiters feel more than half of all workers inside a company are unqualified for new roles—we know we have a systemic failure of development.

All too often we hire people with a specific and perhaps narrow set of skills or capabilities, and then we never look at how they may have changed over time, or if the organization's needs have also changed. Development technology can help individuals understand where their current skill gaps are located, assign them to development opportunities, and help prepare them for further steps in their careers, both inside and outside your organization.

Learning

Learning technology has an entire tech stack of its own, but elements of learning technology are critical to talent mobility. An important part of mobility technology is making more individuals aware of what learning opportunities are available to them to build the skills they need to move into new roles. Having technology that can suggest and provide access to courses or learning content the organization already owns is important functionality, as is the ability to sign up for those programs. Learning technology can also help individuals understand the multiple paths to develop a skill, such as books, classes, stretch opportunities, and more.

This is an often neglected piece of the tech stack for mobility, with just 23% of learning and development professionals saying that they partner with recruiters to identify skill gaps and hard-to-fill roles.¹¹

Feedback

Feedback technology plays several roles in the mobility tech stack. One way feedback tools can be used is to validate the current skills and capabilities of an individual. Many mobility solutions will allow individuals to self-assess skills and then have others endorse them or provide insights into areas for development. Another way feedback tools can be useful is in evaluating performance on stretch assignments. During and after key projects, other team members can provide feedback that can be used to create an overall development plan. And as managers look to have annual development conversations with individuals, having a record of feedback throughout the year can yield far more valuable conversations than that manager's recollection of assignments in recent weeks.



Mentoring & Coaching

Mentoring and Coaching are two distinct development practices, enabled by distinct technology capabilities. It is important to talk about them together, however, because many people and organizations use the terms interchangeably and incorrectly.

What is important about coaching and mentoring technology is the capability it brings to scale coaching and mentoring, to bring it deeper into your organization.

Mentoring

Mentoring technology can help identify key skills in which a mentor may be useful for development, and suggest matches within the organization. Typically, mentors are from within the organization, so mentorship technology helps build organizational visibility, and takes the burden off HR to manually administer mentorship programs. It also helps employees who may not be naturally inclined to ask for mentorship informally to take advantage of this important development opportunity.

Mentoring is different from coaching and can often have socialization and cross-functional components. Mentors can be vital during the onboarding of new employees, and these relationships can support visibility into talent and provide continued learning throughout a career. Mentorship can be valuable to both the mentor and the mentee, sharing knowledge and experience in both directions. Mentorship is typically a volunteer assignment, versus a job assignment, but participation can hinge strongly on the organization's cultural support of mentoring.

Currently, 76% of people think mentors are important, but only 37% have one. Access to mentoring is not a trivial piece of overall development either. It can have a significant impact on diversity and inclusion. Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations found that mentoring programs boosted minority representation at the management level by 9%

to 24% (compared to -2% to 18% with other diversity initiatives). The same study found that mentoring programs also dramatically improved promotion and retention rates for minorities and women by 15% to 38%, compared to non-mentored employees.¹²

Coaching

Coaching has long been a part of the executive experience at organizations and is almost like a career perk offered to key leaders. As such, it has traditionally been an expensive, 1:1 experience that is also time-consuming and specific. While extremely valuable, it was not scalable due to the cost and time associated with the traditional approach.

New coaching technology is being released that can help scale coaching across the organization by focusing on particular skills and needs for the individual based on a mix of automation and machine learning. It then delivers up coaching in a bite-size, digestible way, to help the employee learn at his or her own speed, and then receive feedback. If you think of products like "noom" for weight loss, you have an idea of the type of delivered content intermixed with opportunities for personalized feedback.

Some coaching technology providers that offer the "noom" approach can also provide access to screened and credentialed coaches to help bring the program to life for employees that need more support, but this may not be at the level suitable for traditional executive coaching.

Retention and Employee Experience

Allowing and encouraging top talent to build their skills and their career within your organization is a smart business move. It also keeps employees happy and employed at your company longer. A whopping 94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer *if their employer invested in their career*.¹³ The technologies in this category are all about helping individuals see how their career can grow with you.

Career Pathing

A more mature part of the mobility tech stack, career pathing technology was one of the first tools developed after succession planning and internal job boards. This technology can be thought of as a way for individuals to “scenario plan” their careers within your organization. By looking at their current role, skills, and capabilities, these tools show each employee what their potential future roles might be—anywhere in the organization, not just the “traditional” route of moving up in one functional area—and what it would take to get there. These go beyond traditional career ladders or lattices and let the employee take control and make decisions or learn about different directions. They allow for employee movement forward and sideways within the organization, to go up the leadership ladder, or gain new skills, or better align roles with their shifting interests.

Career path tools also are closely aligned with development technology. As individuals plot a course for their future, development tools can help them build out their interdisciplinary approach to executing it—combining learning, feedback, mentoring and coaching to first identify the gaps and then build the skills and experiences needed to achieve their goals.

Project Assignments

Project support and assignment tools not only help business leaders find key skills wherever they may be within the company, but they can also facilitate individual skill-building for future roles. Not enough organizations take advantage of project assignments in pursuit of internal mobility. Businesses are constantly organizing and reorganizing to take on new challenges around products, services, or customer

success. Particularly when it comes to key leadership skills, project assignments can be an important part of development, allowing individuals to stretch and take on leadership on a small scale before being promoted.

Many organizations have been “flattening” or reducing many management layers between individual contributors and senior leadership. While this can have many organizational benefits, from reducing



bureaucracy to lowering costs, it does require new leaders to accelerate the learning curve. Often new leaders are afraid to ask for help or training, figuring if they do, their boss might think they made a mistake promoting them. And because many senior leaders are busy with their own jobs, they usually simply hope that new leaders will figure it out themselves. But by using technology to systematically use ad-hoc projects to build key skills, individuals and their teams will be far better off.

Job Sharing

Although job sharing is not an area covered by many of the typical internal-mobility technology solutions, it should be. Job-sharing technology allows organizations to look at the time, skills and capabilities required to take on a role, and divides the role among two or more people. Particularly in industries where certain skills are hard to find, or to help bring in more diverse talent that has chosen other than full-time work, job sharing is a way to bring new hires into the company, keep people engaged, and ensure that their valuable skills stay inside the organization.

Internal Movement

This category of mobility technology is the most mature. It is all about the tools to manage and automate the actual processes of moving individuals across the organization. They range from traditional process automation to enabling more forward-thinking strategies to build skills and reduce hiring costs and friction within the organization.

Succession

Succession technology is designed to automate the process of cultivating the next generation of senior leadership talent. Typical solutions today match individuals within the organization to a skill and experience profile for each senior role, such as the C-suite. The software will often bring these candidates up to the surface in some form of performance vs. potential matrix. Then board members or other senior executives will have a discussion about the candidates, and make moves or add in other candidates at their discretion. A big advantage of succession technology is the ability to track when, why, and how individuals may have changed positions within the succession plan.

Internal Mobility and Internal Apply

This technology automates the actual application and job-reassignment processes within an organization. Tools in this area include internal job boards and



internal skill profiles. Having a formal process with tools is essential, because when informal referrals are made, performance can suffer. In a five-year study of over 11,000 internal hires in a Fortune 100 firm, internal candidates who applied for new roles through formal internal job postings outperformed candidates (in almost every way) who were simply sponsored by a leader to take on a new role. These individuals received higher competency and contribution ratings during their first year on the job, and were both more likely to be considered top performers (rated in the Top 25% of the performance distribution of peers in similar jobs) and less likely to be considered poor performers (rated in the bottom 25%). In addition, internal candidates hired through formal internal postings were 20% less likely to quit or be fired during their first two years on the job versus informally-sponsored internal candidates.¹⁴

Skills Inventory

Technology designed to capture a skills inventory within your organization helps leaders to see not only who is in their organization, but also what they know. Organizations often overlook great internal candidates because hiring managers either don't know them personally or don't realize that key skills often reside in the unlikeliest places. Through self-assessment, ratings, reviews, and even tie-ins to your LMS, individuals can create a skill profile that is searchable by managers. This allows hiring managers to discover and compare candidates based on skills. Many of these tools today also allow you to anonymize candidates, ensuring a level of equity and bias removal. By looking beyond their personal network and aligning individual goals and desires to opportunities, organizations can make internal hiring fairer and more successful.

Executive Insights

From an executive perspective, today's leaders are expecting far more robust mobility tools than in the past. Now analytics and insights tools are designed to identify risks, gaps, and areas of opportunity before they actually arise, and they use data from multiple systems and sources to understand what is happening with their talent.

Executive insights tools are built into many of the above systems, and are also available with full-suite solutions and as a stand-alone tool. This is a much harder technology area to categorize into sub-categories or sections, but we can focus on a few key features in these solutions that we are seeing across the board.

- **Workforce Intelligence** - provides management dashboards in real-time to guide skills gaps, training investments, and depth of talent bench, both inside and outside of an organization, when integrated directly into certain recruiting technology.
- **Measurement** - understanding participation by individuals and managers, the success of internal hires and key diversity metrics are critical components of solution success. If your tool isn't providing you with benchmarking or insights into what or how it is working, that is a real shortcoming.



- **Skills gap identification** - while also seen in some workforce intelligence tools, some stand-alone options and integrated solutions will be urgently needed that specifically focus both on identifying the skills gaps and understanding how to close them.

One study has estimated that skill gaps could leave 2.4 million positions unfilled between 2018 and 2028, and impact the economy by as much as \$2.5 trillion.¹⁵ With technology in place to enable a skills inventory, managers can use AI and other matching tools to look across their organization to find great talent. These employees may appear hidden in different functions, have become stuck in particular roles, have recently completed training or education, are ready to move, or are simply interested in additional projects and training. These make up the invisible talent to help bridge an organization's skill gaps.

Because so many employees get forever typecast as to who they were and what they knew when they joined the company, organizations need to realize that the skills, needs, and goals of their employees are continuing to evolve. This realization can also benefit those individuals who are actively managing their careers and seeking opportunities, as well as those employees who might need a nudge to consider more interesting or rewarding opportunities.

Selection

There are clearly many types of solutions in the talent mobility tech stack. What is important in selection is not to pick all of them, but to design the right mix of tools and technologies that respond to the needs of your organization and your individual employees.

If you aren't sure where to begin, start by listening. Ask your employees what is missing for them. Look closely at your engagement survey results and find out if people feel they understand their paths for career advancement or feel they have access to development opportunities. Mobility won't happen overnight, so be on the lookout for sustained use of key tools. And keep asking questions and listening to your employees while you give them opportunities to manage their own journey with the tools that you provide.

While there are many considerations when selecting technology partners for internal mobility, certain core capabilities are important to know, no matter what tools your organization might be considering.

Consumerized Experiences. Simply put, this is all about how technology looks and feels. In the tech world, we call it the UI (User Interface) or the UX (User Experience). The only thing you should care about is if it is simple and easy for your employees to use. In fact, 73% of respondents to the 2021 Aspect43 Buyer Insights study cited usability as a top selection criterion for HR technology. When you evaluate the technology, remember to think about it from the perspectives of an employee, a manager, an executive, and an HR leader.

One way to evaluate any HR product for an employee is to think in terms of any app you might download onto your phone. Any employee-facing technology should be that easy to use, and not require a lot of training, if any. If a vendor disagrees, it is likely because they have not put a lot of thought into the user experience. Making technology useful, simple to use, and secure are keys to a great consumer and employee experience.

Personalization. If we take consumerized technology one step further, we get personalization. It is already driving consumer experience on sites like Netflix and Amazon, where content is served up based on what is known about the user. In an organization, it's about taking what we know about employees and delivering content that is specific to who they are, their role, and what they are likely to need to do using the product. One of the difficulties with HR tech software in recent years is the tendency to confuse standardization with personalization. Having a consistent, secure, equitable process for every aspect of



73%

of respondents to the 2021 Aspect43 Buyer Insights study cited usability as a top selection criterion for HR technology.

HR is necessary but insufficient. The ability to use that standard process and data to reveal usable insights and help power personalized journeys through these processes is key to truly modern HR technology.

Analytics. You may see this referred to as reporting or metrics, but analytics is simply about bringing information together to enable easy review and find insights. Reporting is a top frustration with HR technology, cited by 65% of organizations responding to the 2021 Aspect43 Buyer Insights study. The entire goal of HR technology and automation is to first make processes more efficient, and then to use the resulting data from these processes to drive better data-driven decision-making. Basic reporting is a minimum requirement of HR technology today, as is some level of custom reporting that is accessible to your organization without engaging your vendor.

Keep in Mind:

- 1. Think about mobility for the entire organization.** Today's succession planning is necessary but is still insufficient when it comes to fostering talent mobility. It must go deeper, enabling organizations to build talent from within, not just for their own success, but for the overall success of employees. Investing in employees in this way can dramatically improve retention and engagement, and can be done at a reasonable cost through a technology-enabled mobility strategy.
- 2. Lead with technology.** Development is highly personal, and the only way to scale it is by using technology. It's also the key to organizational transparency, both in terms of individual opportunities and executive visibility. To enable organizational success, find solution partners that lead with technology and are transforming key developmental tools through technology.
- 3. Measure and reward for movement.** Help your organization view talent as an organizational resource. Then make it clear to leaders that they are expected to help identify and build talent. This mandate to leaders gives employees the assurance that there are ongoing opportunities for them within the organization. And don't forget to put metrics in place to measure success and hold leaders responsible for achieving mobility goals.

Talent Mobility is a Team Effort

When selecting technology for any facet of the business, it is important to remember the multiple users of that technology. This is especially true of mobility tools because they are viewed very differently at different levels of the organization.

Employees need to feel empowered, through visibility into career paths, and through access to development opportunities. Career development is a critical component of employee engagement, cited as a key driver by 73% of organizations. Employees also want transparency, in order to build trust in the process.

Managers need support and accountability when it comes to talent mobility. And as part of their own career development, managers need tools and information to create better development conversations with their employees. They also must be accountable for ensuring mobility. The vast majority of organizations, 86%, do not include career management as a criterion for leader evaluation.

Executives need to know they are developing the right skills to support business growth. This requires tools to both uncover key skill gaps and help managers bridge those. Top-performing organizations were more than twice as likely (83% vs. 40%) to have managers who had mapped career ambitions for their direct reports against organizational strategy as average performers.

73%

of organizations consider career development a key driver of employee engagement.

Conclusion

While no mobility solution will have every tool you need—and you may not need every tool there is—a technology-enabled mobility strategy is a must for today. Some tools may be point solutions, but a mobility platform that brings them together is vital. Mobility tools can create an employee experience layer that connects your hiring, learning, development, and performance management processes in a new way. Mobility solutions add additional functionality that aligns these elements, helping to support near-term hiring needs, as well as ongoing retention, and engagement.

Despite the increasing focus on the value of an organization's talent and the growing conversation about talent mobility, most organizations struggle to make it a reality. This is largely because it necessitates that organizations rethink their people point of view, and then begin looking closely at movement. If your organization has faith in its hiring, onboarding, performance management, and development practices, your leaders won't hesitate to move people. They will be more than willing to move top talent up and around in the organization because they trust in the ability of their organization to hire or grow replacements. (They are also willing to move people on from the organization, if needed, for the same reason.) All too often, managers will try to keep top performers hidden for fear they'll never find others to fill these roles. Changing this attitude is key to a successful mobility practice.

Of course, changing a culture is difficult, and there's no magic wand to do so. But what you can do is influence behavior, and there are three major ways that organizations can do this:

- train managers on what is expected of them;
- provide managers and employees with tools and resources to support mobility; and
- hold leaders accountable for making mobility a reality, as part of their own job description and performance.

None of this is easy. And even with the best of intentions, managers may not be casting their net wide enough when it comes to who has visibility into opportunities. Just as technology has revolutionized every aspect of Human Capital Management, technology is playing an increasingly valuable role in helping organizations make their internal mobility strategies a reality.

Aspect43

Aspect43 believes the biggest influencers in HR technology should be the people who use it and the companies that build it. We designed our research group to improve HR tech by giving practitioners a voice through our buyer and market research, targeted focus groups and roundtables, and providing all of our market education for free to practitioner teams. Our strategic services group partners with solution providers and investors focused on building a new generation of work technology through better products, stronger go-to-market positioning, and growth strategies that move the future of work forward.



Mollie Lombardi

Chief Research Officer, Aspect43

Mollie Lombardi is a top industry analyst with extensive experience gathering and interpreting new data, but she also moves beyond the numbers, translating them into real decisions and actionable insights. She has interviewed & surveyed tens of thousands of organizations, and her dedication to creating better conversations between buyers and sellers of HR Tech drives her work. Her research has appeared in Fast Company, The Wall Street Journal, Inc., and other industry trade publications. She has also presented at HR Events globally. Prior to Aspect43, Mollie has held a number of leadership roles at industry analyst firms including Brandon Hall and The Aberdeen Group.



Sarah White

Founder and CEO, Aspect43

Sarah White is an industry veteran with a passion to improve how people buy, sell and use technology at work. Her first start-up, focused on vendor education and selection, was acquired in 2006 and helped educate more than 750 companies on buying new software. Since then, she has continued to focus on improving the market - working with more than 300 vendor and investment teams, publishing dozens of analyst reports and new frameworks, and speaking on HR, Recruiting & Technology at events around the world. Prior to Aspect43 she has held executive leadership and principal level roles at Cornerstone, Bersin, Clear Company (formerly HRMDirect), and founded Accelir Insights.

About Our Sponsor

WORQDRIVE

WORQDRIVE is an internal mobility tool that matches current employees to open jobs based on their skills and aspirations, serves up relevant learning and development based on the employee's growth goals, and allows them to apply for internal jobs with one click. WORQDRIVE also allows recruiters to anonymously source internal talent based on their skills. We do this to eliminate bias and bring real internal equity to the mobility space. Because we are storing skills and aspirations, we empower leaders to see organization-wide skill and opportunity gaps. We built WORQDRIVE with a consumer-grade interface to ensure adoption because we know without the talent participating, internal mobility cannot work.

References

1. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>
2. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/talent-strategy/global-talent-trends-2020-report>
3. <https://www.visier.com/clarity/women-on-the-move-new-survey-uncovers-urgent-need-to-empower-female-leaders-in-todays-workforce/>
4. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/talent-strategy/global-talent-trends-2020-report>
5. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/internal-mobility-boosts-retention.aspx>
6. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/talent-strategy/global-talent-trends-2020-report>
7. <https://hr.mcleanco.com/>
8. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/seven-charts-that-show-covid-19s-impact-on-womens-employment>
9. <https://hr.mcleanco.com/>
10. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/06/corporate-mentorship-programs/528927/>
11. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/talent-strategy/global-talent-trends-2020-report>
12. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinecomaford/2019/07/03/new-study-76-of-people-think-mentors-are-important-but-only-37-have-one/?sh=434f26d14329>
13. <https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report-2018>
14. <https://hbr.org/2015/06/the-best-way-to-hire-from-inside-your-company>
15. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/understanding-the-skills-gap-and-what-employers-can-do-about-it/>