

Prime your organization for the talent mobility revolution

Expert-backed methods to cultivate a culture that fosters internal employee growth.

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A Cornerstone collaboration with Edie Goldberg, Ph.D., nationally recognized talent management advisor and author of *The Inside Gig*. Some aspects of this eBook are drawn from *The Inside Gig*.

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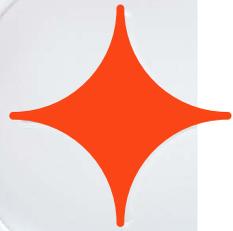
Edie Goldberg is the Founder and President of E. L. Goldberg & Associates. She is a nationally recognized expert in talent management and the future of work. Her practice focuses on designing human resources processes and programs to attract, engage, develop, and retain employees. Her clients are from all industries and range from Fortune 10 companies to start-ups. Prior to starting her own firm over 20 years ago, Edie was a global thought leader in the Human Capital Practice at Towers Perrin. In addition to her strategic advisory work, she is also the chair of the board for the SHRM Foundation, and she is a member of the Board of Advisors for three HR Technology companies.



Cornerstone powers the future ready workforce with a next-generation talent experience platform designed to unite technology, data, and content and inspire a work environment of growth, agility, and success for all. With an AI-powered, skills-forward, experiential platform built on an open architecture designed for neutrality and scale, we help organizations modernize their learning and development experience, deliver the most relevant content from anywhere, accelerate talent and career mobility, and establish skills as the universal language of growth and success across their business. Cornerstone serves over 7,000 customers and 100 million users and is available in 180 countries and 50 languages.



LRMG is a strategic Cornerstone partner in Africa. We are leaders in talent technology and talent advisory. LRMG digitally enable high performance in your teams with talent acceleration systems, smart toolboxes and content, and new high-performance habit-forming strategies.



The new era of talent

The way employees work — where, when, why, and with whom — continues to evolve with the shifting business landscape.

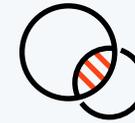
Unforeseen challenges have drastically altered the workforce. The pandemic forced companies to quickly pivot in new directions as the business landscape changed. Employees were moved to new project teams to address both new challenges and business opportunities. Due to technological innovations, new skills are emerging at an ever-increasing pace.

At the same time, employee engagement remains stubbornly low and talent shortages are at a 20-year high, leaving companies to determine how to attract and retain the talent they need to move their business forward. Productivity is also historically low and is driven by stress, burnout, lack of access to the required skills, and our inability to completely reimagine our approach to work (versus simply automating our existing processes).

Organizations remain tethered to the same outdated tools, policies, and practices restraining them from prevailing over these disruptions. Some business leaders fail to recognize that we've entered a new era where internal talent mobility is critical for employees and employers.

In reality, leveraging internal talent and new technologies allows organizations to better prepare for both economic downturns and growth without hiring a whole new workforce.

Employees are more than just their job titles. Before their current positions, people had other roles, industry knowledge, interests, and skills. These past experiences and passions reflect employees' unique abilities to contribute to their organizations, even if those skills don't apply to their current roles. But it's a common problem for organizations not to realize the full spectrum of skills their employees offer. So how can you improve the visibility of your organization's talents? And what can you do with this knowledge?



Instead of competing for skills that are short in supply and high in demand, focus on what you have the power to control

- 1 Bringing visibility to the internal skills you already have and identifying any skills gaps
- 2 Learning how to accurately predict the skills you might need in the future
- 3 Addressing the speed at which you can upskill current talent
- 4 Empowering employees with the opportunities they need to grow their careers
- 5 Using digital horsepower, like artificial intelligence, to efficiently match and deploy talent to the right work at the right time and the right cost



Gains from growing employees

The key to unlocking your organization's limitless potential is talent mobility. Internal mobility increases the visibility of employees and exposes them to new experiences throughout the company. The overarching goals of talent mobility are to facilitate career development, increase employee engagement, and create organizational agility.

Internal talent mobility can refer to moving individuals to new jobs within the company, but it can also be used to match individuals to project-based opportunities they can participate in while maintaining their current roles.

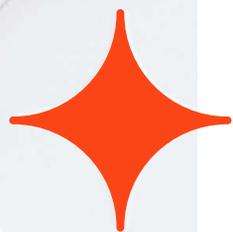
For example, a marketing analyst might be an excellent fit for an upcoming sales development manager position within the same organization. Their expertise in analyzing marketing data, monitoring competitors, and identifying new customer bases would greatly benefit the sales department by building meaningful partnerships and moving leads down the pipeline.

Alternatively, that same marketing analyst may be able to lend their skills and expertise to help the sales team analyze data to identify the sales tactics that best contribute to the team's success in a new market category. Talent mobility is a best-for-everyone solution.



Talent mobility can help organizations

- ◆ Identify the hidden talent within to execute against critical business priorities
- ◆ Empower employees to grow their careers and gain visibility into new roles and opportunities
- ◆ Build the talent they're lacking due to a tight labor market and constantly evolving skill sets
- ◆ Reduce employee turnover and revitalize engagement
- ◆ Identify the skills that are growing in demand in the organization relative to the current supply of talent
- ◆ Connect with mentors who can help develop specific skills or areas of expertise
- ◆ Quickly redeploy talent to meet a pressing business challenge
- ◆ Ensure employees can leverage all of their skills and experiences to make a positive impact on the company's success



Employees crave career development

There's a high level of interest in career growth and development in today's workforce. The Cornerstone People Research Lab and Lighthouse Research & Advisory conducted a study to explore how to create the scalable growth opportunities employees crave.¹

The study discovered that more than 70% of workers are interested in learning about career growth opportunities. One in five employees in the survey noted that despite their interest, they don't have transparency into their career opportunities. According to the same research, women were 50% more likely than men to say they don't have visibility into any career opportunities within their organizations.

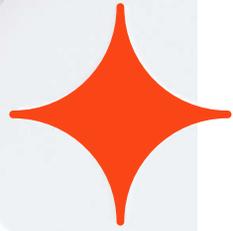
Sadly, most employees say it is easier to find a new opportunity outside of their company than a new opportunity within. When workers are uncertain about opportunities for career advancement, they're less likely to feel a sense of connectedness. Conclusively, employees who feel a sense of belonging will likely be more productive and stay long-term.



of workers are **interested in learning** about career growth opportunities.



One in five employees **don't have transparency** into their career opportunities.



Opening new options with an opportunity marketplace

Managers can best support their team's skill development and power their internal mobility by giving employees hands-on opportunities to stretch and grow. Fortunately, with the advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning today, there are more effective ways to deploy talent across organizations.

An opportunity marketplace helps fill the pressing demand for experiential learning by providing employees with AI-automated career exploration to plot their own path to success.

Organizations can use this cutting-edge technology to match their people to personalized career development plans featuring options for learning, mentorships, gigs, stretch assignments, and more.

HR technology is pivotal in enabling richer experiences for employees that redefine their work. With artificial intelligence, businesses can automatically match employees to exciting new opportunities outside their traditional roles. More agile work environments can leverage an organization's full capabilities and talents, helping employees tap into their passions and contribute to the business's overall success.

Hi, Carmela Alexander!
 Suggestions are made based on your profile and preferences. [Update Career Profile](#)

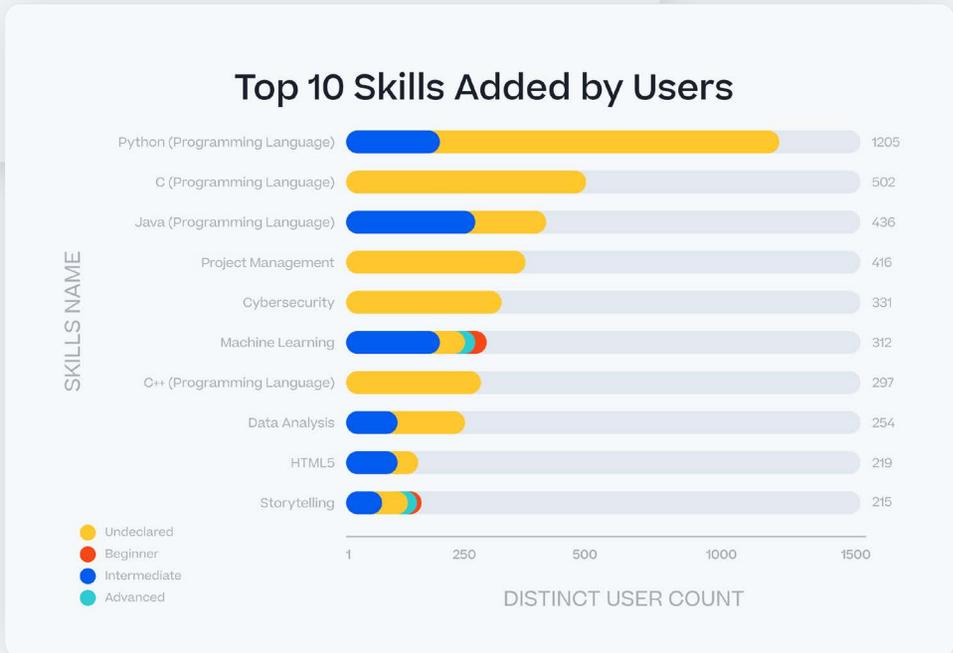
Your current role: **Junior Software Engineer** [View Details](#) → Your aspirational job role (3/5): **Product Manager** [View Details](#)

Explore Opportunities | Suggestions | Job Roles | Vacancies | Projects

Explore Opportunities
Take charge of your career

Suggestions | **Job Roles** | **Vacancies**

Projects



An opportunity marketplace enables organizations to:

Boost understanding of skills landscape and increase organizational agility

Increase the transparency of employees' skills and experiences so leaders can quickly source employees for open roles and projects

Improve workforce planning

By gaining visibility into skills, organizations can identify skill gaps and what percentage of employees can be easily upskilled versus a lengthier or a more expensive development strategy

Empower employees

Put employees in the driver's seat of their career trajectory by connecting them with development opportunities through learning, gigs, projects, mentorships, and more



Why innovative organizations turn to an opportunity marketplace

Deutsche Post DHL Group

Cornerstone customer Deutsche Post DHL Group (DPDHL), the world's leading logistics company, turned to technology to discover which current skills aligned with any potential challenges they might face in the future. More specifically, they needed a skills ontology reflecting the differences between their desk-based roles and field roles. This is where the power of AI came into play.

An early adopter of Cornerstone Opportunity Marketplace, DPDHL leaned into the AI-powered skills engine to identify which capabilities could be matched to jobs within their company and pinpoint any potential skills gaps.

By doing so, DPDHL set clear objectives to satisfy both the needs of its employees and the business's needs.

Their strategic, skills-first approach enabled their employees to continually learn, grow, and personalize their career paths. And by celebrating their people's growth and developing talent internally, DPDHL has saved millions on external recruitment costs and future-proofed itself from challenging workforce disruptions.

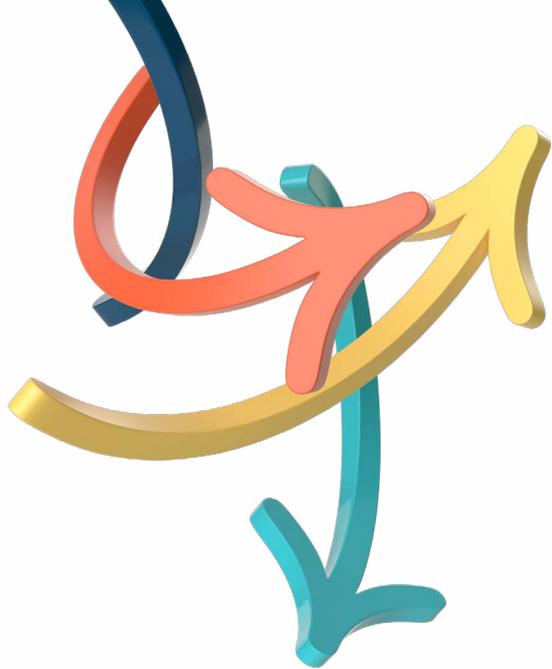


Prepare your organization to champion a culture of growth

In today's ultra-competitive talent market, managers must prioritize opportunities for employees to spread their wings and fly. This is important because the number one reason cited for employee turnover is the lack of career opportunities within the company.

But before an organization moves forward with an opportunity marketplace, it must assess if its company culture is ready for limitless learning. You can't flip a switch and change to a new talent operating model overnight. Organizations must build and refine processes so leaders can champion employee growth.

Implementing this innovation requires leaders to reframe their mindsets and rethink old ways of working. Here's how to do it.



Embrace learning in the flow of work

With life expectancies rising, our traditional school, work, and retirement models need a complete transformation. Learning must evolve from conventional classroom training to continuous learning by doing. Leaders should focus on connecting employees with just-in-time tools and training to support the work being done.

Companies must adopt a growth mindset by encouraging employees to embrace curiosity, learn new skills, and grow professionally, regardless of their current positions. Continuous learning by doing — supplemented by a wide variety of curated content like blogs, books, videos, and online learning courses — will help improve the organization's overall performance.

Once an employee has completed a project or training module, organizations should have systems and technology in place to:

- Prompt the employee to see if they want to add a new skill to their profile
- Suggest project-based opportunities that allow the employee to apply what they learned in training
- Recommend related or more advanced learning content or project opportunities
- Recommend new roles that match the employee's current skills profile and are aligned with their desired career path

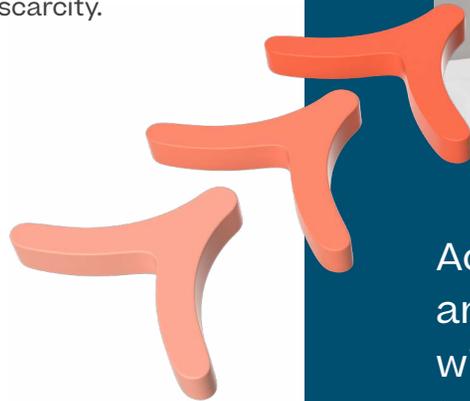
High-performing organizations recognize and celebrate learning. How do your leaders praise employees who learn a new skill or complete a new gig?



Overcome manager talent hoarding

Managers must be held accountable for encouraging learning experiences and celebrating their team's personal growth.

For employees, collaborating on cross-functional teams elicits greater levels of engagement, increased contributions, and more widespread opportunities to flex their untapped talent. For managers, it brings them a diversity of thought that improves the outcomes they deliver. Managers must think beyond the boundaries of their teams and approach talent from a perspective of abundance, not scarcity.



According to the Cornerstone People Research Lab and Lighthouse Research & Advisory study, employees with access to internal self-service career exploration technologies are **2.5 times more likely to say their organization is headed in a positive direction.**

Here's how to help drive that success:

- ◆ Offer a change readiness assessment among senior leaders to better understand why some are concerned about the implications of sharing talent. Then build a change management plan to address their concerns.
- ◆ Share stories of employees who found new careers within the company that reenergized them and made them more committed to the organization rather than looking for new opportunities elsewhere
- ◆ Host cross-departmental monthly meetings with various people leaders so they can better understand why specific projects are critical to the business. (This will create a mentality of a shared mission when lending out employees to other gigs or projects.)
- ◆ Ensure that if an employee moves to another team, that team lead does not have a frozen headcount and is allowed to backfill the position
- ◆ Share stories of how borrowing internal talent helped get a critical project over the finish line or enabled a leader to finish a project on time and within budget
- ◆ Recognize and reward managers for developing their employees and sharing talent across internal boundaries

Finding the time to thrive

Workloads often change with the ebb and flow of assignments. Work is not always a full-court press. While employees wait for feedback or additional information related to one task, empower them to spend time learning or lend their expertise where helpful.

Alternatively, sometimes employees spend time doing work that either drains them because they don't enjoy the work or it is not really their skill set. Or employees spend time in activities, like attending meetings, where they are not adding value. Consider moving a workaround to let employees work at their optimum value. Perhaps, rather than attending that weekly meeting, they can read the notes to be informed and spend that hour working on another project where they can make a real impact.



Zero in on skills

Skills are the foundation for managing the world of work and the heart of today's talent mobility strategy.

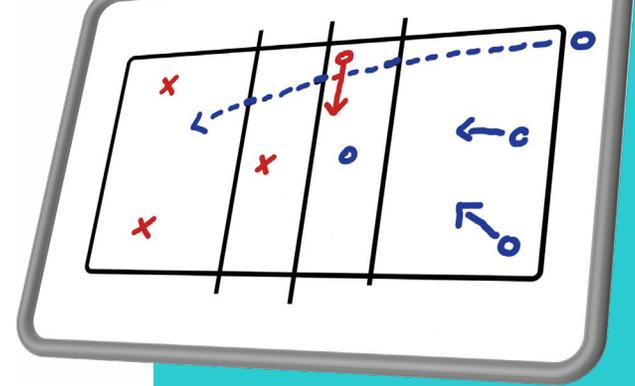
And with the rise of artificial intelligence and machine automation, skill sets must evolve continuously. So imagine the possibilities if a real-time, comprehensive inventory of skills assets were easily accessible at every organization. The potential positive impacts of accurately matching people skills to project assignments could be enormous.

When leaders reframe their thinking to view skill assets as capital assets, they'll see how this puts them at a competitive advantage. In some cases, an organization has engaged in strategic workforce planning, and leaders already know what skills they need for the future. In other cases, leaders rely on skills technology to track what new skills are emerging in requests over time, and that same technology can identify more important skills as the organization evolves.

Either way, knowing what skills they have and what skills they need helps organizations close any gaps and prosper through the shifting business landscape.

Here are some actionable steps companies can take to minimize the shocks and stresses of workforce disruptions:

- ✔ Anticipate and prepare for more flexible career models that include stretch assignments and gig work (see the next section to learn more)
- ✔ Leverage more tenured workers as mentors for less experienced workers
- ✔ Collaborate across academia, industries, and government to strengthen your talent pipeline
- ✔ Hire employees with skills that match your needs, not just qualifications and past experiences
- ✔ Hire agile employees who embrace learning opportunities that continuously improve their performance and productivity
- ✔ As soon as an employee joins an organization, document all of their current skills regardless of if they are job-related or not
- ✔ Continue to assess and build upon these skills on a quarterly basis during development conversations between managers and direct reports
- ✔ Invest in HR technology that will automatically prompt new enrichment opportunities once training is complete



Recruiting for skills

- ✦ Tap into skills technology
- ✦ Use tools that can suggest skills related to a job description and can “read” skills from a candidate’s resume or LinkedIn profile
- ✦ Don’t automatically bypass individuals who don’t have four-year college degrees
- ✦ Leverage AI to identify adjacent skills to help you find diamonds in the rough

Break jobs into a series of projects

The most challenging aspect of the move from jobs to projects is the act of taking what has been a full-time job and figuring out how to break it down into a series of projects or tasks that can be distributed to a different set of people.

One approach that is largely employed by on-demand talent platforms (e.g., Upwork, Guru, Task Rabbit, etc.) is to take a job description and break it into distinct smaller parts or projects that require specific skills. These parts can be further distilled into more specific tasks. These tasks can then be turned into bite-sized opportunities where employees can lend their skills and experiences to get important work accomplished.

For example, you can have an employee with videography skills film a video you want to use for a career website. After that project is completed, you then might engage another individual who has video editing skills to cut the film and add graphics that will bring the right flair to your marketing collateral.

Another approach that is helpful is to think about a job as a pie. Are there slices that can be given to someone else so that an individual can focus on those slices of the pie (the key areas of responsibility) that they are best suited to execute?

Many employees get drained from having to do tasks that are not really their skill set. But the tasks one person may not like may be another person's passion.

Project planning may be one aspect of their job that is draining for some project leaders, but others may love planning and organizing and thrive on doing this type of work. Moving the workload to those people who thrive in doing that type of work lets everyone do their best work at their highest level of engagement.

A particular project manager may be great at all aspects of this work except for budgeting. If the job is deconstructed, this work could be an opportunity for another individual whose expertise and passion is financial analysis. Perhaps someone from the Finance department, who excels in this area, wants to learn project management. Wouldn't this be a great opportunity for them to learn what the role is all about?



Let's deconstruct the job of a project manager to see how this works in action. There are a few core slices of the pie for the role of a project manager:



Initiate the project

Outline the objectives, project scope, resources, and timeline

Assemble the team

Identify and recruit qualified team members and oversee their work

Execute the project

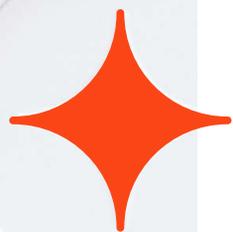
Monitor project progress, manage project risks, and ensure effective communication channels are established

Manage project budget

Develop and manage the project budget, track expenses, and prepare financial reports

Assess project outcomes

Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of project outcomes to determine if they met the project objectives and were they delivered on schedule, within budget, and with the expected level of quality (additionally, document key learnings for future projects)



Shifting to a “supply chain” mentality

Supply chains are primarily associated with the manufacturing industry and are rarely used when referring to talent inside an organization. Yet human resource departments are dynamic networks that produce and deliver high-demand talent.

Until recently, the only way organizations could inventory internal talent was to identify how many employees they have with a given job title. This strategy proved inefficient since competencies became irrelevant or generic very quickly. Skills of the future have more levels of specificity than competencies.

Human resource departments today can leverage technology and data science to transcend outdated processes and function more like a supply chain that continually catalogs what skills and capabilities an organization does or doesn't possess.

These innovations simplify the human resource complexities of talent management and provide real-time snapshots of the strengths needed to maintain competitive advantages in their markets.

Putting it all together

Designing opportunities and experiences that facilitate talent development and enable workforce agility doesn't happen overnight. Building the business case for internal talent mobility and assessing your organization's readiness are critical steps to overcoming the challenges presented by this rapidly changing economy.



Conclusion

Questions to ask

Are managers willing to share talent across boundaries? Or do managers operate from a mindset of talent scarcity or talent abundance?

Does your organization operate in a boundaryless manner with lots of cross-functional collaboration?

Does your culture emphasize what is in the best interest of the company or team?

Do your managers value diversity of thought?

Do leaders understand the importance of operating from a growth mindset and understand their role in facilitating development?

Do leaders lean into the strengths of their employees, finding new ways for them to leverage their skills?

Are employees encouraged to follow their passions?

With this wealth of knowledge, companies can customize specific strategies to transition to a technology-enabled, project-based work environment. While it's impossible to change everything at once, **creating this roadmap for the future by implementing a new talent operating model can help:**



Uncover the hidden skills within your workforce



Cost-effectively align the right talent to real-time business challenges



Apply machine learning and AI to manage the allocation of resources across departments



Break down the barriers of organizational silos preventing agile, collaborative teams



Improve employee engagement and retention with opportunities to learn and grow

References

- 1 Cornerstone People Research Lab and Lighthouse Research & Advisory. "Ready, Set, Grow: The Building Blocks for High-Impact Talent Mobility"