



# HOW TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION WITH INTERNAL MOBILITY

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EBOOK

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Internal mobility has [increased 20%](#) as a result of COVID-19. Companies that were forced to slow or stop hiring due to the pandemic needed to find creative ways to redeploy their staff in a dramatically changing business landscape, so they switched from recruiting for the skills they needed to upskilling or reskilling existing staff.

This turned out to be a boon for both employers and employees, as LinkedIn's [Global Talent Trends 2020 report](#) found that internal recruiting improves retention, accelerates new-hire productivity, and ramps up the hiring process. Simply put, internal mobility is the key to creating a [more resilient organization](#), as well as a better employee experience.

In this eBook, you'll find a roadmap for creating a strong internal mobility program at your organization. We'll explore:

- Why internal mobility is so important for effective HR management
- How businesses can increase the internal mobility of their workforce
- How to harness digital technology to make career mobility easier to measure and manage

With this guide to implementing internal mobility, you'll be ready to position your company as the employer of choice in today's highly competitive recruitment market.

**"Since SumTotal's LMS has been implemented, we have seen turnover in branch assistants decline to our lowest rates ever."**

Ken Dude  
HR Principal

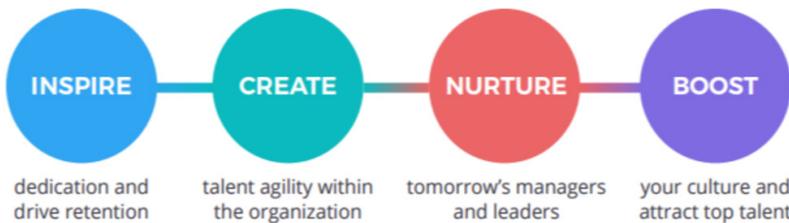
# WHY IS INTERNAL MOBILITY IMPORTANT?

Internal mobility is the movement of employees to new opportunities within the same company.

Instead of hiring from outside the organization, companies move their existing employees vertically or laterally, supporting them with the necessary training and coaching to take on a new role.

**Creating a company culture that fosters and promotes career mobility can have an outsized impact across the entire employee journey.**

**When you begin to prioritize internal career mobility, you stand to:**



Here are just a few examples of how internal mobility can help strengthen your company culture and engage your workforce:

## 1. STRONGER BRAND

Internal mobility is vital if you hope to attract today's top performers, as the current labor shortage is unlikely to decrease any time soon. In fact, labor market analytics firm Emsi has predicted an ongoing "demographic drought," with **24% more jobs** in the U.S. than last year but reduced labor force participation.

According to HR industry expert [Josh Bersin](#), there is only one way to respond to the growing talent gap:

***"Companies must get very serious about internal mobility."***

The top talent you need may well be in your organization already. Beyond reducing your need to recruit externally, investing in internal talent development will also help you build a reputation as an employer of choice. After all, ambitious, gifted candidates are looking for companies where they will be able to grow and make career progress — and investing in internal mobility means they are more likely to knock on your door.

## 2. INCREASED EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Internal mobility is more than just a way to handle a shortage of qualified applicants. According to LinkedIn, employee tenure is [41% longer](#) at companies with high internal hiring than those with lower internal hiring, which means improving your internal mobility program will make it easier to both hire and retain great candidates.

## 3. IMPROVED COMPANY CULTURE

The [SumTotal Organizational Maturity Index](#) is based on input from our 6,700+ customers and our 35+ years of experience as an HR software vendor. Our research revealed that “mature organizations” are more resilient and able to adapt to changes more rapidly. One of the defining characteristics of mature organizations is that they have a people-centered company culture wherein employees feel that they are seen as individuals, their well-being is prioritized, and their career ambitions and development goals are supported and enabled. Internal mobility is a core component of creating this kind of adaptive and engaging culture.

To help clarify the maturity level of your organization’s current learning, talent, and workforce strategy, start by completing the [SumTotal Organizational Maturity Index Diagnostic](#).

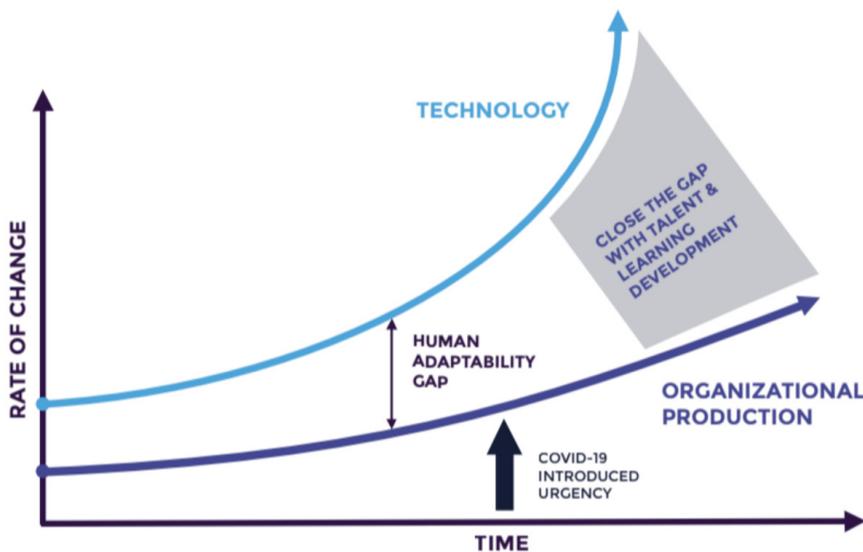
## 4. IMPROVED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Internal mobility is a significant driver of employee engagement, as employees who know their efforts may result in a promotion or another exciting career opportunity are far more likely to be motivated to deliver their best work. In fact, according to Deloitte, organizations that encourage internal moves and offer employees stretch assignments can increase engagement levels by [as much as 30%](#).

## 5. A FUTURE-PROOF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

With the current rapid rate of change, employees' skills will be out of date [in 2.5 years](#) without consistent professional development. Given the challenges of recruiting in today's tight job market, companies that act now to build upskilling into the day-to-day employee experience will be optimally positioned to adapt.

### LEARNING IS THE PRODUCTIVITY ACCELERATOR



Simply put, a future-proof learning and development program should recognize the “inevitable fusion of learning and talent” and encourage employees to forge their own career development trajectories within the organization.

“SumTotal’s learning capabilities were far superior to the other tools. I knew it would make my life easier and would drive a cultural change, not just automate processes.”

Ghie Lara, AVP for Human Resources, Administration, and OD Alsons Power Group

# HOW TO FACILITATE CAREER MOBILITY

Fostering internal mobility isn't always easy — [just 6%](#) of employers feel they're doing a good job at internal mobility. And chances are, this low figure isn't for lack of interest, as a survey by Deloitte found that nearly [90%](#) of employers believed having a strong internal mobility program would help their retention and recruitment goals. Despite this, only 33% of respondents actually had such a program in place, with some companies not just neglecting internal mobility but actively working against it by discouraging recruiters from “poaching” their top performers.

The post-pandemic talent landscape may finally give businesses the push they need to implement a convincing talent mobility strategy. However, to make internal mobility a long-term success, you'll need to start by re-evaluating the full employee journey and identifying areas to target. These may include:

## 1. WORKFORCE PLANNING AND STRATEGY

How are your hiring decisions currently made? Do you have a coordinated, forward-looking recruitment strategy to address current and future skills gaps, or are managers still requisitioning new hires whenever the need arises? Do you use a skills and competencies framework that's updated as business needs change? And, crucially, do you have management buy-in for increasing internal mobility — even if it can cause short-term inconvenience for individual managers?

## 2. HIRE FOR POTENTIAL, NOT EXPERIENCE

Internal mobility starts with how you hire employees. In today's quickly changing workplace, it makes more sense to hire employees for their innate skill sets, capacity for learning, and potential for growth rather than their experience in a specific role.

## 3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The following [performance management processes](#) are a key part of encouraging employees to seek out opportunities for internal mobility:

- **Performance reviews:** Managers should use performance reviews to discuss career growth with their direct reports — or even hold separate development conversations on an ongoing basis. Managers need to see themselves as career coaches who help employees thrive and grow within the company as a whole, not just in a given role.

- **Unified HR systems:** Learning and development systems need to be tied to your performance management processes. If your HR systems are siloed into individual software platforms, your company will remain unaware of current employees qualified to fill open roles. Conversely, the [HR systems](#) deployed at a mature, people-centric company present a 360-degree view of employees as individuals, making it easy to view current performance and growth as well as identify opportunities for internal mobility.

## 4. A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK

In a [feedback culture](#), learning and growth are part of the day-to-day employee experience. When employees have ongoing opportunities for enrichment via additional challenges and stretch goals, moving into a new role, department, or level becomes customary.

“In the post-pandemic, people have had an opportunity to do things differently, be a part of work groups or initiatives because they were working remotely. They were able to find creative ways of solving problems in a virtual world that allowed them to tap into different areas in their job. **They are unwilling to go back to the status quo.**”

I believe this is a great thing. Employers are being forced to look at the people that work for them in a different way. Businesses have been driven to tap into the innovative and creative minds that emerged brightly in the pandemic.

**It is not business as usual anymore, but business as unusual.”**

- Nancy J. Lewis, leadership expert and CEO of Progressive Techniques

# HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY HELP ME IMPROVE INTERNAL MOBILITY?

Companies wishing to foster internal mobility face two key challenges: securing management buy-in and creating the systems to support career progress. The pandemic left many business leaders convinced that talent mobility is an urgent priority, so today’s HR professionals must be focused on **creating a digital infrastructure that delivers a seamless and growth-oriented employee experience.**

With the right technology solutions in place, HR teams can improve how they:

## 1. COMMUNICATE INTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

A recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) revealed that [only 30%](#) of employees even consider an internal opportunity before quitting to look for career progression opportunities elsewhere.

A [comprehensive talent development platform](#) like SumTotal addresses this issue by making it easy for employees to search for and find jobs based on their competencies, skills, and resume, thereby fostering talent agility within the organization.

## 2. LINK DEVELOPMENT TO CAREER PROGRESSION

With a digital platform that helps employees identify and work to rectify their skills gaps, companies can facilitate a global understanding of internal opportunities for growth. On a personal level, employees and their managers can use the platform to identify the next steps in their development journey and can help them reach their professional goals.

## 3. PERFORM HR ANALYTICS

A recent [McKinsey](#) report made the case that HR personnel now need to take on the role of “internal service providers that ensure high returns on human-capital investments.” In particular, McKinsey advised HR professionals to optimize their talent management capacity by harnessing HR data analytics — for example, through setting up dashboards that let business leaders track the availability of internal talent for critical roles.

However, if your data remains siloed in multiple platforms, this level of data-driven decision-making will remain out of reach. HR technology with an open platform approach will allow you to combine data from multiple systems to gain a holistic view of your workforce, including skills gaps, upcoming recruitment needs, and existing talent resources.

Find out more about SumTotal’s easy-access [data analytics and reporting](#) functions.

## 4. CONDUCT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Internal mobility shouldn't exclusively rely on employees to be proactive, so performance management processes should facilitate career progression by helping users identify growth opportunities.

With SumTotal, personal development plans are more than a resource for struggling underperformers — they are fully automated and easy to execute, allowing managers to quickly create a detailed development plan for every direct report. As such, working toward career advancement is baked into normal performance management processes as a cornerstone of regular manager-employee 1-to-1s.

"Using SumTotal and Skillsoft® to systematize career development is a competitive advantage. Having team members use the solution to drive career planning discussions with their managers will be a complete game-changer in the industry."

DEREK BLAKE  
Divisional Vice President, Global Learning & Development  
ENCORE

## OUR TAKEAWAYS

In today's rapidly changing environment, business success depends on your ability to grow and change.

At a truly people-centered organization, employees know their employer is prepared to invest in their future and support their professional growth. With the right digital technology in place, they are empowered to pursue their own self-directed paths for development and career growth within your organization, creating a win-win for both you and your employees.

# ABOUT SUMTOTAL

SumTotal provides a unified, comprehensive Learning and Talent Development suite that delivers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle. With SumTotal, organizations can build a culture of learning that is critical to growth, success, and business sustainability. SumTotal's award-winning technology provides talent acquisition, onboarding, learning management, and talent management solutions across some of the most innovative, complex and highly regulated industries, including technology, airlines, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals.

Skillsoft and SumTotal are partners to thousands of leading global organizations, including many Fortune 500 companies. The company features three award-winning systems that support learning, performance, and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform, and the SumTotal suite for Talent Development, which offers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle.

Learn more at [sumtotalsystems.com](https://sumtotalsystems.com).

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