



TALENT MOBILITY EBOOK

# Why Talent Mobility Is a Business Imperative— and How to Achieve It



RALLYTEAM

# Talent Mobility: The New Business Imperative

Ask a room full of executives what their company's most valuable asset is, and you're bound to hear a resounding, **"Our people!"**

*So why aren't executives doing more to build a culture that does, in fact, prioritize the growth and development of its people as a means to driving competitive advantage?*



That is, quite literally, a million-dollar question—and the reason organizations are rapidly focusing their attention on their long-ignored talent mobility strategies. By moving employees across roles, functions or projects, employees get the professional growth they crave—while the business reaps powerful bottom-line benefits.

And in today's competitive talent landscape, talent mobility is no longer a nice-to-have—it's a critical imperative. **High-performance organizations are more than twice as likely to prioritize the movement of talent, while low-performance organizations are 2.5 times more likely to say the movement of talent doesn't matter.**<sup>1</sup>

## Why Companies Are Embracing Talent Mobility

The business case for hiring and developing from within—whether through a promotion, lateral move, stretch project or functional shift—is compelling.



**97% of  
CEOs**

say that having the right talent is the most critical factor for business growth

Businesses benefit from reduced hiring costs, faster time-to-hire, improved quality of hire, lower turnover, and higher profitability. **In fact, 81 percent of organizations actively practicing talent mobilization experience on or above target revenue growth compared to just 68 percent of other organizations.**<sup>2</sup>

And since 97 percent of CEOs say that having the right talent is the most critical factor for business growth,<sup>3</sup> organizations are increasingly making talent mobility a strategic business priority. A PwC report, for instance, reveals that two-thirds of CEOs say it's more likely that talent in their organization will come from internal promotions in the future.<sup>4</sup>

Forward-looking executives know that by optimizing their existing talent pool, they can more effectively meet organizational goals, achieve and sustain a competitive advantage through human capital, and drive better bottom-line performance.

And yet, despite the fact that leaders seem to be acutely aware of the strategic importance of talent mobility, there still exists a **tremendous disconnect between vision and execution.**

## Barriers to Talent Mobility—And How to Overcome Them

While 93 percent of CEOs recognize the need to adjust their strategy for attracting and retaining talent, a whopping 61 percent still have yet to take the first step.<sup>5</sup>

So what's holding organizations back from building—and benefitting from—a culture of talent mobility? And, more importantly, what steps can business leaders take to address these obstacles? Here are four key barriers to talent mobility and tips on how to overcome them:

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## 1 Talent Hoarding: A Corporate Epidemic

Talent hoarding—when managers keep superstar employees in their current roles because they don’t want to lose them—is detrimental to the bottom line. It’s also alarmingly prevalent.

Research by the Institute for Corporate Productivity reveals that talent-hoarding managers exist at **half of the employers surveyed**. What’s more, that proportion **rose to 74 percent for the lowest-performing companies** in the survey, as defined by such measures as profit and revenue.<sup>6</sup>

### How to fix it

- **Use your voice as an executive to influence a top-down push to combat talent hoarding.** Take a queue from Avanade CEO Adam Warby who—after struggling with rapid business growth due to talent-hoarding managers—initiated a push to shift leaders to new roles every few years.<sup>7</sup>
- Executives should also demand accountability from leaders for developing and moving talent internally. Consider implementing a formal incentive program to encourage managers to mobilize employees and hire from within—or, at the very least, measure them on their ability to do so.

## 2 Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

In Malcolm Gladwell’s fascinating book “Blink,” he reveals that nearly 60 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs in the U.S. are



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over 6 feet tall—a trait that less than 15 percent of adult males possess.<sup>8</sup> **Do we really believe tall people make better leaders?** Or could unconscious bias cause an organization to overlook a leader like Jeff Bezos or Jack Welch—both of whom, standing at 5’7”, don’t fit the profile of a “typical” CEO?

The impact of unconscious bias on talent mobility, diversity and inclusion and the bottom line is significant. After all, **companies with inclusive talent practices generate up to 30 percent higher revenue** per employee and greater profitability than their competitors.<sup>9</sup>

Yet when it comes to recruiting, people often look to hire somebody who they **think** should fit that role—either based on who held the position previously or their own preconceived notions. This prevents even the best organizations from utilizing existing talent in innovative and optimal ways.

### **How to fix it**

- Leaders should take active steps to reduce bias in the organization by stressing the strategic importance of diversity and inclusion. Managers should be trained to understand unconscious bias, the value of diversity to the company, and the connection that should exist between diversity and talent mobility.
- Align your diversity and mobility initiatives by ensuring there is a shared vision and common goals. You should also regularly review your talent mobility initiatives for inclusive design.
- Explore opportunities to introduce more objectivity into your talent mobility practices. Have managers assign



employees to projects based on their skills and experiences, as well as provide feedback based on the actual work completed within a project.

### 3 Limited Visibility Into Workforce Skills

As the war for talent continues to increase, companies must learn how to effectively leverage their most important resource: **their people**.

But too many organizations are still running blind when it comes to fully understanding the power that lies within their workforce: 57 percent of employees feel their employers are not fully taking advantage of their talents.<sup>10</sup>

Without deep visibility into workforce skills, competencies and gaps, **you'll never be able to fully utilize and get the most out of your internal talent pool.**



**57% of Employees**

feel their employers are not fully taking advantage of their talents

#### *How to fix it*

- Work with HR leaders and managers to conduct a thorough workforce audit in order to assess organizational skills and gaps. If your employees' skills don't match your company's needs, consider whether stretch assignments or training—rather than external hiring—could meet the needs of the business while also supporting your employees' needs for growth and development.
- Consider how technology could give you a better line of sight into employee skills and capabilities. Investing in a talent marketplace platform can help you automatically extract employee information directly from LinkedIn or your HRIS for full, real-time visibility into your current workforce's strengths, skills and experience.



**1 in 3**

Believe orgs aren't giving stakeholders the right tools to implement and practice talent mobility



## 4 Internal Recruitment Inefficiencies

Another barrier to internal talent mobility is the inability for organizations to efficiently and effectively match internal talent to organizational needs. This can be a result of simply failing to “think inside first” when it comes to filling a position. Often even employees are too focused on climbing the proverbial corporate ladder to recognize—or appreciate—the many other career possibilities that may exist within an organization.

Not having the right resources in place can also hamper the ability of managers and HR leaders to successfully match employees to internal opportunities. According to the 2015 Talent Mobility Research Report, more than 1 in 3 respondents believe organizations aren't giving stakeholders the right tools to implement and practice talent mobility.<sup>11</sup>

### *How to fix it*

- Clearly define and communicate organizational goals company-wide. Since talent mobility is really all about getting the right talent in the right seats to support the needs of the business, all employees must fully understand the organization's top priorities—and be asked to consider how their skills can support those priorities.
- Reframe the organization's perspective on hiring and promotions. Communicate the “why” of lateral moves as it relates to business performance, and ensure lateral moves are rewarded and recognized just as much as promotions.
- Ensure your HR team has the tools, technologies and resources they need to match in-house talent to available opportunities. A talent mobility platform can help you auto-match and recruit talent to jobs, projects or tasks based on skills, development areas and availability.

## Real-World Success

# How eBay Makes Internal Talent Mobility a Reality

As part of an initiative to empower employees to take control of their own career development, e-commerce leader eBay deployed Rallyteam's talent mobility platform to four business units in North America and Europe.

As a result, 75 percent of projects have matched to talent in just the first few months and eBay has seen a 30 percent increase in employee engagement. Partnering with Rallyteam to facilitate a culture of talent mobility has been so successful, eBay is now planning to roll out the platform company-wide.

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## Building a Culture of Talent Mobility

Creating a thriving talent mobility program that is deeply rooted in your corporate culture starts at the top. Like many enterprise-wide initiatives, executive leadership, support and transparency is paramount. And for business leaders who demonstrate an unwavering commitment to talent mobility, the payoff is real. In fact, **high-performance organizations are 4.5 times more likely to report that criterion for talent mobility is transparent to their organization.** <sup>12</sup>

A recent survey revealed 71 percent of U.S. workers are looking to change employers.<sup>13</sup> Right now, **nearly three-quarters of your employees are actively looking to move on because you aren't giving them the growth and development they crave.** But with a thoughtfully designed and executed talent mobility strategy, you can reduce the risk of losing your top performers to the competition and bolster bottom-line performance.



As Bersin by Deloitte notes,

*One of the biggest success-drivers in enduring organizations is their ability to rapidly and transparently move people from role to role and function to function as business needs change.*<sup>13</sup>

In today's rapidly changing and increasingly competitive business environment, can you really afford not to prioritize talent mobility?

Ready to learn more about how you can leverage technology to implement a robust mobility program? [Let's talk.](#)

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