Rethinking Career Development to Build Tomorrow's Workforce

workday.

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Over the past few hundred years, our world has experienced three different industrial revolutions–the first driven by the use of <u>steam</u>, followed by <u>electricity</u>, and then <u>information technology</u>. Now there's another revolution upon us, and its most marked characteristic is the dizzying speed of innovation.

This "fourth industrial revolution," <u>as it's been called</u>, affects industries and markets around the world. It also affects the nature of how we work. Unprecedented access to knowledge, more processing power, and the rise of new types of technology like artificial intelligence and quantum computing will fundamentally change productivity and efficiency for the next generation of workers.

While it may be too soon to know exactly how these technologies will change day-to-day work, we do know that it's going to change the nature of work, and the look and feel of our careers. We are already beginning to see a <u>departure</u> from the traditional, linear career path. Job satisfaction is taking on new meaning for those entering the workforce as well as for those who have been in it for decades. Today's workers are passionate about cross-team collaboration, and are eager to quickly take on new responsibilities and develop new skill sets. They don't want to spend years grinding away in a role to earn those opportunities, and want more career mobility. <u>A recent study</u> shows that today, the average worker only spends 4.4 years in a specific job, and millennials only half that.

This shift in the workforce will impact each part of the employee lifecycle, from recruitment and talent retention to employee engagement and performance enablement. With so many more opportunities, employment becomes a two-way street that will require increased personalization to keep employees motivated. This is not just an HR issue. Declining employee engagement also leads to a decline in overall revenue growth.

If we don't keep up with this rapidly changing workforce, we'll find ourselves without the talent, skills, organizational agility, and ability to innovate that the best leaders seek. To build a workforce that can withstand these changes and thrive during the next revolution, we must rethink our approach to career development and refocus our efforts to build the leadership of tomorrow.

This will require us to invest in foundational leadership development at every level in the organization: from the green graduates fresh out of college to the experienced and tenured senior managers. We must also make an effort to foster meaningful employee connections and mentorship relationships to inspire, motivate, and create better career paths. Finally, we must provide ample opportunities for learning regardless of the role: the more skills we offer, the greater value we provide to the individual and the company as a whole.

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Nurture Future Leaders

We should ensure that leadership skills are taught regardless of whether an employee is a direct people manager or not. For those that do manage people, developing the right skills is critical. Bad management is one of the top contributors to low employee

engagement, and ultimately, poor retention. As has been said, people join companies, but they leave managers. The reality is that many successful employees will become people managers at some point during their careers, despite the fact that they don't have the right experience or skills when they step into the role. In fact, a recent Gallup survey suggests that only 1 in 10 employees have what it takes to be a good people manager.
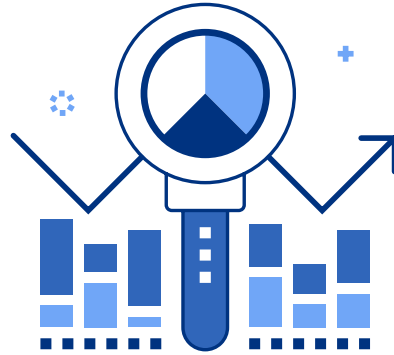
What's more, employees will likely imitate, for better or worse, the management style they've seen firsthand. Without the opportunity to learn best practices in management or general leadership skills, companies are perpetuating a vicious cycle of bad leaders that can ultimately create bigger problems across the company.

What more can organizations do to help employees develop the critical skills needed to lead? One idea is to weave training and career development opportunities into the fabric of your company culture. We'll come back to this later, but by providing a structured program early in their careers, you ensure that employees get a head start on developing their leadership skills. Rotational programs, for example, give employees the opportunity to experience different roles within the company and get a better understanding of what a career in that area would require.

More established leadership tracks, such as 3M's four-level experiential development program, target employees at different levels in their careers, providing experiences that speak to their skill level and future potential. 3M's programs range in length from 3 to 12 months and include a discovery process for the leaders, spot coaching, 360 feedback, and a capstone project to be completed at the end to show learning impact and how employees can apply the skills in their day-to-day jobs.

With technology and HR systems innovating at a galloping pace, we are also gaining more insight into individual performance. By harnessing employee data, we can identify top performers early on, understand what makes them successful, and use that knowledge to improve everything from personalized career paths to recruiting practices.

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The smarter our systems become, the more time managers will have to focus on employee development. According to a recent survey, managers at all levels spend more than half their time on administrative coordination and control tasks. As developments in artificial intelligence begin to automate many of these tasks, managers will have more bandwidth to spend on employee development.

Some companies are investing in one-on-one training programs to help employees develop "soft skills" such as peer-to-peer communication, public speaking, negotiation, and expectation-setting. Aaron Feinberg, an executive coach and leadership trainer, works with companies of varying sizes and industries to help their employees develop greater emotional intelligence–skills he believes are the backbone of a great leader.

"As a manager and a leader, one of your most important responsibilities is to motivate your employees. You can't do that if you haven't built trust and rapport with them using your emotional intelligence skills–getting outside of yourself and thinking about them," says Feinberg. "Through active listening, open questions, and encouraging self-awareness, you can find out their internal motivations, and help them live their values."

Identifying personal leadership style and individual strengths will help employees become better leaders and assist those they work with or manage in becoming better leaders themselves. Through focused training programs, whether in a group or one-on-one setting, and better insights with the help of technology, we can help all managers and employees reach their full potential.

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Encourage Mentorship

The *New York Times* best-selling author and "mentor-capitalist" Anthony Tjan found that among the 100 or so leaders from various industries he researched for his recent book, there's one characteristic they all have in common: they do everything they can to imprint their "goodness" onto others in ways that make people feel like fuller versions of themselves. By this logic, we should be facilitating knowledge transfers as much as we can to increase the prevalence of good leaders.

Mentoring uses the resources your company already has to improve employee satisfaction, develop leadership, and create lasting relationships with peers. Both parties involved in a mentoring program gain the opportunity to recognize their abilities and limitations, highlighting areas for future development. Most importantly, mentoring serves as an opportunity outside of regular work interactions in which one can discuss career opportunities, the optimal paths to growth, and how to get there with leadership support.

Breaking it down further, for the mentee, it's an advantage to have someone in a senior role outside of your management chain that can provide unbiased guidance on areas you are unfamiliar with, and serve as an ally when opportunities or promotions come up.

For the mentor, discussing issues with a mentee can help develop and renew communication skills. In many cases, this relationship can act as a link between generations, bridging the gap between work styles to help company leadership better understand younger workers and what they can expect from the future workforce.

Building these essential connections also helps company leadership identify future leaders and put them on the track to success. Technology and more advanced performance enablement practices can help us build stronger connections with peers and identify potential career paths. By looking for similar contributions and career goals, we can connect employees with mentors who are able to offer more meaningful feedback.

Companies have also leveraged mentorship programs to target groups of employees that need extra career support. According to Pew Research, 39 percent of women are likely to take a significant amount of time off due to family-related events. Intuit recognized the difficulty women have in returning to their careers after leaving the workforce, so they started Intuit Again, a mentorship program in India that helps women who have taken a break reenter the workforce and sharpen their professional skills through a six-month internship. In the program's first year, 50 percent of participants were hired into full-time positions upon completion of their internships.

Before you establish a mentorship program at your own company, consider what the requirements are for a meaningful relationship to work. There are two important things to remember:
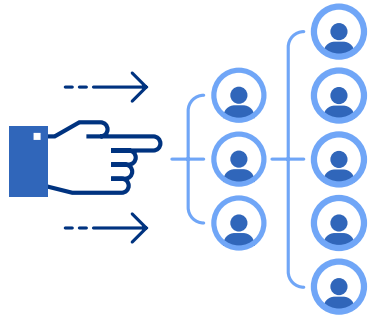
1) Establish goals from the outset.
Outline what you would each like to get out of the relationship before you develop a regular cadence of meetings, then refer back to those goals at points throughout your relationship.

2) Make the relationship a priority.
It's not hard to fall into the bad habit of taking a "check the box" approach to mentorship instead of building something authentic and mutual. For the relationship to work, both parties need to be motivated and engaged, working toward a common goal.

In the end, mentorship is about people helping other people reach their highest potential. By utilizing the tools and practices at your disposal, you can improve overall employee satisfaction and retention, enrich careers, and ultimately help your company build stronger leadership.

TECHNOLOGY AND MORE ADVANCED PERFORMANCE ENABLEMENT PRACTICES CAN HELP US BUILD STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH PEERS AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CAREER PATHS.

Create a Culture of Learning

We've covered how to develop better people managers, but leadership, emotional intelligence, and other skills are important for all employees. To that end, establishing a culture of learning is vital to ensuring everyone at your company, people managers and individual contributors alike, are effectively developing new skills and finding value in their careers.

It's clear that organizations are starting to connect the need for better learning opportunities with business success. This year, improving employee careers and transforming corporate learning emerged as the second most important trend in Deloitte's 2017 Global Human 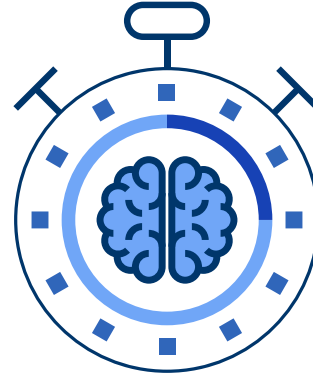Capital Trends survey, up from fifth last year. This urgency is compounded by the fact that 42 percent of millennials say they are likely to leave their company because they are not learning fast enough.

While there have been significant developments in learning technology over the last few years, adopting a traditional learning model isn't the only way to encourage individual development. Simply increasing the frequency of new experiences in a current role will have a strong impact on an employee's career.

What this looks like in practice will be different for everyone, but it can start with a conversation, whether it's a one-on-one between manager and employee, or a more

structured company-wide initiative led by the CEO. Encourage employees to do an honest assessment of their work, the responsibilities outlined in their jobs, and the skills required to get where they want to go next.

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Company leadership plays a major role in the success of a learning environment. Leaders must support employees' attendance at classes, activities, and online programs that support the objectives they have laid out. Companies should look to leverage online learning, including setting up an internal learning environment to share company best practices and user-generated content, as well as looking to external providers such as Coursera and Udacity to offer more wide-ranging material.

Workday Chief People Officer Ashley Goldsmith suggests companies make online learning opportunities as personalized as possible to see the best results.

"Take a page from Netflix, and make proactive recommendations on content that can position employees for growth in a new area," says Goldsmith. "Bring it to the next level by giving your employees the opportunity to create learning content in their areas of expertise, similar to producing their own YouTube tutorials. By providing employees with the opportunity to learn and teach on their own, you empower them to become better at their current role and beyond."

There is a plethora of learning opportunities outside of digital classes as well. On-the-job training such as stretch assignments, shadowing employees on other teams,

and working on projects in other focus areas are all great ways to encourage skill development.

These efforts will be moot, however, if you don't make learning a top priority for everyone at your company. By actively encouraging employees to devote time to learning, your company sends the message that it expects employees to not only succeed, but to also have the opportunity to get promoted, change roles, or take on more responsibility. Maintaining a level of transparency will reveal that no matter how far you rise in the organization, everyone can take time out of their days to work on areas of improvement. Learning, when celebrated and encouraged, is a surefire way to increase the amount of positive experiences for employees.

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—ASHLEY GOLDSMITH, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, WORKDAY

Engaged Employees Make for a Healthy Business

Studies that analyze how some of the world's most successful companies (such as Google) got to where they are will often uncover a recurring theme: engaged employees. Many companies, including Workday, believe happy employees significantly affect all areas of the business: retention, customer experience, even revenue. To keep employees happy and thriving, an investment in their experiences—from establishing meaningful relationships to learning new skills—is essential.

Refocusing your organization's efforts on career development will not happen overnight, but by supporting employees through leadership training, mentorship, and innovative learning opportunities, you can support the kind of environment that fosters growth and success for the workforce of tomorrow.