



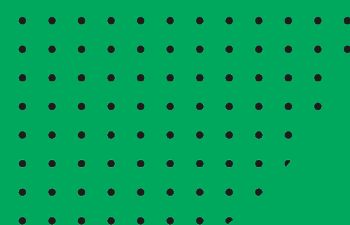
The SocialTalent Guide to...

Internal Mobility

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In his 2002 novel, You Shall Know Our Velocity! Dave Eggers wrote that ‘stasis is itself criminal for those with the means to move.’ We are conditioned as human beings to want to push forward if we can, to achieve and experience more in every facet of life – including our work. No-one wants to feel stuck or stagnant in a role and often the only panacea for this is to look for opportunities outside the company and ultimately leave. But what if this wasn’t the only option?

Internal mobility refers to the movement of your employees to new opportunities within the organisation itself – both vertically to a new job level or horizontally to the same. It allows a company to tap the wellspring of potential high-quality candidates who are already on the books and offer a chance to re-skill (or use different skills) in order to fill gaps in other departments or positions. The issue has become of great importance lately – with hiring freezes sweeping the industry like a Disney spell due to COVID-19 and an impending economic downturn, businesses have been forced to re-calibrate to remain afloat.

While not a new concept by any means, a recent study by Bersin found that as much as three-quarters of companies only have rudimentary internal mobility programs. Hiring externally is still seen by many as *sans pareil*, but this isn’t necessarily the case, and we’re here to show you why!

“Stasis is itself criminal for those with the means to move.”

The Benefits of Hiring Internally

Retention

According to a [LinkedIn](#) report, 94% of employees will stay at a company if they feel like they are being invested in. A lack of future career development is a key driver of employee attrition; by adopting a thorough program of internal mobility you are future-proofing your workforce. It shows that you actively want to nurture talent and promote development within your organisation – an attractive proposition for any employee. A 2015 [Deloitte](#) survey found that while 87% of staff agreed that a strong internal mobility culture would help retention goals, only 33% of the respondents actually had such a program.

Engagement

Only [one in three millennials](#) feel their organisation is fully leveraging the skills and experience they have to offer. If employees feel underutilised or stuck, with no growth path in front of them, it leads to dissatisfaction. Offering your team members further training and an opportunity to develop naturally creates an engaged workforce who are invested and ultimately want to rise and flourish in the company. [Deloitte](#) noted that a culture of internal mobility could even increase overall employee engagement by up to 30%. And engaged employees are loyal employees.

Performance

Sometimes the perfect person for a role is right under your nose! It is never a sure-fire thing that buying in new talent will result in peak performance. Hiring internally allows current employees, who you already know are a confirmed culture fit, to bring their well established skills and work ethic to a new position immediately. In fact, according to research from [Wharton](#), it can take new hires up to two years to match the performance levels of those who are promoted internally while being paid substantially more to do so.

Agility

Offering opportunity and clear career growth also results in an agile workforce that can quickly respond to market changes, new technology, or even unprecedented situations like the current pandemic. Cross-functioning employees with different skills can adapt easily. In some companies, like Spotify for example, this internally mobile attitude is instilled within the mission statement; CEO Daniel Ek told [Fast Company](#) that he thinks of jobs as 'missions' rather than static roles.

Hiring internally is often the easiest, fastest and most successful method for filling open positions. However, like many 'great on paper' ideas, it can be a little trickier to execute in reality...





The Difficulties of Hiring Internally

Even the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Establishing or implementing a culture of internal mobility can raise a number of obstacles that need to be considered before going full throttle.

Visibility

In a recent survey conducted by [Deloitte](#), about 50% of respondents believe it is actually easier to find a job outside an organisation than inside. It's an obvious roadblock that talent acquisition seem to come up against when trying to promote internal mobility. If open job vacancies are not clearly visible to your own staff, then how can you expect them to feel encouraged to apply?

50%

of respondents believe it is actually easier to find a job outside an organisation than inside.

The Power of Veto

Good management is a foundation of a strong approach to internal mobility, but unfortunately, this isn't always the case in every company. Oftentimes if managers are made privy to knowledge about a team member's desire to up-skill or apply for a new role, they squash the move to "save" their own team. Tasked with reaching performance goals themselves, they are loathe to lose star employees, resulting in a phenomenon known as talent hoarding. However, when a manager blocks internal mobility, it simply encourages staff to look elsewhere, outside the company.

Culture

A [PwC](#) report indicated that opportunities of career progression was the most important component in making an organisation an attractive employer. But so many companies don't foster this belief, in fact, many even actively discourage any form of internal mobility, seeing it instead as poaching. If an organisation doesn't promote a culture of hiring from within, it's very difficult for talent acquisition and HR to take advantage of this potential. It's also difficult for employees who don't want their desire to pursue new roles or challenges to be seen as a hint of dissatisfaction.



How to Become More Internally Mobile

Of course, knowing the potential pitfalls that internal mobility can throw up is the first step in avoiding them, but there are a few other tips that can help you overcome any obstacles and implement steps to reap the worthwhile benefits.

Seeing is Believing

Be proactive and ensure your teams are made aware of any opportunities available to them. During the [Brainfood Live Show](#), Adam Gordon implored that an internal job board should be built, if absent, and connected with digital channels where employees spend time. Systems like this need to be put in place so employees can actively create their own career paths while simultaneously opening up this potential pool for talent acquisition. Coinciding with this, internal applicants should be given the same (if not more) credence as external ones, and not just shunted on as an after-thought.

The Culture Show

Creating a culture of hiring internally is more than a recruitment project, it is something that has to be owned by the HR department and actively supported by senior management. Internal mobility should be actively destigmatised and embedded within the systemic approach to talent sourcing. Here's how:

- Provide clarity around the value of mobility so EVERYONE can see the benefits.
- Map the skills of your current employee base for future reference so internal opportunities can be pounced on.
- Get senior leadership on-board and incentivise managers to have transparent conversations with employees about their career aspirations within the company.
- Encourage not just vertical, but lateral moves to other disparate roles and departments.
- Provide opportunities to up-skill within the company.

While it may be a complete mind-set change for some, an open culture of internal mobility allows for company knowledge and skill to remain while minimising disruption.



Confide in Me

Fear is often a big reason why employees are reticent to pursue additional avenues in a company, so confidentiality has to be of paramount importance if you want internal mobility to become the norm. Candidates have to feel secure in the knowledge that their application to another position won't result in bad blood with their current manager or team, especially if it's unsuccessful. Ideally these conversations should be had in the open and career advancement should be championed by all, but as this isn't always the case; assuring confidentiality will cover any awkward situations.

Story Time

According to [Beamery](#), storytelling is an extremely powerful tool for promoting internal careers and is the 'core piece of any marketing or communication efforts around internal mobility.' Recruitment teams need to show success stories in their own organisations to give employees a map they can model their journeys on. They need to plainly see it is possible to move forward and not be pigeonholed. Use internal communication campaigns with emails, blogs, testimonials and even events to champion those who have choreographed unique and fulfilling careers from within. Remind employees of their shared company purpose and drive home the narrative that it's a place where long term tenures are both possible and rewarding.

Storytelling is an extremely powerful tool for promoting internal careers.





The Final Word

As stated by Jason Richmond in an article for [Oracle](#), organisations that promoted internally are 32% more likely to be satisfied with the quality of their hire. Internal mobility means significantly more

than simply filling an empty position from within; it keeps a workplace agile and responsive, results in a faster time-to-hire, helps develop your talent, shares skills and improves retention. In a hiring environment that has been compounded by COVID-19, optimising your internal mobility strategy could make the crucial difference between struggling and success.

The Shortlist

Before you go, why not check out this recent episode of [The Shortlist](#) where Johnny Campbell discusses all things internal mobility with Jan Ackerman, the VP of Global Talent at Oracle. Or catch Johnny's webinar on the topic [here!](#)



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