SocialTalent

HIRING EXCELLENCE PODCAST

INTERNAL MOBILITY AT SCALE

Thom Staight's Top Tips on Internal Mobility at Scale

Former GM, Global Talent Acquisition (EMEA & Asia), Microsoft

1 Lead With the Business Case

- **Tie mobility to agility, not empathy.** The pitch that won leadership over was "we need to move faster," not a values-led case on its own.
- **Put a dollar figure on the alternative.** Redundancies and empty seats both carry a real, quantifiable cost — show finance the number.
- **Don't lead with culture and hope ROI follows.** Tie the story back to business outcomes early, not just people strategy.

2 Build a Common Skills Language

- **Invest in a skills taxonomy before you need it.** Microsoft's foundational work is what made a talent marketplace possible.
- **Simpler beats comprehensive.** The taxonomy only became useful once it was pared back from something big and unwieldy.
- **Connect skills gaps to learning, directly.** Point employees to the exact content that closes their gap, not a general catalogue.

3 Plan for Resistance in Advance

- **Don't assume it's only managers who push back.** Some of the strongest resistance came from HR business partners.
- **Watch your language.** Calling it "internal sourcing" made leaders feel their people were being poached.
- **Build guardrails, not a free-for-all.** Clear rules for when recruiters can approach internal candidates build trust.

4 Simplify, Then Sustain

- **Map the real ways mobility happens.** Narrow a sprawling set of scenarios into a handful of core movement types.
- **Make the obvious moves self-service.** Succession-ready moves shouldn't need sign-off from HR or recruiting.
- **Give it years, not months.** Expect an 18-month build, and years of culture change after launch.

> There has to be a business imperative that you can tie the whole thing back to.
>
> — Thom Staight, Former GM, Global Talent Acquisition (EMEA & Asia), Microsoft