Career Pathing for a Fragmented Work Landscape

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Mounting turnover rates in an already hypercompetitive labor market are increasing HR leaders' uncertainty about how to support employee career growth. CHROs can use the following tactics to maximize their investments in this area and ultimately improve employee engagement and retention.

Career opportunities are a key attraction and retention driver. In hybrid work settings, however, employees are more likely to seek external opportunities when internal opportunities are less visible, or when they do not trust that internal opportunities will be comparable to their external options. To secure higher engagement and retention, CHROs must think differently about the careers they can offer and establish a partnership with employees to create compelling career paths.
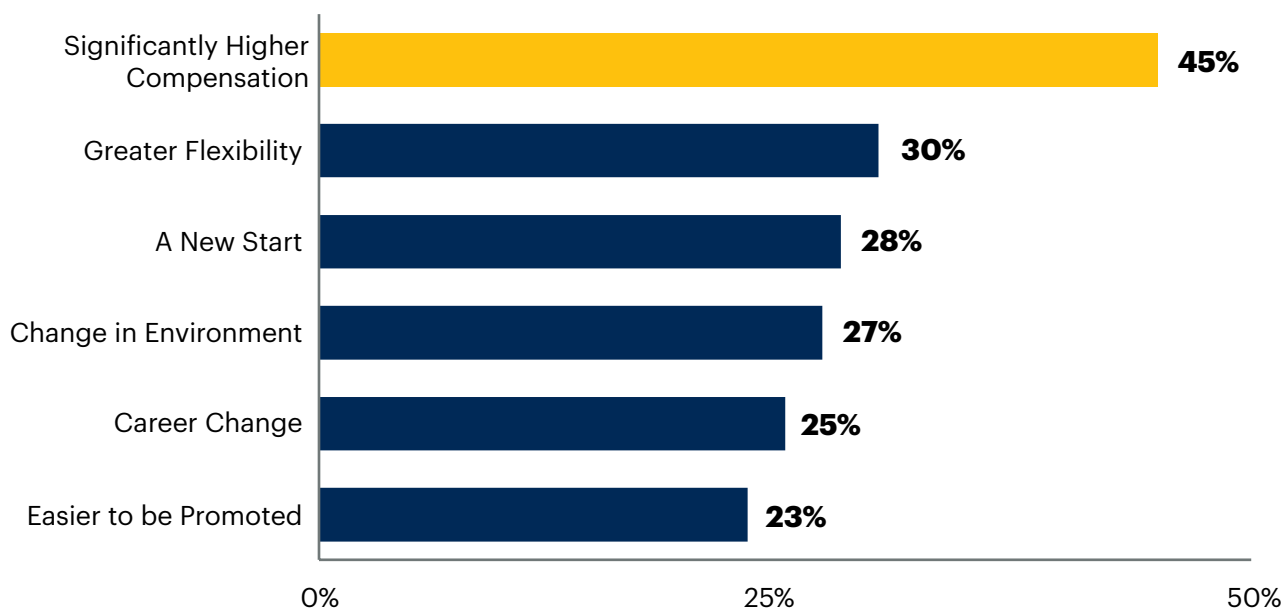
Typically, organizations rely on successful internal communication to provide information about in-role opportunities for employees to grow their careers. In addition, many organizations offer special projects outside the scope of employees' current roles, including stretch opportunities. But, despite these investments, only 39% of job seekers said they are interested in internal roles.[1]

While compensation is the main driver for employees interested in external roles, jobs that provide a new start or a change in their career or environment, or that make it easier to be promoted are attracting employees at similar rates (see Figure 1). Employees are seeking new experiences and assurances that growth is achievable — and many believe they must search externally to find them.

## Figure 1: Why Employees Are Interested in External Roles
Percentage of Employees Indicating Each

Category	Percentage
Significantly Higher Compensation	45%
Greater Flexibility	30%
A New Start	28%
Change in Environment	27%
Career Change	25%
Easier to be Promoted	23%

n = 484 employees actively looking for a new job
Source: 2022 Gartner New Talent Landscape and Career Pathing Survey

Figure 2: Maximum Impact of Tools on Employee Confidence in Careers
Percentage of Respondents
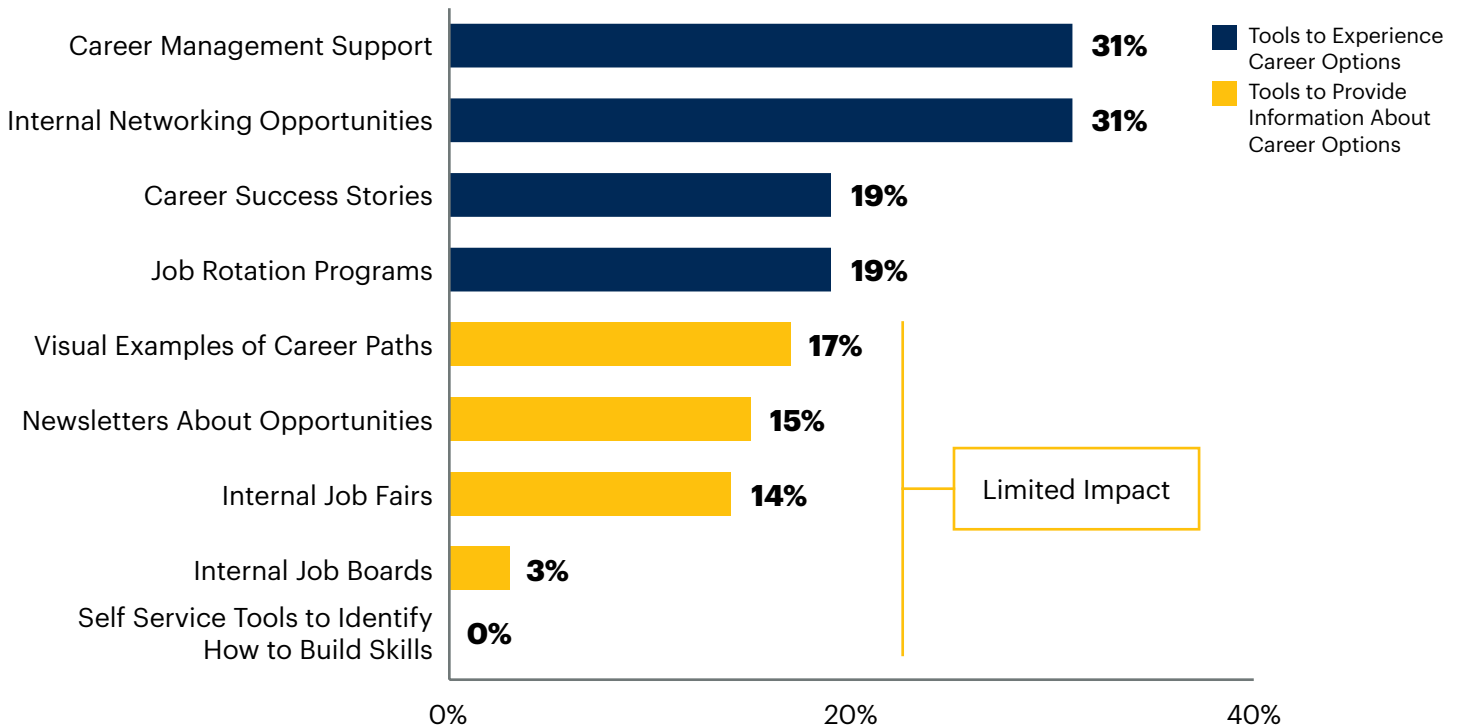
n = 3,370 employees

Q. "I am Confident I Will Have a Successful Career at my Organization."

Source: 2022 Gartner New Talent Landscape and Career Pathing Survey

To stay ahead of the curve, CHROs must ensure their career strategies are visible to employees and tailored to employees' needs. They can improve the experience of career growth for their employees by targeting three phases: setting employees' career trajectories, progressing employees' careers and achieving employees' goals.

Setting Employees' Career Trajectories

As work becomes increasingly distributed, employees have fewer organic touchpoints with colleagues on different career tracks. Employees today spend 65% less time in offices than they did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it more difficult to collaborate across roles and observe other career options.[2] Meanwhile, only one in four employees strongly agrees they feel confident about their career at their organization.[1] Limited confidence, compounded with the lack of visible opportunities, makes employees feel stuck in their careers and think they have no option but to look outside the organization.

To mitigate this issue, organizations are investing in various tools to support employees' careers. However, prioritizing investments in tools that only provide information about careers is insufficient. Employees need to experience career options in more individualized ways, such as career management support and internal networking opportunities. Investing in these areas, in particular, can boost employees' confidence in their careers by 31% (see Figure 2).

To help employees set their career trajectories, organizations should start by being transparent about job openings, internal role benefits and requirements. But more than that, they should give employees real experience in potential career trajectories by being flexible about role design and mobility. One option is providing "career experiments," in which employees try

different career options without the formality of applying for a new role.

TDECU does this by breaking roles down into tasks that can be performed by employees from different areas of the business — for example, by employees in either high-demand or high-supply roles. TDECU prioritizes high-level tasks that overlap between roles, meaning employees in high-supply roles will already be proficient, or can quickly upskill. Once these tasks are identified, TDECU uses temporary mobility to shift the overlapping tasks from an established employee, who is already working in a high-demand role, to a "transferred" employee, who will temporarily own some of that role's responsibilities. This shift allows the established employee to take on other high-value tasks and stretch opportunities. In addition, making this a temporary trial period allows the transferred employee to try out a new role and determine whether they want to work for that part of the business. The experience also provides a clear development plan for how, over

time, the transferred employee would expand and develop in the role (see Figure 3).

Progressing Employees' Careers

As the skills and experiences needed for future roles continue to rapidly evolve, employees are feeling less prepared for the transitions they'll make in the future. Ninety-four percent of employees believe it is more or as important now, compared to before the pandemic, to develop skills outside their current roles. However, not even one in three employees has a clear sense of how to progress their career over the next five years.[1]

To help employees progress their careers, organizations should offer in-role development opportunities that can prepare them for potential roles. HR leaders can help employees dynamically track their career progress at the organization by crowdsourcing diverse career

Figure 3: TDECU: Task-Based Redeployment
Example of Identifying Task Overlap Across Roles
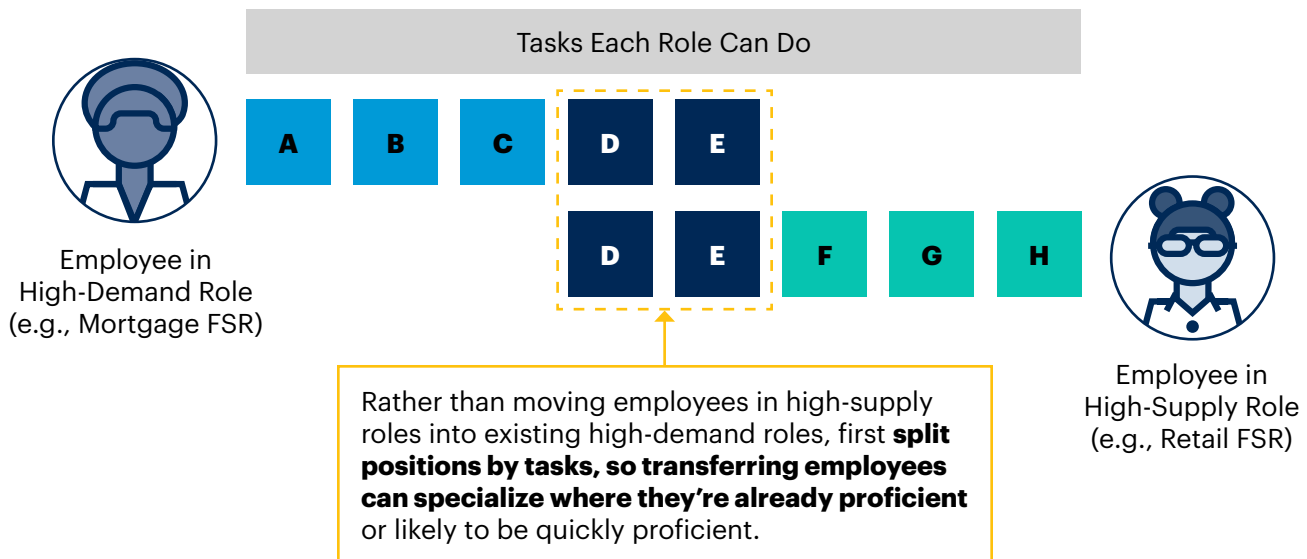
Source: Adapted From TDECU

development examples and matching employees with multiple potential routes. For example, EY has employees lead in the design and communication of their experiences. This allows them to surface more options that align with their personal interests and can boost employee engagement (see Figure 4).

Achieving Employees' Goals

Since the onset of the pandemic, employees' perceptions of the role that work has in their lives has changed — likely indefinitely. In particular, employees are looking for opportunities to take more ownership over how and with whom they spend their time. Gartner's 2022 New Talent Landscape and Career Pathing Survey found that:[1]

- Seventy-six percent of employees want to spend more time with family.
- Seventy-five percent want to spend more time on their personal lives.
- Sixty-eight percent want to find purpose beyond work.

While these factors have always been important, employees today expect their employers to act on commitments to a shared purpose, offer flexible work options and holistically support employees' well-being. But, despite these expectations, less than half of employees (41%) feel comfortable sharing their concerns with their leaders — and even fewer female employees (39%) feel comfortable doing so.[3]

To help employees achieve their personal and professional career goals, organizations should support managers in working with employees to identify potential internal roles that will align with those goals. HR leaders can offer objective channels that provide unbiased support for employees to reflect on what career would best suit their needs. In doing so, they can help employees look beyond their current roles and see how the organization can support them in achieving their goals.
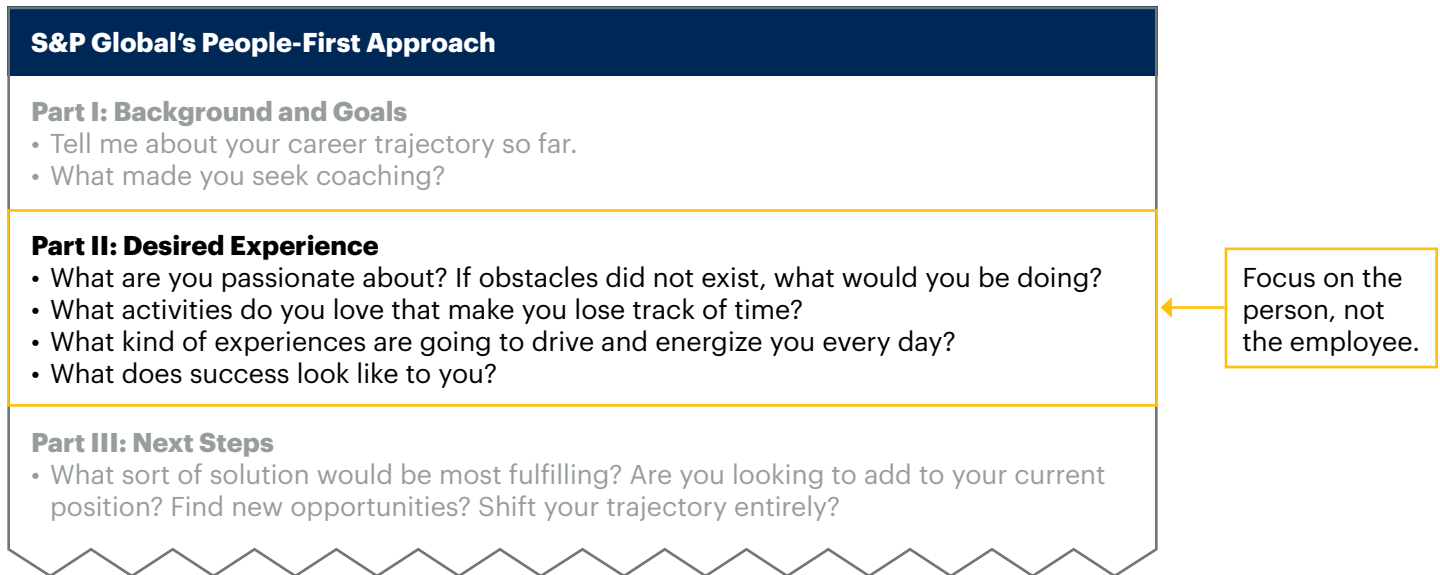
S&P Global does this by providing employees with career coaching opportunities that prioritize their individual needs, not just the needs of the business. During these coaching conversations, employees share their personal interests, aspirations, passions and motivations. Coaches then provide a range of options for employees to pursue both within and outside the company, including temporary moves such as stretch

Figure 4: Employee-Led Growth Experiences

Employee Shares If All the Following Are True:

- It is a skill, opportunity or insight relevant to other employees.
- It extends beyond professional to include personal opportunities.
- Employee is willing to connect others to the opportunity.

Employee Experience Fund

1. Volunteering or Board Opportunity
2. Grad School Consideration
3. Management Coaching
4. Python Skills
5. Résumé Review
6. ...

Employee Uses If All the Following Are True:

- They can determine how this will balance with their role.
- This opportunity will expand personal or professional capabilities.
- They can commit to the identified time frame or requirements.

Source: Adapted From EY

Figure 5: Interest-Focused Discovery Guide
Illustrative

S&P Global's People-First Approach
Part I: Background and Goals • Tell me about your career trajectory so far. • What made you seek coaching?
Part II: Desired Experience • What are you passionate about? If obstacles did not exist, what would you be doing? • What activities do you love that make you lose track of time? • What kind of experiences are going to drive and energize you every day? • What does success look like to you?
Part III: Next Steps • What sort of solution would be most fulfilling? Are you looking to add to your current position? Find new opportunities? Shift your trajectory entirely?

Focus on the person, not the employee.

Source: Adapted From S&P Global

assignments and rotations, and permanent moves such as a new role (see Figure 5).

Effective career coaches should be specialists who are outside the employee's manager's purview to ensure their views are not limited to the role, the immediate team or the manager's network. Coaches should also be required to look beyond the business-first perspective and be available to everyone in the company, not only high-potential employees.

Recommended Actions

To attract and retain talent through professional development and career opportunities, CHROs should:

• Create greater role flexibility to make it easier for employees to experience different career options and thus boost their confidence in careers within the organization.

• Crowdsource career moves and routes from current employees to show diverse options so employees have greater clarity in how to progress their careers.

• Provide dedicated resources that prompt employees to look beyond their current roles and take a wider view of how the organization can help them achieve their personal and professional career goals.

[1] 2022 Gartner New Talent Landscape and Career Pathing Survey. This survey was conducted to better understand employees' attitudes toward the hypercompetitive labor market and their feelings on career pathing in hybrid roles. The survey was conducted online from 28 February through 23 March 2022 and contains responses from 3,370 employees with representation from various regions, industries and functions.

[2] 2022 Gartner Culture in a Hybrid World Employee Survey. This survey was conducted in December 2021. It included responses from 6,758 employees. The survey focused on employees' experiences and opinions related to their organizations' cultures and their connectedness to them, with representation from various geographies, industries and functions.

[3] 2022 Gartner Leadership Success in the New Environment Employee Survey. This survey was conducted online from 28 January through 22 February 2022 and contains responses from 1,000 midlevel leaders in 13 countries across multiple industries. Midlevel leaders were defined and screened based on role title, definition of responsibilities, reporting structure and level within the organization.