

8 Tactics to Evolve Your Talent Strategy and Drive Business Success in 2022

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Introduction

The last decade has seen an unprecedented shift in the way people work, where they work, and why they work. With the rise of digitization, automation, and workplace transformation brought on by the global pandemic, employers and employees alike find themselves in a new era of work where both are reevaluating their values, objectives, and futures.

The immediate impact is on hiring, retaining, and supporting your talent. As the lessons of the pandemic took root, organizations saw employees quit their jobs in record-breaking numbers—a phenomenon known as The Great Resignation. In November of 2021, 4.5 million workers quit their jobs—another

record-breaking month since the start of the pandemic. And many of these workers are staying out of the job market despite a staggering 10.6 million job openings available in November.¹

In 2022, the broader impact of labor and skills shortages has become clear, permeating every function of organizations—upending business plans,² disrupting global supply chains,³ and in many cases, creating negative customer experiences.⁴ This challenge doesn't just affect one or two industries—it's systemic—and what the Washington Post calls “the most unusual job market in modern American history.”⁵





The power has shifted. It's really an employee-driven culture right now. And employers need to make sure that they are very accommodating to their employees' needs and their career aspirations.”

Juergen Lindner

SVP of SaaS Marketing at Oracle

Pamela Stroko, vice president of HCM transformation and thought leadership at Oracle, prefers to call this talent phenomenon “The Great Realignment,” noting that employees aren’t quitting their jobs for no reason. Instead, they are looking for organizations that enable their future vision of success in work and life. A recent study from Workplace Intelligence further shows this: 85% of respondents are not satisfied with their employer’s career support, and 88% said their meaning of success has changed since the pandemic.⁶ It’s clear that employees want flexible, meaningful work and opportunities to grow—and they expect their employers to provide the support, training, and direction to achieve these goals.

In this environment, employees are in a position of strength, and employers are at a crossroads. This Great Realignment can be a crisis—or it can be a golden opportunity. HR leaders have an imperative to answer the call and give employees the skills to help develop their careers. Organizations also have an opportunity to marry the needs of both employers and employees to build a resilient, agile, and purposeful workforce while adapting new strategies, tactics, and technologies to help employees gain skills to drive business success.



The Impact of The Great Realignment

The Great Realignment is positioned as an HR topic, but it's far broader. Talent shortages hinder the ability of an organization to function effectively, and ultimately, impact the bottom line. The results are visible across many aspects of daily life, from empty shelves and product shortages⁷ to understaffed hospitals struggling to treat patients⁸ to ski resorts having to cut hours because of staffing shortages.⁹

The supply chain has become one of the most visible areas of disruption. Manufacturing and supply chain leaders expect 2.4 million positions to go unfilled between 2018 and 2028, causing a potential economic impact of US\$2.5 trillion.¹⁰ Furthermore, throughout the pandemic, this issue has been compounded by the virus itself sidelining workers and irregular shopping behaviors, such as hoarding.

62%

of manufacturers and distributors named hiring skilled talent as a top labor challenge.¹¹



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The Great Resignation typically is packed as an HR topic, but it's honestly so much wider. It impacts your supply chain, your ability to service customers, and the experiences customers have with you. And it's not an industry-specific problem—it's really very systemic at this point in time.”

Juergen Lindner

SVP of SaaS Marketing at Oracle

The talent shortage has also forced CFOs and other financial leaders to make increasingly complex projections. More than a third of CFOs in a PwC survey said they're very concerned about turnover remaining high indefinitely, affecting revenue growth due to lost productivity and hiring costs.¹² Companies traditionally spend anywhere from six months to two years of an employee's salary to replace them, depending on the position and location.

Many employers have responded to the mass exodus of workers by offering remote office options, better compensation packages, and expanded benefits. These shifts are critical to reengaging prospective employees and retaining talent, but they won't solve the problem on their own. The Great Realignment has also revealed that modern work requires a workforce with creative, agile skill sets that can respond to rapidly shifting global realities, the impact of digitization and automation, and evolving consumer needs.¹³



The good news for HR leaders is that there's a common thread in supporting the critical need to hire, retain, and develop future skill sets: a holistic learning and development strategy that centers around employee values, needs, and aspirations. Organizations need to invest in the career goals of their workforce, offer opportunities for meaningful work, and make talent a business priority. And they need to provide the training, skills development resources, and technology that aid in these efforts. Ultimately, all these factors contribute to creating an employee experience that differentiates an organization from the competition.

It's clear this employee-centric learning and development ethos is critical to combat today's talent challenges, and the question is not "whether" but "how." Here are eight actionable tactics HR leaders should consider implementing now.



You need to differentiate yourself by being an employer who is keenly interested in making the employee the center of everything. The focus on work-life aspirations and the flexibility employees need is where we're seeing a lot of differentiation between companies, and that's going to be a decisive factor for corporate Darwinism at large. To be honest, if you don't do those things right now, I think you might find yourself on the receiving end quickly with your talent pool eroded, and employees won't see you as the destination of choice on where to go."

Juergen Lindner

SVP of SaaS Marketing at Oracle



8 actionable ways to evolve your talent strategy in 2022

1. Take stock of the skills your organization needs to thrive in the future

The demands of the workplace have fundamentally shifted, and employers must respond by cultivating talent with more agile capabilities, including analyzing and interpreting data, problem-solving, change-manage, and teaching others. Managers recognize the urgency of this issue. In a recent McKinsey report, 90% of executives and managers said their organizations either currently faced skill gaps or expected gaps to form within the next five years. But a mere third of survey respondents felt that their companies were prepared to address

workforce disruptions caused by massive technology and market shifts.¹⁴

Employees also understand the urgency of the issue in their day-to-day jobs. The number of skills required for a single job is increasing by 10% year over year, and the half-life in value of professional skills acquired has dropped from 20 years to 10 years to five years over the past decade.¹⁵

Pamela Stroko, vice president of HCM and thought leadership at Oracle, believes to cultivate and capitalize on skills needed by employees and organizations alike, employers need a 360-degree view of the skills that their organization already

possesses, as well as those they lack. HR leaders should conduct an enterprise-wide skills assessment to set a baseline for what skills exist in the organization and then use this as a foundation for creating a meaningful learning and development strategy to address any skills gaps.

An effective skills assessment will include data on where the company's skill set is strong—and can pull from its current skill base—to areas where the company needs improvement and must retrain, reskill, or recruit employees. It should also highlight opportunities, including areas where the organization could invest or pivot to gain an edge on competitors.

2. Start the learning and development journey during onboarding

Career development is a partnership between employers and employees that begins on day one. By starting the conversation around goals, accountability, career development, and skills development during onboarding, organizations can demonstrate to employees that they are invested in their long-term advancement.

According to a LinkedIn survey, 62% of employees said that professional development helps contribute to their job satisfaction.¹⁶ Workers are deeply motivated to build successful careers—but they want

employer support. One form this can come in is by providing clear career paths: 78% of employees said that having a clear career path would encourage them to stay longer with an employer.¹⁷

Research shows that a proactive, structured onboarding process can improve employee retention by 50% and lead to a 34% increase in full proficiency on the job.¹⁸ The onboarding process should include standard elements like orientation and training but move beyond these. Instead, employers should also use onboarding as an opportunity to set goals, showcase growth opportunities that exist at the company, and help employees identify and map out their ideal trajectories at the organization.



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As an employer, you have much, much more responsibility right now to make sure that individuals understand how their skill set can be evolved, how you're helping them with training, and what type of new requirements for the business they can participate in.”

Juergen Lindner
SVP of SaaS Marketing at Oracle

3. Cultivate the skills “filing cabinet” for employees

With automation and digitalization transforming the way work gets done, employees are eager to ensure their skill sets don't become obsolete. “People feel their skills are becoming less valuable, or they feel it could be automated. So, there's more sensitivity in the workforce that certain types of tasks can be automated going forward,” says Juergen Lindner, SVP of SaaS marketing at Oracle.

Stroko believes to help cultivate the employee skill sets needed for the future, organizations have an opportunity to create a skills-based “filing cabinet” that aligns with business needs—and helps employees draw on ongoing career and life experiences to become more dynamic, well-rounded, and resilient to market changes.

AI-driven HCM technology provides an opportunity to make this effort feasible. Using AI can help employees identify skills they need in the future, develop a milestone-driven journey, and broker the mentorship relationships essential to career growth. It also helps to scale skills development, bringing it out of the realm of one-on-one relationships and allowing all employees to develop skills that can be matched with meaningful work.

“By applying AI widely, we can become more insightful and more prescriptive about the type of skills that will have a high contribution to an employee's success. This can help bind employees into the company and allow workers to have more mobility. Machine learning prediction and pattern analysis have great promise for helping develop dynamic skill sets,” explains Lindner.

4. Invest in a real-time internal talent marketplace

In a world that's increasingly flexible and geographically distributed, organizations can help democratize internal mobility by surfacing roles and projects across departments, geographies, and teams in real-time by establishing an internal talent marketplace.

This approach focuses less on rigid, task-based jobs and linear career paths and more on an agile, project-based path. It draws from existing talent to match employees with company needs in a way that benefits both parties. Using a technology-based platform connects employees with opportunities inside the organization, matching them up with everything from promotions and one-off team projects to mentorships and training. Companies using this approach can mobilize quickly and deploy the right people for the

right jobs at the right time, leading to greater employee satisfaction and a sense of purpose while achieving the goals of the organization in a nimble way.

Investing in an internal marketplace is not only good for employees—it's good for the bottom line. Recruiting, hiring, and training new employees can be one of the most expensive parts of running a business. And with onboarding lasting up to 12 months,¹⁹ hiring and training outside staff is a big investment.

5. Create programs that allow employees to access the learning they need on demand

Employee learning shouldn't be rigid, top-down, or one-size-fits-all. Employees want to learn and develop on their own terms and gravitate toward organizations that provide multiple opportunities to build

new skills and capabilities in different ways. Organizations should meet these employees where they are, offering a variety of different skill-building opportunities—from videos to skillshares to AI check-ins or digital mentorship opportunities—that speak to the skills employees want to cultivate. They can also consider offering education and reskilling opportunities through partnerships and external resources.

Many organizations have leaned into this new approach to skill-building. Walmart rolled out a new program offering free college to its 1.4 million employees, while Target, Chipotle, and Starbucks offered similar education benefits in an effort to reskill, upskill, and retain employees.²⁰ The people who have been part of The Great Realignment want to work—but they also want their employers to invest in their future in flexible ways that fit their life aspirations.

6. Leverage technology to empower skills development and unify talent and business needs

Employers might be daunted by the task of creating a personal yet scalable system for building employee skill sets, but they don't have to do it on their own. Stroko stresses that "technology is the engine to power the learning and development strategy of the future." Technology can help with everything from identifying the right skill sets for the company to recommending new skills for employees and powering the internal marketplace of skills to creating connections between employees. Technology also has the power to unify business and talent needs by connecting goals, data, and employee desires to solve critical business demands, such as running

an effective supply chain and supporting customer satisfaction.

Widely applying AI-powered technology can allow organizations to be more prescriptive, more strategic, and more insightful about what skills employees will need to make a significant contribution. Investing in this technology is the difference between struggling to implement change on a small, ad hoc level and leveraging institutional power to free people to do what they do best. For Lindner, it's about "having technology work on your behalf to paint career paths, to help you with the evolution of your skills." It can be an enormous boon for employers trying to adapt their companies to changing times *and* employees looking to shift and grow their skills.

Importantly, technology also has the power to unify talent and business needs. "This is

all very intertwined," says Lindner. Taking a holistic approach to technology solutions across HR and finance can empower organizations to use one data model for revenue, forecasting, and talent and help teams collaborate in real time to solve critical business challenges. Take the supply chain, for example. Lindner explains, "There are massive ramifications on talent and skills when thinking about the supply chain. There are hard-core business problems in getting the manufacturing facilities property set up, getting the supply chain streams properly orchestrated, and then finding the talent to operate them. By using technology with a common data model and analytical layer, we are able to provide the insight, planning, and solutions—with consideration for talent and skills—much more quickly, which would typically have taken years to do."



7. Build learning and development into the fabric of your company culture

It's not enough to "check the box" on having the required skills in an organization. It's about transforming your approach to investing in your employees so your company and your employees can adapt to changing times. According to a recent Capgemini report, 70% of workers want customized learning paths, and 71% want to learn new skills at their own pace.²¹ To do this, organizations need to cultivate an environment that consistently challenges employees and aids in their growth and success.

Organizations that understand this will make learning and development a central tenet of their company ethos and culture, talking about it at town halls, executive listening sessions, and performance

reviews. Just as crucially, employers have a greater responsibility to ensure the career development and progression of their employees. Organizations must ensure they know they are being supported with additional training and that their skills will evolve with a changing job market.

8. Help employees find meaning in work—it's essential now

Ultimately, employees want meaningful work—and the skills to do that work effectively. According to Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP), Imperative, and PwC's Fulfillment at Work study, 7 out of 10 employees said they'd consider leaving their current role for a new, more fulfilling opportunity and 3 out of 10 said they'd take a pay cut for it.²² These employees want to be more engaged, and they will hold out for employers who are committed to providing that for them.

To make work more meaningful, employers must show each employee the impact their work has on the bigger picture of business success, regardless of role or level. "It's about feeling included," Stroko said. "Everybody wants to be an insider. If I'm talking to you about coming to your company and I don't feel that I can be an insider, or I feel that I'm always going to be on the outside looking in, I'm probably not going to take that job."

Organizations should also look to technology to eliminate repetitive tasks like gathering data. Employees today expect the mundane to be automated and have access to data and systems that allow them to have more strategic roles.²³ "You need to liberate them from their day jobs," says Lindner. Technology, he says, "holds the promise of liberation for something more rewarding."



Conclusion: A thriving, resilient workforce with the skills required for the future

The talent challenges of today do not have to control the future. Organizations that embrace the lessons of The Great Realignment and provide employees with opportunities to develop meaningful skills will turn the crisis into an opportunity. They will see better retention, engagement, and business performance. They will also have the opportunity to avoid the broad impacts that come with overlooking employee experience: supply chain shortages, customer dissatisfaction, and ultimately, less business success. Organizations that commit long-term to learning and development will have a thriving workforce with the dynamic skills, loyalty, and passion required for the future.

[Learn more](#)



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