

The State of Career Management

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OVERVIEW

In today's business world, significant changes in the employer / worker relationship have led to new approaches to career management. In short, both the needs of companies (including more agile, well-rounded, and engaged workers) and the desires of individual workers (including more flexibility, development, and visibility) are motivating organizations to rethink career management from top to bottom, reevaluating everything from its definition to its execution and beyond.

This report outlines the major findings of our recent career management research. It addresses current drivers, major shifts in career management approaches, and the challenges organizations face as they adapt to this new environment. This is the first of six reports on this topic.

Top Findings at a Glance

- Companies are broadening and expanding their definitions of career management to better meet the needs of both the organization and workers.
- Going beyond the previous focus on only full-time, balance-sheet workers, organizations are now offering and applying career management to alternative talent sources.
- There is no one best approach to career management. Alignment of the individual components of a career management approach appears to be as important—or perhaps even more important—than the individual components themselves.
- Research indicates that the top four challenges faced by organizations revamping their career management approaches are infrastructure, culture and strategy, messaging, and manager support.

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Introduction

As recently as 20 years ago, organizations offered life-long contracts to their workers, who often expected to be able to work for one employer throughout their careers. Members of the baby boom generation, for instance, might have spent 35 years at one company that may have reimbursed workers' tuition to earn graduate degrees, given regular raises and promotions, offered interesting work, and provided pensions when workers retired.

Nowadays, such organizations are few and far between. Challenges in the business world have made it more difficult to provide that type of security to workers while still maintaining market position. Industries are changing rapidly and competing more globally, requiring worker skills to be revamped every 10 years or so and making it harder for companies to guarantee jobs or career paths to their workers.

Workers' attitudes and expectations have changed too. Rather than making a lifetime commitment to one type of work and one organization, many workers now expect their companies to offer more variety, faster development paths, and a broader range of opportunities. While more than 40 percent of America's baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) stayed with one employer for more than 20 years¹, the average worker tenure today is only 4.2 years², and workers can expect to have an average of about 11 jobs over the course of their working lives.

Yet despite these immense external and internal pressures, most organizations' career management approaches are still artifacts of a previous age. In other words, while the needs and wants of both businesses and workers have evolved—and relationships between employers and workers are now based on very different criteria—organizations have been slow to overhaul their career management programs.

That said, our research found there is now a sense of urgency around addressing career management. Organizations cited several drivers for this urgency, as well as several associated challenges. Time and again, companies reported they are now redefining what career management is and how it is supported across their organizations. This redefinition encompasses everything from the vocabulary used to describe career management, to shifting mind-sets and directions, to even improvements in organizational structures. These changes are broadening the definition of career management beyond simply providing defined career paths for workers.

¹ "Working Longer: The Disappearing Divide between Work Life and Retirement," The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, n.d., www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/HTML%20Reports/working-longer-the-disappearing-divide-between-work-life-and-retirement-issue-brief.aspx.

² "Employee Tenure Summary," United States Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 22, 2016, www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm.

The definition of career management with which we approached this research (which is also the definition we use in describing both the current state and the resulting career management framework) is:

How companies move their workforces—all segments (including full- and part-time employees, contractors and consultants, etc.)—into, around, and out of their organizations in order to accomplish business goals and objectives.

The purpose of our research was to explore how organizations conduct career management and how they are modifying their methods given the changing environment. We have distilled our findings into three distinct topics:

1. The drivers of career management
2. Major shifts currently taking place within the area of career management
3. Challenges to effective career management

The rest of this report addresses these three topics in turn.

Career Management Drivers

What is driving the current renewed focus on career management? Our research found that organizations cite three primary external factors as influencing their evolving approaches to career management:

- **Rapid growth.** Many high-growth companies have found that their legacy career management strategies are no longer adequate to the task of serving the current rapid influx of new workers. Workers in these organizations struggle to navigate the various roles into which they might develop, as well as understanding what is expected of them. High-growth companies also tend to have more inexperienced managers who are not yet able to provide guidance to their workers.

Convenience store chain Wawa, for example, is expanding rapidly as it opens dozens of new stores each year. To support this growth, the company expects to double its headcount in the coming years. This has made building a talent pipeline, both for store operations and leadership, a huge priority.

- **Inability to compete due to inflexible organizational structures.** Many organizations cite top-heavy or inflexible organizational structures, or a significant shift in organizational structure, as reasons for focusing on career management. This is not surprising, as 80 percent of respondents to Deloitte's 2016 Global Human Capital Trends study reported that they are either currently restructuring their organizations or have recently completed that process.³

Inflexible organizations may find it difficult to pivot or adjust to external market pressures. These organizations also find it more difficult to attract and retain talent, as there are fewer opportunities for workers to move upward (usually the only direction in which career progression is defined). For example, one company that had recently collapsed a number of senior leadership positions and widened its job levels decided to also restructure and rebrand career management within the organization to encourage lateral and, in some cases, even downward career moves. And this is not an isolated case. On average, organizations are flatter than they used to be⁴, and flatter organizations necessitate a different approach to career management.

- **Rapidly changing industries.** Many companies reported that while their industries are changing rapidly, the skills of the corresponding workforce often remain stagnant. These companies see career management as a way to enable reskilling or repositioning of workers to adapt to the changing needs of the organization.

³ *Global Human Capital Trends 2016: The new organization—Different by design*, Deloitte Development LLC and Deloitte University Press, 2016, <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/HumanCapital/gx-dup-global-human-capital-trends-2016.pdf>.

⁴ *The Corporate Lattice: Achieving High Performance in the Changing World of Work*, Cathleen Benko, Molly Anderson / Harvard Business Review Press, August 3, 2010.

For example, healthcare organizations have experienced significant changes in both the overall industry and the job market from which they hire. The increased complexity and pace of change caused by shifts in regulation have made it difficult to know what skills will be needed two to three years down the road. Identifying which skills sets will be in high demand—and which will become obsolete—has therefore become a major focus for these organizations. This in turn has led to rethinking career management in order to guide and provide clarity for workers trying to ensure they build and maintain the skills necessary to their organizations.

These three external pressures are motivating organizations to make sure their internal people practices are sound and aligned to organizational goals and needs. Career management is a big part of that trend, particularly in the following areas:

- **Stronger employment branding.** Organizations report that they include a strong career management strategy as part of their employment brand⁵ for messaging to both potential and existing workers. Research has shown that the opportunity for professional growth is workers' most desired benefit after health insurance and a competitive salary⁶, while Bersin by Deloitte has found that employers include career development in the top three benefits they use to attract talent⁷. In short, a strong approach to career management augments employment branding.

For example, Vi (a family of companies consisting of 10 continuing care retirement communities across the United States) recently relaunched its recruitment website. One of the ways in which the company has developed its new employment brand is by featuring development opportunities within the company, as well as stories about workers' career paths, on that website. Another company discusses development opportunities with external candidates, citing the ability to have multiple positions within the organization as part of its recruiting strategy.

- **Engaged and present workers.** Workers tend to be more engaged when given opportunities for development, growth, and career progression.⁸ Several organizations in our study discovered through their annual engagement surveys that their workers' perceptions of their ability to grow and develop is a top driver of engagement. Other organizations report a similar but related pattern: Workers cite not having sufficient opportunities for development at work (regardless of their career level) as a top reason for leaving an employer.

How workers are developed also seems to matter. Our High-Impact Leadership study showed that while almost all leaders surveyed want to grow as leaders, 42 percent of leaders in the lowest-performing organizations report they do not want to grow as leaders *at their current organization*—a significant qualifier, to say the least.⁹

⁵ Employer branding encompasses activities that help to uncover, articulate, and define a company's image, organizational culture, key differentiators, reputation, and products and services. Employer branding can help advance the market position of organizations, attract quality candidates, and depict what it is truly likely to work for that organization.

⁶ "Career Trends Report: The Pursuit of Employee Purpose," Cornerstone OnDemand, 2016, www.cornerstoneondemand.com/careertrendsreport.

⁷ This information is based on the Bersin by Deloitte High-Impact Talent Management research project completed in 2015.

⁸ *Designing an Employee Engagement Strategy*, Bersin by Deloitte / Robin Erickson, PhD, and Heather Bussing, 2016.

⁹ *High-Impact Leadership: The New Leadership Maturity Model*, Bersin by Deloitte / Andrea Derler, PhD, 2016.

Worker retention is of course crucial given the level of resources organizations devote to getting the best talent through their doors. With that in mind, one hospitality company we spoke with uses its career management program to help ensure the right policies, procedures, and programs are in place to keep talent as part of the organization.

- **Talent acceleration.** Many organizations are utilizing career management to accelerate talent in two ways. First, many companies are recognizing an existing or future need for skilled workers in specific roles and are therefore taking targeted action to prepare individuals to fill those roles. Second (and probably more common), organizations are recognizing the need for more flexible and agile workers, and are therefore providing workers with opportunities to develop in those areas. Incidentally, experiential learning (or learning on the job) and exposure to leaders and others who can provide workers with perspective on their careers are key components of worker development.¹⁰

To promote a consistent worker experience, it is key for companies focusing on career management to align with those in the organization who manage other human capital processes. Dartmouth Hitchcock healthcare system, for example, has been able to align its human capital practices to recognize and fill an anticipated talent shortage. Given its geographic location, the company has found it difficult to recruit skilled workers. To address this need, the company partnered with higher education institutions to create an apprenticeship program that taps into a pipeline of local workers looking for new careers.¹¹

- **A deeper bench and a better talent pipeline.** Finally, organizations are focusing on career management as an integral part of their succession planning strategies. It is no coincidence that aspects of career management are integrated throughout our Succession Management Maturity Model, and are an area of particular focus in the dimensions of workforce planning; talent development and mobility; talent-sharing; talent management integration; and organizational profiling.¹² Companies that require specializations or have well-defined career tracks tend to spend significant time and resources identifying key talent and determining how that talent will be moved through the ranks of the organization.

BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse, for example, promotes from within for manager positions. Given its rapid growth, the casual dining restaurant chain needs to increase the percentage of hourly team members that are promoted into management positions. Senior leadership maintains a 12- to 18-month talent pipeline, discussed at regular intervals, to ensure that workers in that pipeline are receiving the appropriate opportunities to prepare them for management positions.¹³

The external drivers of the evolution of career management, combined with the impact on the internal practices discussed above, have begun to shape a new way of thinking about career management. The next sections of this report discuss some of the larger and more common shifts uncovered by our research.

¹⁰ *Continuous Learning: A Primer*, Bersin by Deloitte / Dani Johnson, 2015.

¹¹ Bersin by Deloitte interview with Dartmouth Hitchcock, 2016.

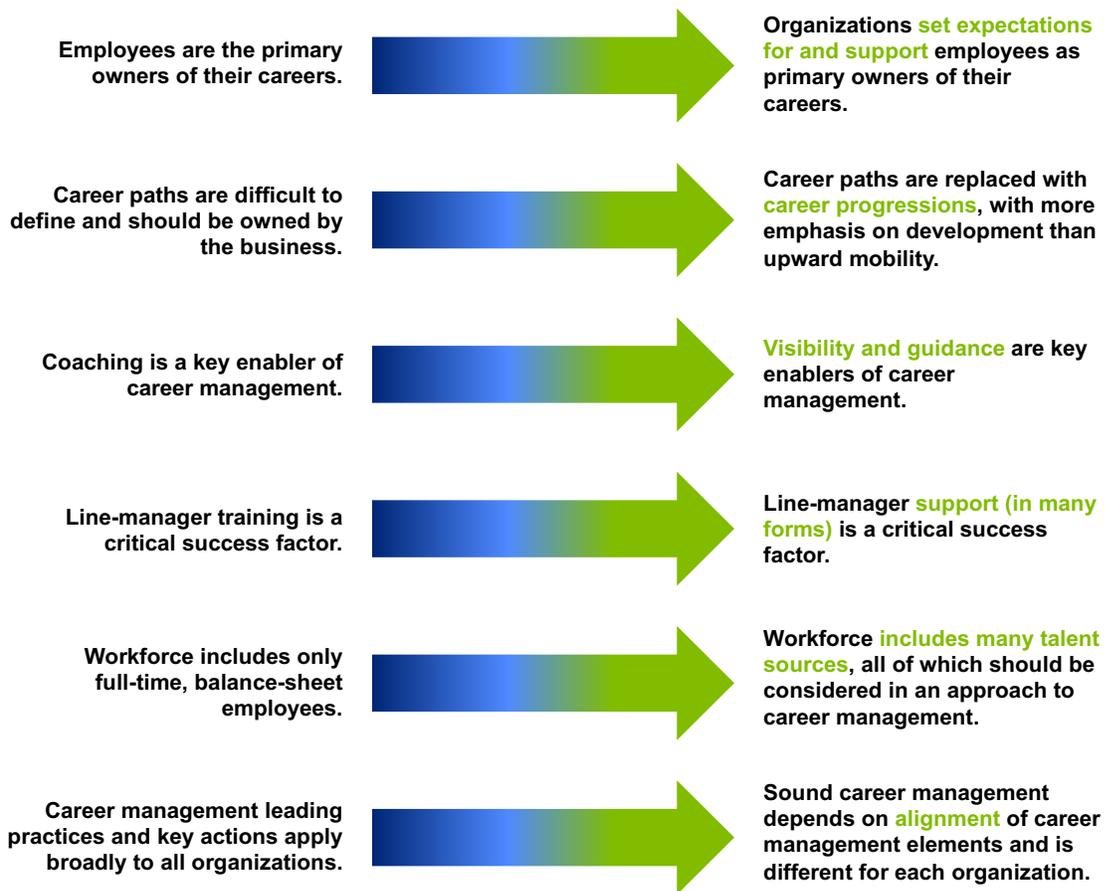
¹² *High-Impact Succession Management: Factors and Dimensions*, Bersin by Deloitte / Kim Lamoureux and Andrea Derler, PhD, 2016.

¹³ Bersin by Deloitte interview with BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse, 2016.

Shifts in Career Management

Over the past few years, we have observed several fairly large shifts taking place when it comes to common approaches to career management. Trends that have existed as only ideas for some time are now being put into practical use. Further, the drivers discussed earlier in this report are now making it imperative that organizations evolve their talent management practices. Figure 1 summarizes the top six shifts uncovered by our research. A discussion of each follows.

Figure 1: Shifts in Career Management



Source: Bersin by Deloitte, 2016.

From Primarily Worker-Owned to Organizationally Supported

The idea that workers should own their own careers has been around for some time—yet, in the past, most organizations did very little to make that idea clear to their workers. Indeed, many still have not been able to clarify workers' responsibilities relating to their careers, let alone empower workers or provide them with the necessary tools to own their own careers. Companies have only recently begun to execute on this idea in an effective way—in part by adding organizational support to the equation.

For example, one financial institution is trying to change its career management philosophy from “my boss will guide me to the next step in my career” to “I’m empowered and I have all the tools I need to find my next move myself.” The responsibility for managing a worker’s career should be shared between the worker, his or her manager, and the organization; the growing acceptance of this philosophy is leading to a push to help workers understand their roles while also reinforcing the guiding or enabling nature of manager responsibilities in the process.

From Career Paths to Career Progressions

For many organizations, career paths that are owned by the business are beginning to give way to more flexible career journeys or progressions. Workers collaborate with managers or mentors to define a succession of roles that makes sense for the worker; roles can also be tweaked to include additional responsibilities to help workers develop in certain areas or take advantage of unique skills and abilities.

For many organizations, this change means less focus on upward mobility and more on development. Most of the organizations with which we spoke were tweaking their career management practices to accommodate this new mind-set by allowing for more lateral movement. This also aligns with what other researchers are finding.¹⁴

At Owens Corning, for example, individual workers do not have to stick to a chosen career path, and are encouraged to transition to positions they normally might not consider. The organization recognizes the value of allowing employees to gain cross-functional experiences and develop soft skills. It also considers cross-functional roles as a differentiator when evaluating candidate readiness for new positions.

From Coaching to Visibility and Guidance

Organizations are utilizing a variety of resources to help workers find the right next career step, including people (through coaching and mentoring activities), processes (including rotations, special projects, and externships), and technology (via career management portals, podcasts, and other messaging tools). While coaching is still seen as a crucial part of career management, other options that are often more self-serve are being used more frequently to help workers navigate through their organizations.

¹⁴ *The Corporate Lattice: Achieving High Performance in the Changing World of Work*, Cathleen Benko and Molly Anderson / Harvard Business Review Press, August 3, 2010.

Hilton, for example, is passionate about providing opportunities for its team members to grow and develop; the company sees these as shared responsibilities with workers. The HR team creates materials and processes for career development plans, maintains career pathing websites, and ensures team members have robust and consistent ways to discover new opportunities. For their part, team members are tasked with taking time to reflect on where they want to go, what they would like to do, and how they would like to develop personally. They then speak with their managers or mentors about their careers and receive guidance about how to achieve those goals internally (or, in some cases, externally if the individual's career goals do not align with opportunities at Hilton).

From Line-Manager Training to Line-Manager Support

In an effort to develop a culture of continuous growth, many organizations are improving the quality, frequency, and value of conversations between managers and workers. Organizations are also doubling down on their belief that direct supervisors or managers are crucial to effective career management, and are therefore providing more support and holding individuals in those roles responsible for their workers' development.

At one company we spoke with, Ameriprise Financial, all workers are developed as leaders. Managers have responsibility for the engagement and development of their direct reports, and are held accountable via engagement survey scores. To ensure they are equipped to develop workers, managers receive coaching and tools, including monthly discussion guides to facilitate conversations.

From Full-Time Workers to Diverse Talent Sources

More than ever before, organizations are expanding their definitions of workforce beyond full-time, balance-sheet workers. While contractors and part-time workers have always been an option in some industries, organizations are increasingly using other sources of talent to get work done as well. These talent sources include traditional as well as nontraditional types of work including apprenticeships, internships, externships, students from higher-education partnerships, and a wider range of contract workers (including specialized consultants and retired workers contracted for special projects, as well as workers discovered via open innovation competitions, crowdsourcing, and the gig economy).¹⁵ While career management for these other talent sources may not include standard processes such as five-year plans, the way in which they are onboarded, moved through the company, and offboarded are definitely points of discussion for many organizations.

¹⁵ For more information, see "The open talent economy: People and work in a borderless workplace," Deloitte Consulting, LLP / Andrew Liakopoulos, Lisa Barry, and Jeff Schwartz, 2013, <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/HumanCapital/dttl-hc-english-opentaleconomy.pdf>.

One company we spoke with has developed a returning talent strategy that includes role-based mobility. The focus is on helping workers get from one position to another within the organization and guiding them to their next role. As a part of this strategy, they utilize programs that focus on interns, retired workers, and former military personnel to bring key skills into the organization. This company does not use role-based hiring, but instead looks at individual skills sets and attributes to create teams that have the right skills for particular projects.

From a Focus on Actions to a Focus on Alignment

Our research shows that rather than focusing on particularly innovative ideas or leading practices, organizations with effective career management strategies tend to focus on alignment rather than on any individual action. Companies that are able to account for and align people, how those people move through the organization, and how they are supported by the larger organization tend to have stronger career management strategies than those focused on the actions themselves.

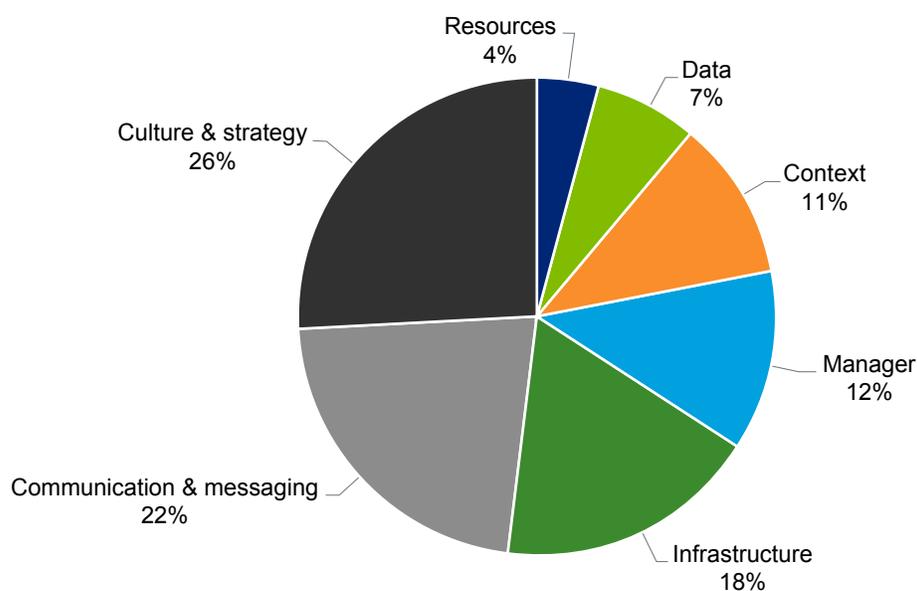
A talent leader at one organization specifically cited lack of alignment and coordination across efforts as the reason career management was not working for them. This lack of alignment led to a lack of expectations among workers; a lack of interest, urgency, and participation among senior leaders; and a lack of processes for meeting business needs via career management—which, this leader feared, could eventually be fatal to the organization.

Many of the shifts discussed in this section require human resources departments (and anyone else involved in helping workers find their way around organizations) to rethink processes, systems, and even mind-sets that have been in place for some time. As companies go through the process of rethinking career management, several challenges have emerged (which we discuss in detail in the next section of this report).

Challenges

While any effective career management strategy needs to be tailored to the individual organization, our research did reveal some broad categories of challenges that organizations tend to face when seeking to revamp their approach in this area (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Top Organizational Career Management Challenges



Source: Bersin by Deloitte, 2016.

The majority of responses from our respondents fell into the following four categories:

- Culture and strategy (i.e., how career management is perceived)
- Communication and messaging (i.e., how the organization talks about career management)
- Infrastructure (i.e., the tools, processes, systems, and technology in place to support career management)
- Support for career management at the manager or leadership level

We explore each of these categories in the sections that follow.

Culture and Strategy

Culture was the area most frequently cited by organizations discussing challenges to effective career management. Breaking this challenge down further revealed three subcomponents:

- Buy-in from managers and workers
- Strategy
- Development

Organizations often find it difficult to achieve buy-in and change mind-sets when it comes to modifying career management strategies. For example, it can be challenging for workers to take primary responsibility for their own careers while at the same time adopting a different definition of progression (that is, collecting experience versus upward mobility). Likewise, managers are being asked to take on greater responsibility for ensuring the progression of their workers (a responsibility that is often in direct conflict with the desire to maintain a consistent and well-trained team).

Much of this difficulty can be attributed to a lack of overall strategy. While almost all of the organizations we studied as part of our research are changing their career management strategies to some extent, many felt as though the changes being made were not cohesive and did not create an effective overall strategy. This aligns with our earlier statement: It isn't so much the individual actions organizations take that makes career management effective (or not); rather, it is the alignment of the individual elements to greater organizational goals.

Culture is also affected by an organization's stance and focus (or lack thereof) on worker development. As mentioned earlier, opportunities to grow and develop contribute significantly to workers' engagement. It stands to reason, then, that an organization's approach to worker development (including messaging, availability, and encouragement) indicates to workers how invested the organization is in their progression.

For example, one company we interviewed is undergoing a growth spurt after a long period of stagnation. This growth requires changes to the skills and capabilities needed by its managers. It has been a challenge to gain the buy-in of those managers in order to develop the new necessary skills, as well as to manage worker expectations about career during this time—all of which plays into the culture around career management.

Communication and Messaging

A significant number of the organizations we spoke to discussed the lack of clear and consistent messaging when it comes to career management. Our data shows three aspects of messaging that appear to be particularly challenging:

- Defining career management
- Communicating with workers about how to find opportunities
- How the career management story is told

What causes these issues? In many cases, organizations have one definition of career management and what workers can expect, while workers have another. This may be due in part to disconnects between external and internal messages (i.e., workers hear about wonderful career opportunities before they are hired, but those opportunities are less apparent once they join the company). These issues can also stem from a lack of clarity about who exactly is responsible for workers' careers. Finally, organizations may sometimes fail to explicitly share their career management offerings with workers.

Visibility was another big theme that emerged from our research. Organizations mentioned a need to make career options more visible. Workers often appear to be unclear about how to find existing opportunities. As many organizations begin to think about more flexible career management practices, this issues becomes even more difficult and requires much more coordination of the overall worker experience.

Overall, organizations should understand the importance of telling the “career management story.” This means not only ensuring the overall messaging and tone are right, but also personalizing the information so workers can relate it back to their own experiences.

Organizations we spoke with are addressing the challenge of messaging in a variety of ways. The majority are rethinking systems and processes to enable visibility of opportunities. Some are laser-focused on crafting aligned internal messaging. Some are utilizing existing communication channels—newsletters, emails, and the like. Others are more inventive, producing short videos differentiated by department to give workers an understanding of the opportunities available, creating podcasts highlighting career management paths for leaders, and leveraging job shadowing and short projects to give workers a sense of the other types of work available to them within the organization.

Infrastructure

Another challenge organizations mentioned is a lack of infrastructure (systems, processes, and technologies) supporting career management. Regardless of how their programs are currently being supported, most organizations cite shortfalls in their support structure as a cause of less-effective career management. By probing further, we uncovered three main themes:

- Visibility
- Agility
- Processes

As with messaging, several organizations we spoke with are focused on utilizing systems, processes, and particularly technology to support workers in their careers. Many organizations had either recently implemented or were in the process of implementing career management software, largely with the purpose of creating a self-serve portal for workers looking to determine their next move.

Infrastructure was also cited as an enabler of agility. With many organizations facing unprecedented pressure, both internally and externally, agility is key to survival.

Solution providers or technology vendors came up regularly in our interviews as key parts of career management infrastructures. Vendors can do everything from providing systems for career pathing and workforce planning to facilitating utilization of contingent workers or alternative talent sources.¹⁶

While many organizations mentioned a lack of technological solutions, several companies said they have very solid career management processes and would make do with what they have (including, for example, paper-based systems or spreadsheets). This tells us that processes, systems, and dedication to solid career management can sometimes trump technology. Indeed, while technology can definitely be an enabler of career management, it is important to note that it is not an overall solution. Organizations doing career management well have the right systems and processes in place and then enable them further with technology—not the other way around.

Support for Career Management at the Manager or Leadership Level

The leaders and managers in an organization present the final category of challenges associated with career management. Three main subthemes emerged in this area:

- Communication
- Support
- Mind-set

Communication of career management strategies by leaders was cited as the number one cause of difficulties in this area. Organizations that do not have the buy-in of their senior leadership struggle to create the right environment for career management. While these leaders may be supportive, their communication (or lack thereof) about the topic sets the wrong tone. These organizations also seem to struggle with frontline managers and the messages they send to their direct reports. In short, when career management and development are not explicitly stated priorities, they tend not to be a priority at all.

Many organizations also mentioned that managers are often not equipped to have career conversations with their workers and, further, are not trusted to do so. In fact, one vendor recognized this problem and capitalized on it. His organization markets its platform as a replacement for key career conversations between workers and managers so workers can bypass them completely and manage their own careers. In many cases, organizations are beginning to understand that managers do not necessarily have the skills to guide workers; such companies are therefore looking for ways to provide better support while also focusing on holding managers accountable for the development of their workers.

¹⁶ For more information on career management vendors, please see *Career Management Systems 2015: Enabling Employee Growth through Career Management*, Bersin by Deloitte / Sally-Ann Cooke, 2015, as well as our upcoming research, *The Technology Landscape for Enabling Career Management: Vendors, Trends, and Key Considerations*, Bersin by Deloitte / Janet Clary, 2016.

Finally, leadership mind-set is often a significant challenge. Several organizations we spoke to mentioned talent hoarding, lack of interest, and self-interest as reasons why career management discussions do not take place. Companies are looking at integration with other talent management systems—rewards and recognition, for instance—in order to align them with career management practices. As the motivations that drive these mind-sets change, so will the actions associated with them.

Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the major drivers of career management, the shifts currently being seen in career management practices, and the challenges organizations face when reexamining their approach in this area. We expect career management will continue to be both a focus and a challenge for organizations as the needs of businesses and workers continue to evolve.

This report is the first of six covering this topic that will be released during the next few months. In the next in the series, *The Career Management Framework*, we will synthesize the findings outlined in this report into a framework that organizations can use to choose an appropriate career management approach and to align elements of career management to the chosen approach. The other reports will address the application of the Career Management Framework and some of the major challenges organizations face as identified by this research; namely, communication and messaging, infrastructure, and support for career management at the manager or leadership level.

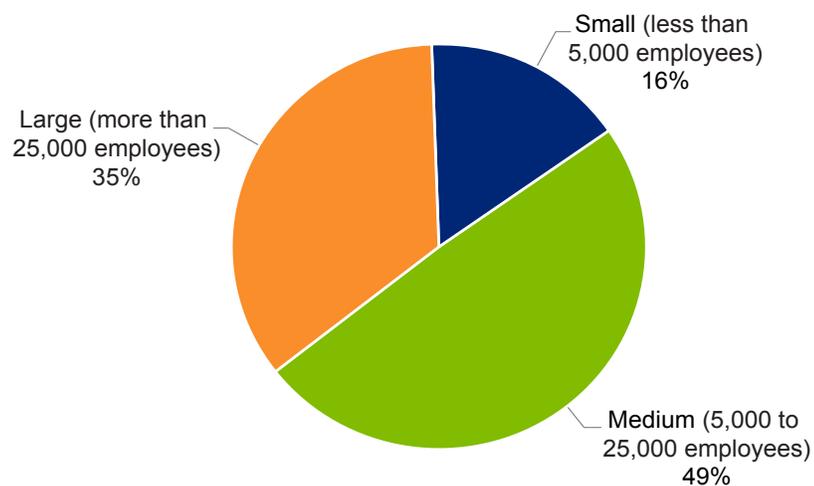
Appendix I: Research Methodology

Our qualitative study on career management was designed to provide an in-depth understanding of what is happening in the field of career management today, including the reasons why companies undertake programs in this area and the challenges they face in doing so.

Qualitative interviews for this report were conducted with senior leaders of global corporations between March 2016 and June 2016. We also interviewed and observed demonstrations of solution providers during this same time frame. Semistructured interviews were conducted via telephone in English. This semistructured approach allowed the research team the flexibility to more deeply explore innovative practices as they arose.

A total of 51 companies, including 31 corporations and 20 solution providers, were interviewed for this study. No restrictions were placed on the size of participating organizations. The corporations included represent organizations of varying sizes from many sectors, including technology, media, telecommunications, consumer and industrial products, financial services, energy and resources, life sciences, and healthcare. See Figure 3 for a detailed description of the surveyed corporations by size.

Figure 3: Research Participants by Organization Size



Source: Bersin by Deloitte, 2016.

Participants were identified through the Bersin by Deloitte member network as well as Deloitte Consulting LLP relationships. Companies were also contacted independently if the research team learned of innovative career management practices at a given organization. Some participants, for example, were identified as a result of an organization being recognized as a leader in the field of career management, worker learning and development, or as a “best place to work” by a trade magazine or independent rater (e.g., Glassdoor).

Our qualitative interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a grounded theory approach. During this process, the research team conducted a thematic analysis of all interview data. Memos were created to document the emerging themes; these were then compared to the findings from the thematic analysis to inform the developing theory. To increase confidence in the findings from this analysis, multiple team members were involved in the analytic process. Team members read through a selection of the same interviews and completed independent thematic analyses to ensure overlap and calibration of findings.

We combined the data collected from these qualitative interviews with a comprehensive secondary literature review to better understand the issues and trends at hand. The literature review covered the following sources: previous Bersin by Deloitte publications; Deloitte Consulting LLP research; research from other consulting firms and academia; and HR-, talent- and business-related publications. The findings from this study are based on these inputs in addition to our years of previous research on learning, development, and talent and career management.

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