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# Employees Want to Stay, But Are Employers Giving Them a Reason To?

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Workers demand opportunities to learn skills and  
grow their careers



# Introduction

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Nearly two years into the pandemic, the average person has experienced a spectrum of emotions ranging from intolerable loneliness and unbridled anger to moments of intense stress—and finally, hope. Access to COVID-19 vaccinations and the hard lessons learned about the coronavirus gave the world a way to move forward and start figuring out how the future would look. Now, after so much time to reflect on what's most important and reprioritize, people are ready to regain control of their lives.

For the fourth straight year, Oracle partnered with Workplace Intelligence to conduct the **AI@Work Study**, this time focusing on technology's impact on employees worldwide as the pandemic continues. The findings are a stark call to action for employers. Workers' priorities have changed, and their expectations have shifted in ways that organizations can't afford to ignore. The study found that **83%** of employees want to make a change in their career over the next year. But surprisingly, given everything we've heard about the Great Resignation, only about one in five workers are planning to change companies.<sup>1</sup> While this statistic might give employers a reason to be hopeful, it comes with a massive caveat. Many millions of workers have already quit during the pandemic, and it seems most remaining employees are looking for their employers to give them a reason to stay. People are now demanding opportunities to grow at and with their companies, but as the study finds, most employers are not giving them the chance. **76%** of workers face obstacles preventing them from making a career change, and employers are part of the problem. It's likely the next wave of resignations will predominately come from companies that are unwilling to address the needs of their workforce.




## Great expectations and the skills of tomorrow

As the pandemic continues, living in a prolonged state of uncertainty has left many people frazzled. Employees reported higher levels of stress and anxiety in 2021 than in 2020, and **62%** experienced more stress and anxiety at work in 2021 than ever before. At the same time, **75%** of employees have felt stuck in their professional lives.<sup>1</sup>

The rapid pace of technology and a lack of growth prospects have left employees feeling that their skills have gone stale, and while they expect help to get out of this rut, many aren't getting the support they're looking for. **The Workplace Intelligence AI@Work Study** found that **85%** of employees aren't satisfied with their employer's support for their career, and **87%** think their company should do more to listen to the needs of its workforce.

Employees are looking to make changes in their careers over the next year by progressing within their current organization. **30%** of workers want to take on a new role or project, **34%** want to earn a promotion or raise, and **43%** want to learn new skills and advance their education.<sup>1</sup> The result: Upskilling and reskilling opportunities are no longer nice for companies to have—they're a necessity. **66%** of global learning and development professionals agree that rebuilding and reshaping their organizations are key areas of focus,<sup>2</sup> and **40%** of HR leaders say they can't build skills development solutions fast enough to meet evolving needs.<sup>3</sup> Companies that fail to act now will only fall further behind. The World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs Report 2020" found that **50%** of employees will need reskilling by 2025.<sup>4</sup>





To stay ahead of the curve, companies are increasingly seeking to build a multifaceted workforce with a combination of soft skills—many influenced by the demands of the pandemic—and hard skills that match a growing demand for digital competencies. More than ever, employers covet workers who possess a mix of resilience, stress tolerance, creativity, and leadership skills. They also want technologically savvy employees who have programming knowledge, think analytically, and can actively learn.<sup>5</sup>

Many employees are also doing their best to catch up with the accelerated rate of digital transformation driven by the pandemic. Coursera’s 2021 “Global Skills Report” discovered that data science and technology skills are popular, with a spike in people taking classes in programming languages, machine learning, and data management.<sup>6</sup> While there has also been an increase in the demand for skills related to AI and blockchain, companies still need people with humanity-based skills, for example, sales and marketing professionals. Regardless of career, organizations say emotional intelligence is a universally vital trait for employees.<sup>7</sup>

One company investing in developing their employees’ emotional intelligence is global media leader Hearst. They use Oracle Learning, part of Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM, to emphasize emotional intelligence and well-being training and provide a personalized career path to support each member of their workforce. Senior VP and CIO Debra Robinson, who also oversees HCM technology, operations, and support at Hearst, says, “The benefits have been endless on the HCM side.” The company also used Oracle Cloud HCM to reduce employee attrition by analyzing turnover data and making it easier for employees to view and apply for internal openings.



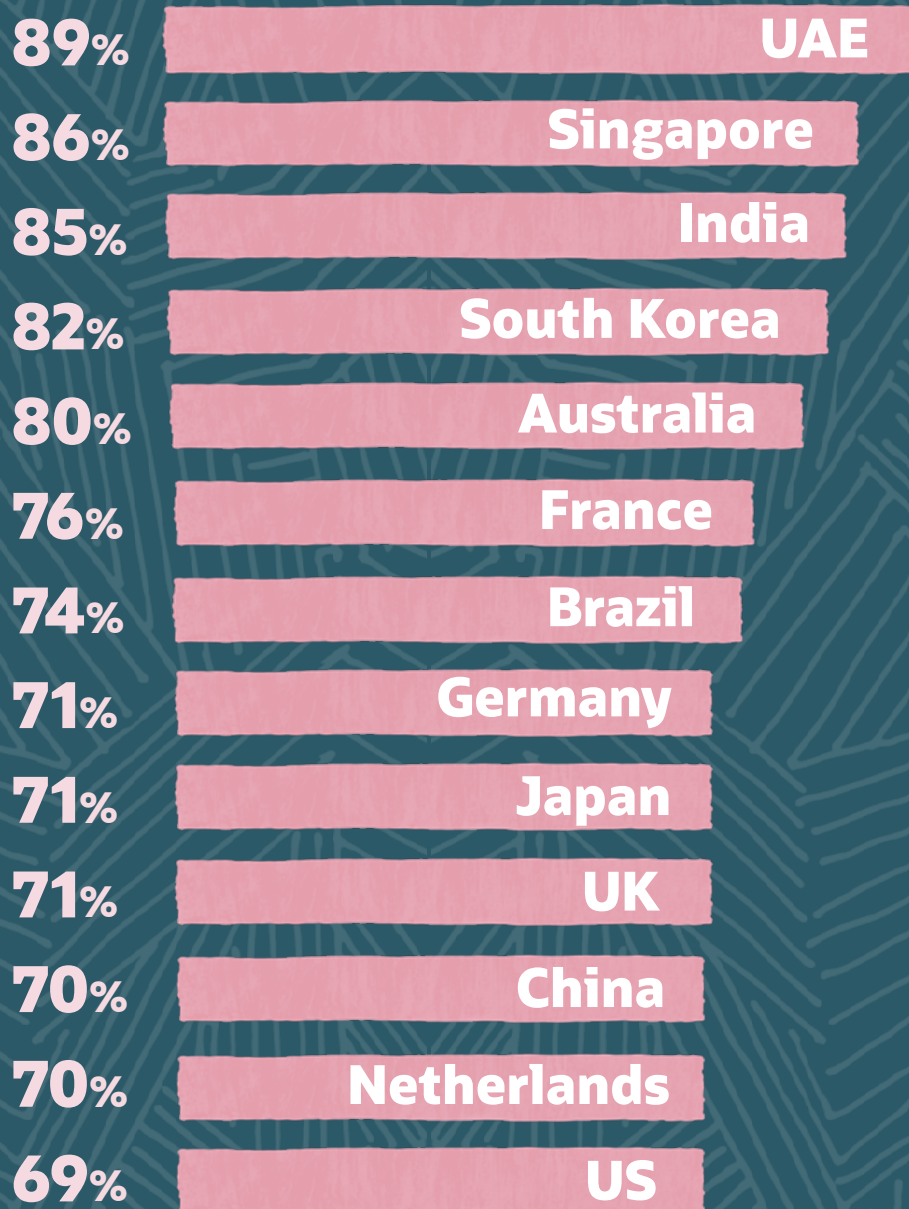
# A new definition of success at work

A long period of reflection during the pandemic drove the global shift in employee expectations and led many workers to redefine success. The **AI@Work Study** found that **88%** of people say their definition of “success” changed over the past year and is now more closely aligned with achieving work-life balance, being in good mental health, and having flexibility in how and where they work. Employees are also searching for purpose in their jobs and want to understand how their contributions positively impact their company and the broader community. Considering that **29%** of employees say having a meaningful job is more important to them than a steady paycheck, organizations must prioritize creating a culture based on core values that align with their workforce’s needs.<sup>1</sup>

There’s an undeniable desire for career development and growth. The Workplace Intelligence research revealed the astonishing things employees are willing to give up for career development opportunities. More than half would be willing to reduce their vacation time or forgo a bonus. **43%** would give up part of their paycheck, and a shocking **47%** would give up some of their healthcare benefits—during a global pandemic.<sup>1</sup>



## Percentage of workers with obstacles keeping them from advancing their careers <sup>1</sup>



# Removing roadblocks



Despite strong motivation to make career changes, the **AI@Work Study** found that **76%** of employees globally face obstacles preventing them from progressing in their careers. In some countries, this number is even greater—**89%** of employees in the United Arab Emirates are facing major roadblocks, followed by **86%** in Singapore and **85%** in India.

Some obstacles are self-imposed, such as being too afraid of failure or lacking the confidence to try something new. But employers bear some responsibility too. Many employees aren't sure where to start, what skills they need, or what career path makes the most sense for them, and employers can help by providing direction. It's also telling that **25%** of workers identified the lack of growth opportunities within their company as a source of anxiety.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, organizations aren't doing enough to support their workforce.



**Employees at companies with internal mobility stay almost**

**2X** longer.<sup>2</sup>

One way employers can empower their people to take back control of their careers is by leveraging HCM technology. Using a combination of machine learning, AI, and analytics, HCM technology can create personalized learning paths that define an employee's strategy for growth. For example, Oracle Cloud HCM recommends learning and gig opportunities based on a person's skills and interests, which helps companies retain talent by fulfilling their employees' desire to develop new competencies and gain new experiences. These opportunities also help workers move up or branch out within the organization by working toward their career goals.



One company committed to supporting their employees is ooba, South Africa's largest bond originator, which has guided more than one million people through the home buying process since 1999. Focusing on people and technology is critical to their business, so it's no wonder the company turned that focus inward. Using Oracle Cloud HCM, they support employees throughout their career lifecycle while creating momentum for easier technology adoption by offering focused eLearning modules that provide how-to training on demand. By taking care of their employees, ooba gives them the peace of mind to focus on helping customers.





## AI Creates the roadmap

The great news is that people trust AI and want to use it to help with their career planning. The Workplace Intelligence study found that **85%** of the global workforce wants technology to assist in defining their future by identifying skills gaps, recommending ways to learn new skills, and providing the next steps to help them advance their careers.

The research also revealed that **82%** of people believe AI can support their career development better than humans. Inherently, AI-powered chatbots are better at giving unbiased recommendations. They can also instantly answer questions about career paths, deliver resources based on current skills or goals, and suggest new opportunities that fit an employee's skill set, taking the pressure off HR leaders to have all the answers.

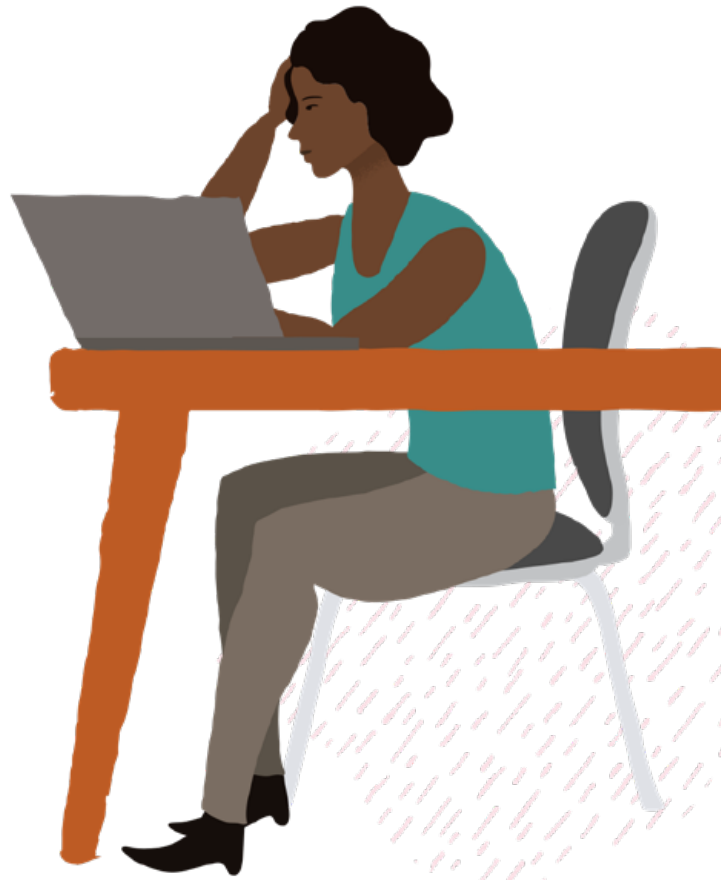
Of course, AI shouldn't replace the human touch. HR representatives and mentors can offer advice based on their own experience or provide personal recommendations, which robots can't do. Employees also say people are better at identifying strengths and weaknesses and can look beyond a résumé to find opportunities that fit an individual's personality.<sup>1</sup>



**55%** of employees are more likely to stay with a company that uses AI to support career growth.<sup>1</sup>

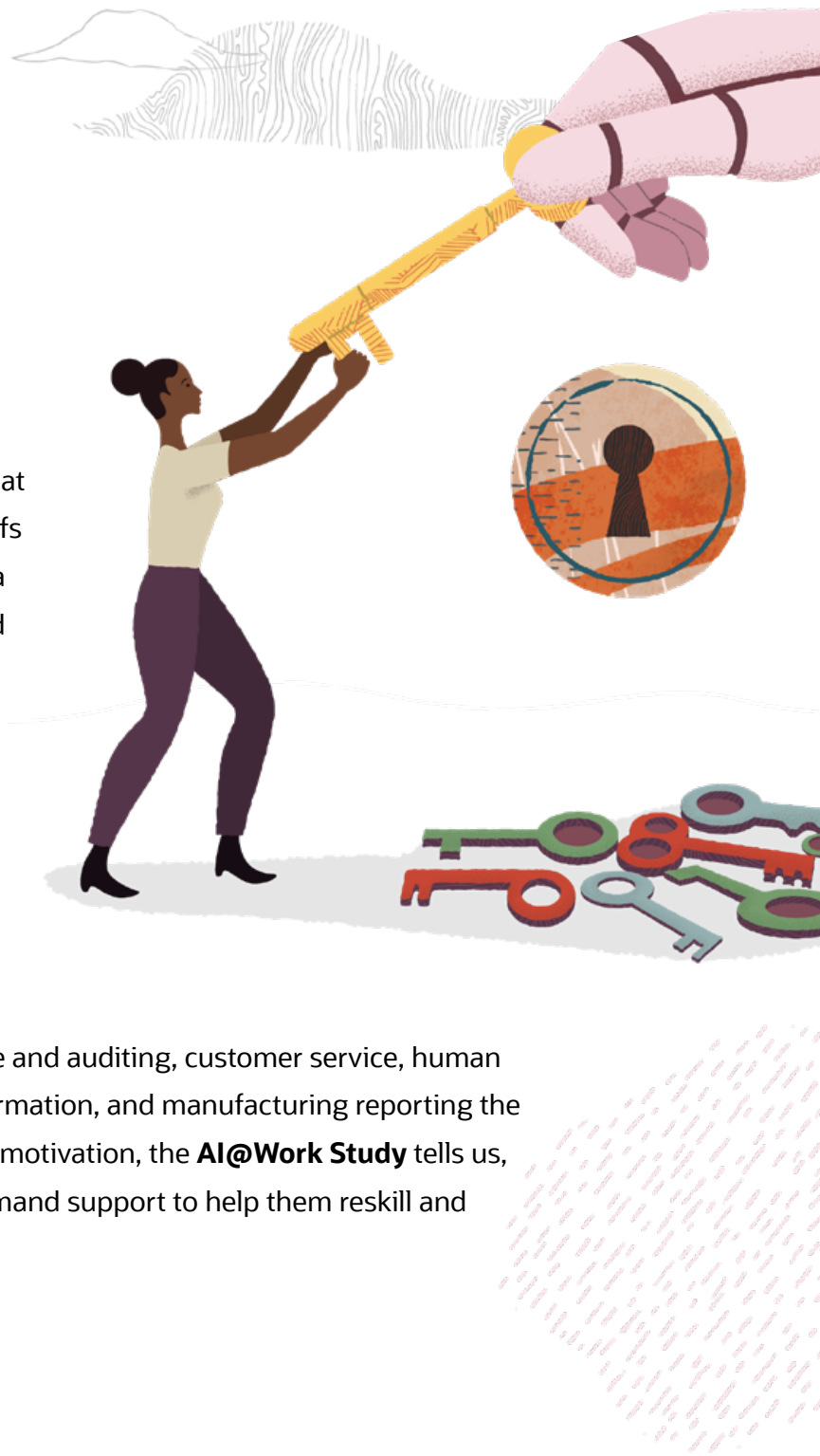
AI can, however, significantly improve recruiting and retention. An Oracle Cloud HCM feature called Best Candidates uses AI to recommend people for open positions based on many factors, including their skills. Oracle Dynamic Skills helps employees develop their careers by proposing learning paths, encouraging workers to enhance their skill sets.

Ironically, some workers fear AI may soon make their jobs obsolete while also believing that AI will help them prepare for the future of work by guiding their careers. The World Economic Forum estimates that by 2025, while 85 million jobs will be displaced due to automation and unstable economic conditions generated by the pandemic, 97 million new jobs will be created.<sup>4</sup>



# Reskilling is an opportunity for employers

After a tumultuous two years, **77%** of the workforce is willing to retrain and switch vocations entirely to seek opportunities that offer more job security and growth.<sup>8</sup> Layoffs and the fluctuating job market made this a necessity for some, but fear has motivated others. According to a Boston Consulting Group study, the willingness to reskill was highest among employees who lost income during the pandemic due to layoffs, reduced hours, or salary cuts.<sup>9</sup> BCG also uncovered that employees who see automation as a threat to their jobs are more enthusiastic about learning new skills, with workers in finance and auditing, customer service, human resources, administration, media and information, and manufacturing reporting the greatest levels of concern. Whatever their motivation, the **AI@Work Study** tells us, in no uncertain terms, that employees demand support to help them reskill and close skills gaps.



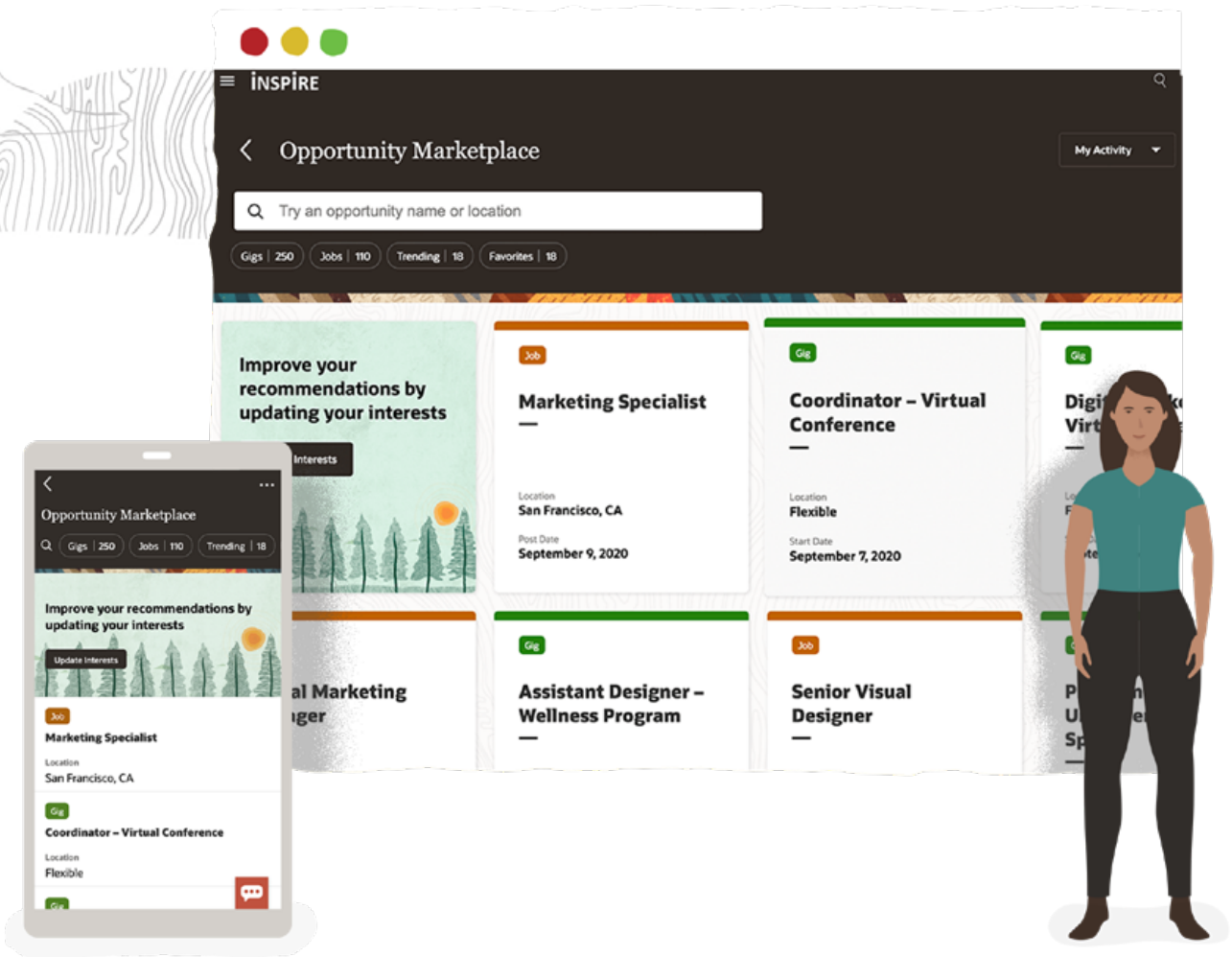
Employees don't need to change companies to change careers. In fact, only **18%** of employees plan to switch companies in the next year.<sup>1</sup> However, that number could quickly rise if employers don't heed the call to action and offer career support. For those organizations willing to invest in developing their workforce, their employees' desire to learn and willingness to reskill presents a major opportunity. By strategically retraining their workforce, employers can fill gaps in their organization, making them more effective, efficient, and better positioned for future success.

**43%** of employees want to learn new skills and advance their education.<sup>1</sup>



People reskill and move into new roles more often than you might think. Most employees who stepped into emerging roles between 2015 and 2020 came from entirely different job families, which in some cases didn't have overlapping skills.<sup>4</sup> For example, **72%** of employees who pivoted into data- and AI-related positions came from different backgrounds, and **68%** of new sales representatives previously held unrelated roles.<sup>4</sup> Managers are onboard with reskilling employees too. **91%** support helping their direct reports discover new opportunities within their organizations.<sup>2</sup>

One way to do this is by posting gig assignments or projects that are open to employees across lines of business. Opportunity Marketplace, part of Oracle Cloud HCM, lets employees keep their current jobs while contributing to projects that help them develop new capabilities and learn more about other business areas while filling organizational needs. Companies that use Oracle's Opportunity Marketplace can post job opportunities and gigs in one place to increase visibility and foster career mobility. Presenting employees with opportunities can help keep them engaged, and companies with high internal mobility have employee retention rates nearly twice as high as those that don't.<sup>2</sup>



# Looking inward and increasing loyalty

Competitive companies already use career progression planning as an employee incentive. A ManpowerGroup survey asked nearly 45,000 employers in 43 countries about their hiring plans for the fourth quarter of 2021 and found that **41%** of organizations offer training, mentorship, or skills development to entice candidates and retain employees.<sup>10</sup> Companies with a culture of continuous learning create a myriad of opportunities for both employers and employees, making them highly attractive to top performers both inside and outside the company.

Organizations worldwide have been slowly increasing their percentage of internal hires. The number of employees who filled positions through promotions or other moves within a company grew by **10%** from 2015 to 2020,<sup>11</sup> and from April through August 2020, the internal hiring rate was nearly **20%** higher than it was during the same period in 2019.<sup>2</sup> Internal mobility comes with added benefits, such as keeping knowledge within the company, boosting morale, and increasing loyalty. Employees who have moved into new roles internally are three and a half times more likely to be engaged at work than those who haven't.<sup>2</sup> Most notably, reskilling gives organizations the ability to shape employees, teaching them the exact skills needed to fill open and future positions.



# The skills gap isn't the only problem

For companies, reshaping the workforce is no longer a wish list item—it's fundamental to their survival. **69%** of employers struggle to fill roles because candidates are unqualified.<sup>10</sup> The skills gap is causing headaches globally for recruiters and hiring managers, with companies in India, Singapore, France, Japan, Germany, South Africa, and Spain having the most difficult time finding candidates with the right skills.<sup>10</sup> Organizations in Mexico, Poland, the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and Israel face average levels of difficulty finding the talent they need. Still, even countries in the middle are in a tough spot. In August 2021, the United States had about one million more job vacancies than people looking for work.<sup>12</sup>



Some countries are even addressing the skills gap at the national level. For example, in 2020, the United Kingdom announced a plan to upskill and reskill citizens. Backed by billions of British pounds in funding, the Lifetime Skills Guarantee initiative will help the country add skilled workers in difficult-to-fill job categories such as engineering and IT so the economy can bounce back more quickly following the pandemic.<sup>15</sup>



**But the skills gap isn't the only problem making it harder to find qualified candidates; there are fewer candidates in general. The pandemic pushed several million people into early retirement in the United States alone.<sup>14</sup> One of the most devastating blows to the global economy is that an estimated 54 million women worldwide left the workforce during the pandemic.<sup>15</sup> As childcare facilities closed, school invaded our living rooms, and people had to find alternatives for eldercare, families made difficult decisions. Since women earn on average only 68% as much as men globally, they often stay home to take on these responsibilities, disproportionately driving them out of the workforce.<sup>16</sup> Making a problematic situation worse, some of these women may not return.**





# Will you answer the call?

The talent shortage and record number of open jobs mean this is a workers' job market with employees dictating the terms. Moving into 2022, **74%** of people feel like they finally have control over their professional lives again, and they're determined to advance their careers.<sup>1</sup> Most of all, the workforce demands help developing the skills necessary to succeed as technology and the requirements of the modern workplace continue to evolve. Companies that stand in their way or don't make efforts to support their employees will be left behind.

Giving your workforce access to the right career development tools through Oracle Cloud HCM will help you meet employee demand. It will also help you create an agile workforce that can learn emerging, in-demand skills in real time and adopt the technologies necessary for your organization to strengthen its position as a leader in your industry.



# Work Made Human

We believe in helping HR unlock human possibilities by building cloud applications that let you find and attract the best talent while helping your workforce feel safe and supported. With Oracle Cloud HCM, you gain an employee experience platform that drives your recruiting, internal mobility, and D&I initiatives with the insights and tools to reduce time to hire and help grow and retain talent. We are here as your partner as you rethink recruiting and look forward to helping you with your talent acquisition technology needs.

Read the ebook **[“Back in the Driver’s Seat: Employees Use Tech to Regain Control”](#)** to learn more about the findings from the 2021 AI@Work Study.

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<sup>1</sup> Workplace Intelligence 2021 AI@Work Study, October 2021, [www.oracle.com/human-capital-management/hcm-ai-at-work-2021-form.html](https://www.oracle.com/human-capital-management/hcm-ai-at-work-2021-form.html)

<sup>2</sup> “Workplace Learning Report: Skill Building in the New World of Work,” LinkedIn Learning, 2021, [learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/amp/learning-solutions/images/wlr21/pdf/LinkedIn-Learning\\_Workplace-Learning-Report-2021-EN-1.pdf](https://learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/amp/learning-solutions/images/wlr21/pdf/LinkedIn-Learning_Workplace-Learning-Report-2021-EN-1.pdf).

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<sup>5</sup> Kate Whiting, “These are the top 10 job skills of tomorrow—and how long it takes to learn them,” World Economic Forum, October 21, 2020, [www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/).

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Marr, “What skills are the most needed right now?” Forbes, July 16, 2021, [www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2021/07/16/what-skills-are-the-most-needed-right-now/?sh=abe0ec3699d9](https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2021/07/16/what-skills-are-the-most-needed-right-now/?sh=abe0ec3699d9).

<sup>7</sup> “7 skills employers of the future will be looking for,” FutureLearn.com, June 15, 2020, <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/careers/7-skills-employers-of-the-future-will-be-looking-for>.

<sup>8</sup> “Hopes and Fears 2021,” PwC, 2021, [www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/hopes-and-fears.html](https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/hopes-and-fears.html).

<sup>9</sup> Rainer Strack, Orsolya Kovács-Ondrejko, et al., “Decoding Global Reskilling and Career Paths,” Boston Consulting Group, April 28, 2021, [www.bcg.com/publications/2021/decoding-global-trends-reskilling-career-paths](https://www.bcg.com/publications/2021/decoding-global-trends-reskilling-career-paths).

<sup>10</sup> “Employment Outlook Survey,” ManpowerGroup, 2021, [go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/MPG\\_MEOS\\_Q4\\_2021\\_Global\\_Report.pdf](https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/MPG_MEOS_Q4_2021_Global_Report.pdf).

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<sup>12</sup> “Gizza Job: PM Allocates Billions in Upskilling Funding,” The Freelance Informer, October 9, 2020, [www.freelanceinformer.com/news/gizza-job-pm-allocates-billions-in-upskilling-funding](https://www.freelanceinformer.com/news/gizza-job-pm-allocates-billions-in-upskilling-funding).

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<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Bartash, “U.S. jobs aren’t coming back quickly, even as millions lose unemployment benefits,” MarketWatch, October 4, 2021, [www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-jobs-are-coming-back-but-slowly-even-as-millions-lose-unemployment-benefits-11633369302](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-jobs-are-coming-back-but-slowly-even-as-millions-lose-unemployment-benefits-11633369302).

<sup>15</sup> Emily Rauhala, Anu Narayanswamy, Youjin Shin, and Júlia Ledur, “How the pandemic set back women’s progress in the global workforce,” The Washington Post, August 28, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/coronavirus-women-work/>.

<sup>16</sup> “Global Gender Gap Report 2021,” World Economic Forum, March 2021, [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf).

