

# BENEFITS INSIGHTS

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## Career Pathing

Career pathing is a structured, comprehensive development planning process intended to help employees visualize their career potential within a company. The process requires employees to take an honest look at their career goals, skills, needed knowledge, experience and personal characteristics. They are then required to make a plan for achieving what is necessary in each of these areas in order to advance in their careers.

In organizations that have formal processes for career pathing, such as performance development planning (PDP), employees receive support and assistance in their efforts to develop their paths. A more traditional form of career pathing is the use of performance appraisals, although they usually aren't as detailed and tend to focus more on past accomplishments than detailed goals for the long- and short-term future. Regardless of the label used, career pathing can benefit both employers and employees.

### Benefits of Career Pathing

The following benefits can influence an organization to embrace formal career pathing:

- The ability to recruit the right people for the right jobs
- Better employee engagement and less turnover
- The ability to meet employee demands for greater workplace flexibility
- More diversity at the leadership level
- More opportunity for advancement

Organizations that implement career pathing tend to have more engaged employees, because employees believe that their employers are concerned about their growth—providing avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling their company's mission. Career paths provide employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current jobs, promotions and transfers.

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## How to Implement a Career-pathing Initiative

There are four main steps for employers to consider when creating a formal career-pathing initiative.

### *Step 1: Identify the Company's Career Progression Needs*

Employees want career progression, and traditional methods don't always work. They are navigating career lattices, where there are multiple routes to desired positions. Companies must consider how business objectives will align with career pathing, what skills and expertise are required from employees and how to build the right foundational framework—something easily navigable to employees looking for an internal career change.

### *Step 2: Build a Foundational Framework*

The starting point of a sound career framework is the job family—a collection of competency-based job role profiles that include competencies, education, experiences, credentials and qualifications. A competency-based framework is designed to translate the organization's strategic business objectives into tangible actions on the part of employees, changing the dynamics of how employees engage with the company.

### *Step 3: Set Employees Up for Successful Career Pathing*

It is important to assess employees' talent profiles against the job profiles that have been created. This gives insight into how ready an individual is for a specific role and helps determine short- and long-term career paths. It is also important to enable employees to develop their paths in ways that are meaningful to them.

### *Step 4: Communication, Development and Assessment*

Employees may have questions around the career-pathing initiative. Communicating employee expectations and implementation methods is vital. Employees and managers will require training to understand how career pathing will change the way job performance and career options are managed. Employers should also create assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and whether improvements are needed.

## Integral Part of Onboarding and Retention

Employers need to ensure that their employees want to stay, even when they are ready for a change in their careers. Career pathing is vital to both onboarding and retention.

### *Make Sure There Are Real Career Opportunities Available*

Many organizations underestimate the total career opportunities available to their employees because their mindsets are about traditional career paths, based on hierarchy and experience instead of potential. However, that way of thinking limits the number of available career opportunities. Employers should make a practice of revisiting employees' resumes to tap into their strengths and interests so they can maximize the potential of their talent base.



### *Make Sure Available Career Paths Are Visible*

If employees cannot see the available career paths in an organization, they may assume other career opportunities are nonexistent. Employers should consider tapping into data aggregation technologies that harness information about roles and skills, so they can map dynamic career paths across the organization. They should then empower employees with a self-service interface to view and explore these internal career paths and learning tracks.

### *Create a System to Facilitate Internal Career Moves*

Not many organizations invest as much in internal career management platforms and practices as they do in external recruitment. HR managers should consider upgrading to cloud-based systems with a powerful functionality that allows them to connect what they learned from the onboarding process to the employees' career paths. This is especially important in organizations with higher rates of turnover.

For more information about career pathing and retention strategies, contact Pinnacle Corporation.

