

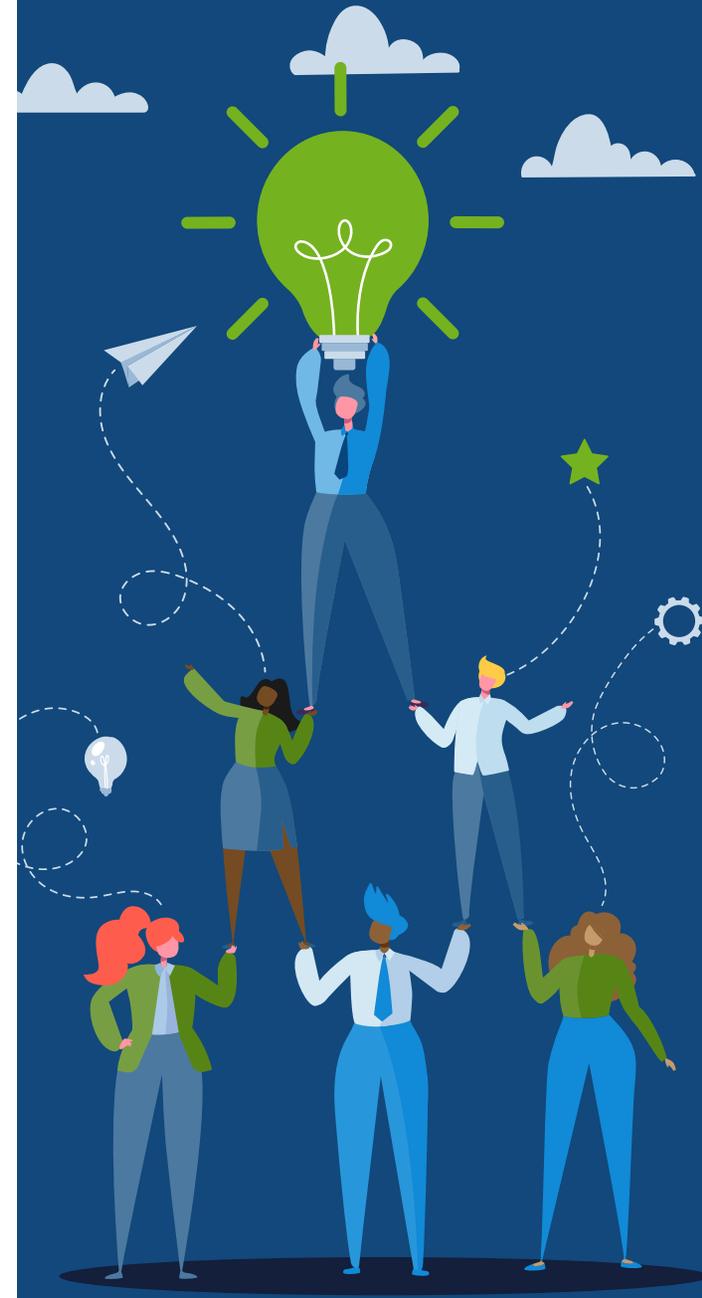


Unlocking Organizational Success by **Supporting Employee Growth and Development**



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Introduction

That career development is highly desired by employees is not news. What you may not know is just how dependent employee loyalty is on whether or not they get support with their development. As it turns out, **many employees feel that neither their managers nor their organizations are supporting them.**

The Gen Z Factor:

This group, in particular, feels detached from their managers and, as a result, struggles to get the support needed to advance in their careers. Gen Z workers also have a far greater expectation for career development guidance and programming than those from older generations. As the fastest-growing employee demographic, this lack of support could lead to ongoing, increased attrition and diminished engagement.

To better understand how support for career advancement—and the lack thereof—is impacting today's workforce, INTOO partnered with independent research firm Workplace Intelligence to survey 1,600 U.S.-based HR leaders and employees. This report describes the survey's key findings, including what support employees seek from their employers and managers. The survey also revealed a distinct misalignment, both in understanding and in practice, between the support HR leaders believe their organization provides and actual employee experience, which may be contributing to engagement and retention issues—especially among Gen Z.

This misalignment and lack of reciprocity in the employee-employer relationship can also stifle an organization's innovation, competitiveness, growth, and overall success. To continually move forward, an organization and its people need to be in sync with goals and milestones matched to the company's objectives. To achieve that forward movement, employees require a clear understanding of their role in the company's strategy, and the right kinds of opportunities to learn, upskill, train across departments, be mentored and coached, and advance in their careers.

The Upshot

It's commendable that employers are expending money and human capital on employee development. However, several things are needed for this investment to be worthwhile: Employees must understand how the programming is supposed to help them, and they must find it beneficial. And managers must have the time and resources to guide them.

Key Findings

Among the survey's key findings:

Employees supported by their managers make significantly more progress, yet almost half of them don't receive that support.

46% of employees say **their manager doesn't know how to help** them with their career development.

7x Workers who feel at least "somewhat" supported by their manager were **nearly 7x more likely to say they made a lot of career progress** last year compared to those who say they get little or no support from their manager.

50% Only half of HR leaders say managers at their company **receive training when hired** on how to provide career development guidance for their team members.

Employees expect opportunities to advance their careers that they're not getting.

25% HR leaders predict that **25% of employees (and an alarming 44% of Gen Z employees) are likely to quit** within the next six months due to a lack of support for their career development.

41% **While just 41% of HR leaders** would describe their company's L&D opportunities and benefits as "excellent," **an even fewer 22% of employees agree.**

59% of employees say **their company "rarely" or "never" helps them** explore opportunities for growth outside of their current department.

Gen Z—the fastest growing segment of the workforce—has little faith in and poor experiences with their managers.

47% of Gen Z say they get **better career advice from ChatGPT** than their manager.

62% of Gen Z would like to talk to their manager more often about their career, but **their manager is too busy.**

Gen Z employees expect to learn A LOT on the job.

84% of Gen Z say L&D opportunities and benefits are **"just as" (54%) or "more" (30%) valuable** than a promotion or title change.

8/10 At least 8 out of 10 employees say that having access to best-in-class **L&D opportunities would increase their engagement, job satisfaction, motivation** at work, and likelihood of staying at their company. However, nearly all Gen Z employees—97% or more—say these outcomes would increase for them.

Career Development Support: Mutual Benefit or Missed Opportunity?

Employees expect their manager to help them grow in their roles, and many HR leaders believe that employees are having this experience.

However, many employees don't feel that their managers or employers adequately support their career growth. In fact, nearly 7 out of 10 employees say they're facing at least one obstacle preventing them from making more progress in their career, including not having the awareness of opportunities for promotion or resources they need, as well as a lack of support from their manager.

Many employees would be interested in advancing in their existing role or moving forward in their existing career path in the organization. Yet **over 40% of employees say their company “rarely” or “never” helps them explore opportunities for growth** within their current role or department.

When employees feel stagnant in their roles, they're less likely to be invested in organizational outcomes, and are less engaged overall. They're also more likely to leave, taking with them their homegrown knowledge, diverse thought and skills base, and ingenuity. If you think salary alone can retain them, you may be surprised to learn it's not always the answer (more on that later).

Employees say:



their employer cares more about their productivity than their career development



they feel completely on their own at their organization when it comes to their career development



their employer does not value their career development

Talent hoarding is a bigger issue than you may expect

Having an eye on internal mobility opportunities can be hugely beneficial for forward-thinking organizations and their employees, as it enables agility, growth, and resilience through change.

But even as HR leaders try to promote this practice, they can be undermined by a lack of buy-in among managers and department heads. Talent hoarding, a common phenomenon in which managers discourage internal mobility because they want to keep their top talent for themselves, can prevent employees and the company from benefiting from such movement.

In addition, while HR is aware of the problem, there remains a steep disconnect about how limited employees actually are:

45%

HR Perspective

Only 45% feel they provide all of the support people need to get a job in a different department at their company

24%

Employee Reality

Just 24% say they have this level of support

The Gen Z Factor:

An alarming 44% of Gen Z employees say they'll quit within the next 6 months because their company doesn't support their career development.

59% of employees say their company "rarely" or "never" helps them explore opportunities for growth outside of their current department.

How bad is it?

25% of employees and an alarming **44% of Gen Z**

say it's likely they'll quit within the next 6 months because their company doesn't support their career development.

Imagine that your organization was going to lose 1 out of 4 employees over the next six months. What steps would you take?



Bad Career Advice Is Everywhere, and Managers Aren't Helping

One factor contributing to a lack of career advancement for your employees could be the proliferation of bad career advice. It seems anyone can offer career tips these days (no experience required!), however, the value and effectiveness of this advice varies widely.

Over 3 out of 4 workers report that they've received bad career advice.

Consider the impact this can have on your employees and your organization. How can you cut through all the noise to keep your workers engaged?

Employees are going to their managers for advice, but 39% say that advice has been bad. In fact, employees say they get better career advice from their friends and family (62%), Google (44%), social media (36%), and AI (e.g., ChatGPT) (34%) than they get from their manager.

Gen Z—perhaps the most moldable workforce demographic — **is especially hungry for career advice but is not getting it from their managers:**

Compared to other generations, a higher percentage of Gen Z say they've sought out career advice. At the same time, Gen Z employees are less likely to feel they can rely on their manager. For example, around half of Gen Z employees say they get better advice from social media (55%) and AI (e.g., ChatGPT) (47%) than their manager. These workers also present a huge opportunity for an organization since employers can benefit from their more recent education, ingenuity, enthusiasm, and ability to be molded with the company's values.

The Gen Z Factor:

Compared to Baby Boomers, Gen Z employees were over 2x more likely to say they'd like to have career conversations with their manager at least once a month.

How can managers begin career conversations?

Here are some starters:

- What specific skills or areas of your role do you want to develop?
- Are there any particular projects or assignments that you're interested in taking on to expand your experience?
- What support or resources do you need to excel in your career growth?
- How can I be a better support to you in your professional development?

The majority of those who have received bad career advice say this has **affected them in their professional and personal lives.**

67% say bad career advice has affected their career:

- ✗ Stayed in a job/career they didn't like
- ✗ Took a job they didn't like
- ✗ Missed an opportunity for a promotion or raise
- ✗ Pursued education/training that did not benefit them
- ✗ Chose the wrong career path
- ✗ Quit their job and regretted it

52% say bad career advice has affected them in their current job:

- ✗ Are unhappy at work
- ✗ Often feel irritable
- ✗ Do the bare minimum to get by
- ✗ Don't speak well of their employer
- ✗ Are not very friendly with colleagues

Employees say they get **better career advice** from these sources than they get from their manager:

62% Friends and Family

44% Google

36% Social Media

34% A.I. (e.g. ChatGPT)

59% say bad career advice has affected their personal life:

- ✗ Are struggling with their mental health
- ✗ Are dissatisfied with how their life has turned out
- ✗ Are struggling with their physical health
- ✗ Have wasted a lot of money on training/education
- ✗ Are struggling with their social life

The Gen Z Factor:

39% of Gen Z say they are struggling with their mental health as a result of bad career advice.

Creating a Workplace Where Employees Can Thrive

Building an environment that encourages growth and stimulates learning requires that you equip both managers and employees with the resources they need, many of which you likely already have.



Empower your managers to provide **more—and better—support.**

Your leaders are key to aligning team members to your organization's objectives. Are they supporting and inspiring employees to learn and grow with you? Do they have the skills and training to be able to do so?

If employees think the advice their managers give them is misdirected or if they feel their managers don't have time to help, they may be adrift or disengaged, which will impact their performance and your business.

Nearly half (45%) of employees say their manager has played only a "small" role or "no role" in helping them grow their careers.

And only 26% feel "completely" supported by their manager in their career development.

Workers who feel at least "somewhat" supported by their manager were **nearly 7x more likely** to say they made a lot of career progress last year compared to those who say they get little or no support from their manager.

Employees want to be able to rely on their managers for career guidance, **but their managers are too busy.**

Around a third of employees say they only have formal (34%) or informal (30%) conversations with their manager about their career (e.g., their career goals, opportunities for promotions, or steps they can take to advance their career) either once a year or never.

Over half (53%) of employees—and 62% of Gen Z—would like to talk to their manager more often about their career, but their manager is too busy.

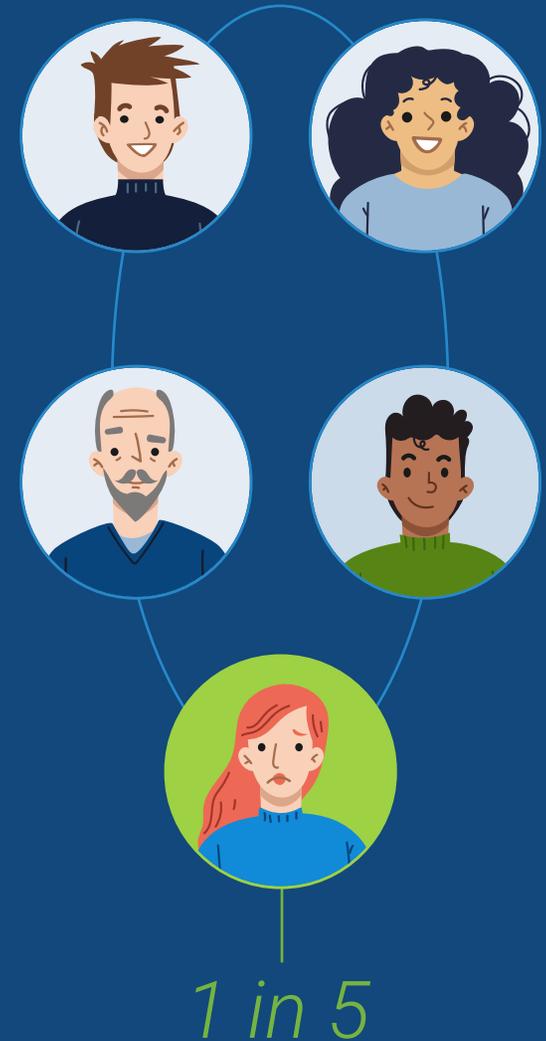
While time is one of the barriers to career support, employees report additional issues with their managers:

- They're more **focused on their own career** than helping them with their career **(47%)**
- They **don't know how to help** them with their career development **(46%)**
- They **don't care** about their career development **(35%)**

Managers are employees, too.

Only 51% of HR leaders say managers at their company receive training when hired on how to provide career development guidance for their team members. Offering managers this and other types of training can help them be the leaders you need them to be.

However, offering training in and of itself isn't enough; managers also need the time to spend on their own growth. Encourage them to prioritize development and promote this value across your organization. When managers are supported, they can more effectively support their employees, and your business will reap the benefits.



Alarming, around **1 out of 5 employees** say they “never” have career conversations with their manager.

Evaluate your **employee learning resources and programs.**

Managers alone can't provide everything their employees need to grow. Tools, resources, and opportunities to develop and practice new skills are needed to help your workforce advance in their careers with you and beyond.

Employee learning comes in all shapes and sizes. **The right fit will make a difference for employees and your business.**

The majority of employees say it's important that their employer offers L&D opportunities such as the ones shown in the infographic to the right. However, a relatively low number of HR leaders report that their company offers these, indicating room for improvement.

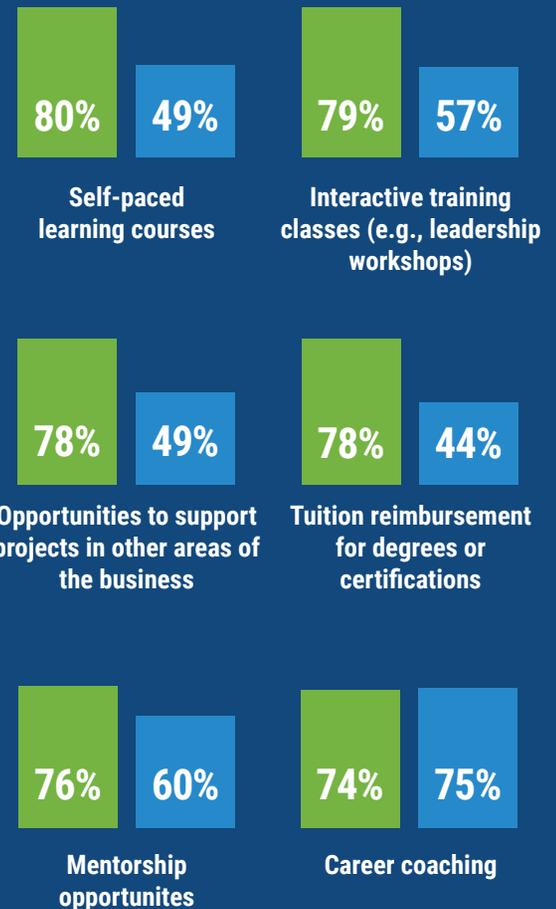
Just offering career development programming isn't enough; these programs have to be **high quality to drive results for employees.**

- Among employees whose companies offer career development programs, only around 1 out of 3 reports that they are "very" satisfied with them.
- Even HR seems to recognize that their career development benefits are basic. Only 41% of HR leaders would describe their company's L&D opportunities and benefits as "excellent." However, even fewer employees—only 22%—feel their benefits meet this standard.
- Nearly all leaders—on average 98%—recognize that improving their career development offerings would increase employees' engagement, job satisfaction, motivation, and likelihood of staying with and recommending their organization.

Employees have high expectation for L&D, **but most companies aren't keeping up**

■ % of employees who think employers should offer this

■ % of employers who actually do



What can **high-quality L&D programming** do?

For employers, there's much to gain by investing in better L&D programs.

At least 8 out of 10 employees say that having access to best-in-class L&D opportunities would increase their:



Engagement

86%



Job satisfaction

87%



Motivation at work

86%



Likelihood of staying at their company

81%

Among Gen Z employees, nearly all—97% or more!—say best-in-class L&D programs would increase these outcomes for them. And among all employees, those who said their company's L&D opportunities and benefits are "good" or "excellent" were over 4x more likely to say they made **a lot of career progress** last year, compared to those who rated their programs as "poor" or "very poor."



The Gen Z Factor:

Compared to Baby Boomers, Gen Z employees were over 3x more likely to say it's very important that their employer offers career coaching and nearly 2x more likely to say it's very important that their employer offers mentorship programs and opportunities to support projects in other areas of the business.

Employees look at career advancement as **more than just money.**

Employee development is an overlooked yet meaningful investment opportunity. For example, as you might expect, 94% of employees agree that getting a promotion or pay raise is a form of career advancement. But most also view the following opportunities the same way:



Technical skill learning opportunities

87%



Opportunity to work on a new project outside of normal scope

82%



Mentorship or coaching opportunities

79%



Soft skill learning opportunities

77%

74% of employees—and 84% of Gen Z—say L&D opportunities and benefits are **“just as” (54%) or “more” (20%) valuable** than a promotion or title change.



The benefit to employers? These career development opportunities often **come at a lower cost versus salary increases.**

Conclusion

Supporting employee growth benefits your business **during and long after employment.**



Employees who feel supported in their career development **drive business growth and innovation for their employers.**

Remember, growth comes in many forms. Employees are hungry for programmatic and on-the-job learning opportunities, even when promotions and raises may not be possible. By instilling these values from the top down and empowering managers to drive this development across their teams, employees will be propelled to create success for themselves and for you.

Employees who gain the most from their experience at an organization are more likely to stay connected with that employer—making referrals of highly qualified candidates, sharing ideas, and potentially returning down the line. This is especially true for Gen Z employees, who have the greatest potential to share their experiences with others—good and bad. By nurturing the long futures ahead of them, you gain the benefits of their connectivity and loyalty.

Supporting employees' advancing movement—whether laterally, upwards, or even eventually out of the company—encourages other talent with similar mindsets to join your organization, thereby creating an ever-growing network of innovative thinkers who support your business. And so engaged employees support you in return, even beyond the term of employment.

Methodology

Research findings are based on a survey conducted by INTOO and Workplace Intelligence between November 19–December 2, 2023. In total, 1,600 U.S.-based employees between the ages of 21–67 completed the survey. This included 800 HR leaders and 800 workers in non-management roles. All respondents were employed full-time in salaried roles.

- **Gen Z (ages 21–26):** 18% of Employees
- **Millennials (ages 27–42):** 32% of Employees
- **Gen X (ages 43–58):** 31% of Employees
- **Baby Boomers (ages 59+):** 19% of Employees

About Workplace Intelligence

Workplace Intelligence is an award-winning thought leadership and research agency focused on the world of work. We help companies and their executives tell their workplace story in a meaningful, relevant, and impactful way using primary data, insights, and interviews. For more information, go to our [website](#) and subscribe to our [Insider newsletter](#).



About INTOO

INTOO is the award-winning career development and outplacement flagship for Gi Group Holding, a global leader in HR and talent solutions with decades of experience in delivering high-touch, people-focused programs to more than 20,000 companies around the world. To support and benefit employers' organizational objectives, we apply research-based, best-in-class methodologies to coaching, training, technology, and assessments designed to help every candidate, current employee, or exiting team member identify and achieve their professional goals. Our flexible, scalable solutions enable organizations of all sizes and in every industry to increase engagement, improve retention, nurture talent, drive optimal performance, develop leadership, and protect their brand.