



CAEL
Linking Learning and Work

A View from CAEL

Are Your Employees Asking for Career Development?



Why Career Development?

In the past six months, we've received an increasing amount of requests for effective career development strategies that target the entry and mid-level workforce. These requests are coming from a number of different industry sectors throughout the country. In response, we've created this paper to summarize all of those requests, take a closer look at what's driving their needs, and offer a smorgasbord of possible strategies that address career development in the entry and mid-level workforce.



What are we hearing?

1. **From a hospital system based in the Midwest, to a financial services firm with a nationwide presence, requests for career development strategies have surfaced from employer engagement surveys.**

In both these cases, the requests came from what we call “entry-plus” employees, meaning younger employees who have been with the company for 6-12 months, and who begin to wonder, “What’s next? Do I stay or look around for something else?” In a November 2012 study conducted by strategic workforce consulting company Cornerstone OnDemand and research firm Kelton Global, it was estimated that 19 million U.S. employees would be searching for new jobs in 2013.¹ This underscores the need for employers to be proactive in offering career development resources that help to retain the bulk of its entry and mid-level workers.

2. **A large agricultural manufacturing company - also in the Midwest - is paying closer attention to the looming retirements of senior technical staff. “We’ve been threatened by the retirement bubble for a long time, and now it’s happening. We’ve had three key people retire in our maintenance operations, and at least two more will retire soon as well. We need help.”**

Clearly, this company is not alone. We are a nation of older workers. According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, the impending retirement of many Baby Boomers will have created 31 million new jobs in the U.S. economy by 2020.²

¹ Cornerstone OnDemand Inc. and Kelton Global Group, The Cornerstone OnDemand 2013 U.S. Employee Report, (Santa Monica, CA: Cornerstone OnDemand, 2013), 1, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/sites/default/files/research/csod-rs-cornerstone-kelton-2013-employee-survey-results.pdf>.

² Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl, Recovery: Job Growth and Education Require-

Many of these jobs will come from the manufacturing sector, but there are growing concerns that new employees will not be sufficiently skilled to handle the everyday responsibilities of their positions. These concerns are made well-evident in a 2011 study of manufacturers conducted by Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute, where 68% said that highly-skilled, flexible workers will be the most important factor to their company's future success.³ However, roughly the same number said that they expect to see a shortage of skilled production workers (i.e. – machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors and technicians) over the next 3-5 years.⁴

3. **Increasingly, enterprise-wide staffing units from several energy companies are building their pipeline with their incumbent workforce. “We’re not really ready to hire externally, but our technology is changing so fast. As a result, we’re helping our current workforce get ready for the new positions that are coming at us, almost daily. Right now, we’re building our pipeline from the inside.”**

One way that companies can meet this goal is by joining or forming industry-wide alliances. Two examples of leading CAEL initiatives include the Energy Providers Coalition for Education (EPCE)⁵ for the energy industry and the National Association for Telecommunications Education and Learning (NACTEL)⁶ for the telecommunications industry. Companies that are a part of these and other partnerships collaborate with higher education institutions to create industry-specific curriculum and training for employees, providing workers with the high-tech skills needed for jobs. Industry-wide alliances have been proven to help companies save time and money in developing the skills of their workers.

The big picture

Employee development, recruiting and retention have always been important, but this recent recession has pushed those objectives to the back burner as companies try to shore up their bottom line with the workforce they already have.

Even in slow economic times, most companies continue to develop their high-potential executives and leaders. During those same times, however, companies generally pay less attention to the entry and mid-level workforce. In a stagnant economy, this decision can be short-sighted, and as the economy heats up, it's a recipe for disaster, resulting in the kind of constant employee turnover that can be costly to a company's bottom line. As noted by a November 6, 2012 report by the Center for American Progress, it costs employers between 10-30% of

ments Through 2020 (Washington: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2013), 19, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/recovery2020.fr.web.pdf>.

3 Tom Morrison and others, eds., *Boiling Point?: The Skills Gap in U.S. Manufacturing – By Deloitte Development LLC and The Manufacturing Institute*, (New York: Deloitte, 2011), 9, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/~media/A07730B2A798437D98501E798C2E13AA.ashx>.

4 *Boiling Point?*, 7.

5 “EPCE Home Page,” Energy Providers Coalition for Education (EPCE), last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://epceonline.org/>.

6 “NACTEL Home Page,” National Association for Telecommunications Education & Learning (NACTEL), last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.nactel.org/>.

Ultimately, the success or failure of any business rests on the backs of the entry and mid-level workforce.

a departed employee's salary to find someone new for that vacated position.⁷

Entry and mid-level workers make up the glue of any company. These are the people who interact the most with their employer's customers, and often times are the only people that a customer will see. Ultimately, the success or failure of any business rests on the backs of the entry and mid-level workforce.

Today, the economy - however slowly - is rebounding. And hand in hand with economic improvement comes a corresponding pressure to develop and retain workers, as the temptation grows for workers to literally cross the street for a new and

"better" job. Considering the massive number of workers on the brink of retirement, it all makes for a strong business case to keep and develop the entry and mid-level workforce. Here are the specific benefits to companies:

- Saves money
- Builds loyalty
- Establishes a solid internal workforce pipeline
- Costs less than external recruiting
- **Bottom line: It just makes sense.**

What can you do?

There are things every employer can do. We lay out two options in the following pages: **Career Maps** and **Learning and Development Advising**. Often these strategies are deceptively simple; some require time, expertise and money. Whatever the strategy, both can produce your company's desired results. As you consider either strategy, remember that any employer can tailor either of these options to the size of its workforce and budget. You can make it as bare-bones or robust as you'd like, but the point, above all, is to get started.

⁷ Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn, *There Are Significant Business Costs to Retaining Employees*, (Washington: Center for American Progress, November 12, 2012), 2, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>.



Career Maps

According to a recent [study](#) from human resources consulting firm Tower Watson, only 37% of North American companies said their employees understood how their employers can influence their careers.⁸ And only 44% said they had the necessary resources available to help employees advance their careers.⁹ Why is this?

There can be many answers to that question, and one reason might be that at too many companies, the career map – or career ladder – is often a “best kept secret.” It may be housed in a folder, perhaps in a human resources office, or maybe in an Excel document stored on a shared drive that someone might have heard about, but never used. That’s not what we’re talking about here. We’re talking about a document that’s widely known, widely used, accurate, up-to-date, accessible and easy to navigate. An effective career map is definitely a case of “if you build it, they will come.”

Why a career map?

There is often no single or right reason to build a map. The reasons for having one vary, and often there are several. What might your career map accomplish? Here are some common goals:

- Provides a transparent “road map”
- Insures everyone is on the same page
- Provides direction, options and pathways for younger, newer employees
- Documents and validates even small career movement steps, both up and laterally
- Expands the critical thinking capacities of more-seasoned employees
- Serves as a foundational document for onboarding and in-performance reviews
- Accurately showcases an employer or an industry for an external audience
- Highlights hard-to-fill and emerging positions
- Increases retention
- Provides accurate information for potential external educational partners, both high schools and colleges

⁸ Towers Watson & Co., 2013 Towers Watson Talent Management and Rewards Survey – North America, Information Graphic, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.towerswatson.com/en-US/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2013/10/infographic-3-2013-talent-management-and-rewards-study-north-america>.

⁹ 2013 Towers Watson Survey

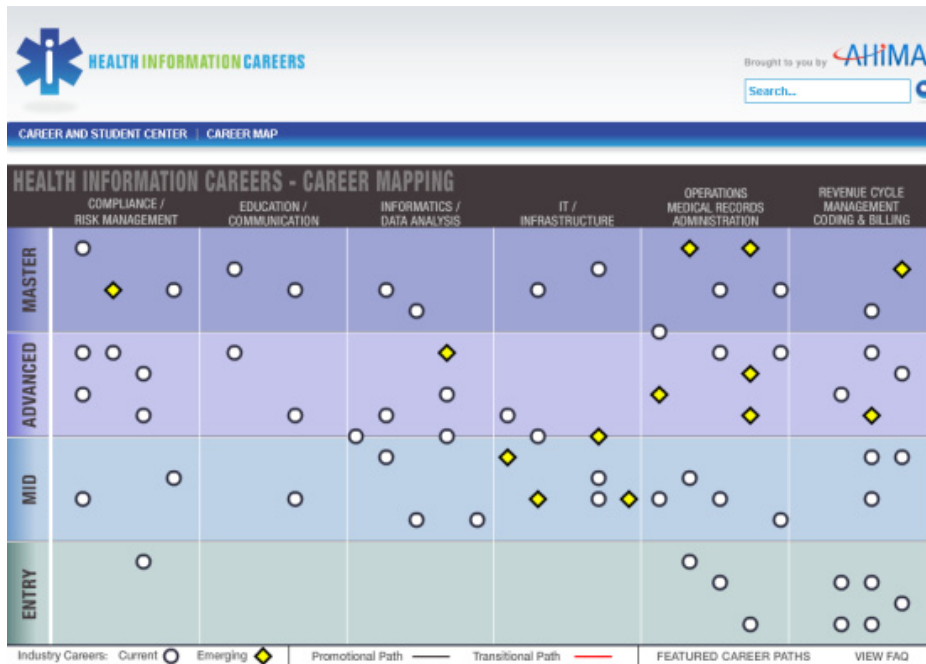
At too many companies,
the career map – or
career ladder – is often
a “best kept secret.”

What does it look like?

Again, an effective career map can be as simple or complex as your company and your company's budget allows. It can be as simple as a PowerPoint or Excel document that is kept current and shared continually and consistently across the organization, or it can be as engaging as a highly interactive web-based tool. The following career maps are good industry examples:

Healthcare Management

- American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA): <http://www.hicareers.com/CareerMap/>¹⁰



- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center: <http://www.mskcccareexplorer.org/>¹¹

¹⁰ “AHIMA Career Mapping Tool,” American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.hicareers.com/CareerMap/>.

¹¹ “Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Career Mapping Tool,” Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.mskcccareexplorer.org/>.

Bioscience

BioOhio: <http://www.bioohioworkforce.org/content/bioscience-careers>¹²

The screenshot shows the Ohio Bioworkforce website. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with options: EXPLORE CAREERS, DEVELOP SKILLS, STATE EDUCATION MAP, DISCOVER OHIO BIO, and ABOUT US. Below the navigation, there is a main banner for "Bioscience Careers" featuring a diagram of career paths. The diagram is a horizontal flowchart with a red heartbeat line running through it. The paths are represented by circular icons and labels: Research & Development, Pre-Clinical Safety Testing, Clinical Trials, Product & Process Development, Regulatory & Quality Control, Manufacturing, Facilities, and Sales & Business Development. Below the diagram, there is a text box titled "Bioscience Careers" with the following text: "When you hear bioscience does your mind go blank? Bioscience offers good jobs that pay well and help people. Explore this diagram to see jobs from the lab to the factory to the sales office." Below this text, there is a sub-section titled "Bioscience Careers" with a paragraph: "The bioscience industry needs people with a variety of work experiences and education. Bioscience offers terrific jobs and career opportunities, great work environments, pays well and puts you in touch with products that help people."

Telecommunications

- [VIVID Future: http://www.vividfuture.org/content/career-map-0](http://www.vividfuture.org/content/career-map-0)¹³

The screenshot shows the VIVID Future website. At the top, there is a logo for "vividfuture: CAREERS FOR A CONNECTED WORLD" and a navigation menu with options: JOBS, EDUCATION & TRAINING, and ABOUT TELECOM. Below the navigation, there is a search bar and social media icons. The main content area is titled "JOBS" and features a "CAREER MAPPING" tool. The tool is a grid with three columns representing career paths: OPERATIONS SUPPORT (green), TECHNICAL (orange), and SALES & SERVICE (purple). The rows represent career levels: Primary Level, Mid-Level, and Advanced Level. The grid contains various icons representing different job titles and opportunities. To the right of the grid, there is a text box titled "Telecom Jobs" with the following text: "Please mouse over the interaction at left to explore Telecom jobs in Operations Support, Technical and Sales & Service or select a popular career path below." Below this text, there is a "Popular Career Paths" section with a list of options: Operations Support - Technical, Operations Support - Sales, Technical - Engineering, and Sales - Technical. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: "CAREERS IN VOICE, INFRASTRUCTURE, VIDEO, INFORMATION, DATA".

No matter how sophisticated your map is, there are some things that don't change. The process for developing the map remains the same, and the end results must be:

¹² "Ohio Bioworkforce Career Mapping Tool," BioOhio, last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.mskcccareerexplorer.org/>.

¹³ "VIVID Future Career Mapping Tool," VIVID Future, last accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.vividfuture.org/content/career-map-0>.

The process for developing the map remains the same, and the end results must be:

- Accurate and current
- Accessible
- Transparent across the organization

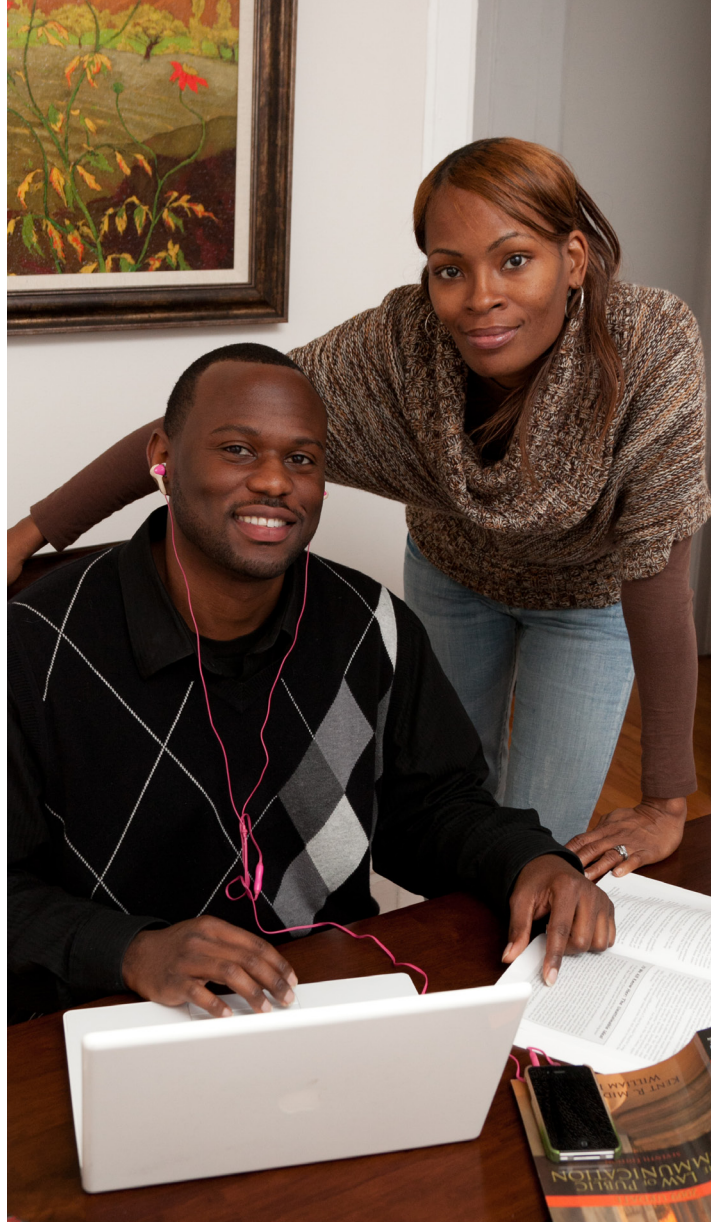
- Accurate and current
- Accessible
- Transparent across the organization

Where to start

1. **Know where you're headed.** What are you trying to accomplish by having a career map? Where is your organization headed and where are the gaps? Include all of these stakeholder groups:
 - Executive management (must drive the process)
 - Training organizations
 - Incumbent employees
 - Workforce development groups
 - Staffing and recruiting experts
 - Skilled facilitators
2. **Identify and rank order the positions you need to fill.** Gather, review and assess job families, job briefs and requirements. Make sure you look into the future far enough to ensure that you'll have the talent you need, when you need it.
3. **Create a "backward map."** Speak with your incumbent workforce to identify transitions and progressions.
4. **Validate.** Draft your map and validate it with your stakeholder groups.
5. **Develop an "asset map."** What tools and resources are already available to you? National, regional or sector resources? Local or national grant funding? Your training organization? Tuition assistance? Local colleges?
6. **Create education partnerships.** If industry-specific education doesn't exist, your local community colleges will help you customize content aimed at your needs.
7. **Bring it all together.** Consider a physical or electronic format.
8. **Socialize your map.** Make sure your map is known across your organization (leadership, management and frontline workforce), embed it in your performance management process and share it with local colleges, high schools and economic development leaders.

Learning and Development Advising

We all know that the days of a lifetime career spent with a single company are long over. We routinely hear from employers that “each person in our company ‘owns’ his or her career.” However, career development skills are probably not something that any of us were taught. Mostly, if we’re lucky, we pick these skills up intuitively, or by trial and error. The truth is that even the most independent self-starters – particularly among younger employees – can, and do, benefit from some “get-started” direction, at least at the beginning. Time spent with an advisor, mentor, coach or supervisor that focuses on one’s career goals, along with general assistance in getting started, can save time, money and a lot of frustration.



Why L&D advising?

As with a career map, there is often no single “right” reason to offer learning and development advising (or L&D advising). Some of the common reasons are that L&D advising:

- Insures the best match between an employee’s individual goals, aspirations and experience and the direction the company is headed
- Answers the question, “Where do I want to go and how do I get there?,” within the context of a current employer
- Identifies the “best” (lowest price, most aligned, most accessible) education and training options
- Eliminates trial and error, saving both time and money
- Finds ways to translate corporate and military training – as well as other experiences – into college credit through a process called prior learning assessment (PLA)

- Sends a message that an employee is valued, which builds loyalty and supports engagement
- Builds the recruiting pipeline internally, which offsets external recruiting strategies
- Increases retention

What does it look like?

Let's start with a definition: L&D advising is a formal process that identifies:

- Individual career direction, including short- and long-term goals
- Employer workforce needs relative to an employee's skills and interests
- Gaps between the employee's goals and current skills and knowledge
- Education and training options based on the individual's needs, not what worked for someone they know
- How to select a program, or school, how to get started, and how to succeed

By now, you should understand that there are many variations in format, length of time, and use of technology, all of which can be adjusted to fit company size, location, footprint, and resources, and all can be effective. Here are some examples:

One-on-One Advising

Formal advising can take place in a one-on-one process that includes:

- An appraisal of where the employee is in his or her career
- Discussion and refinement of an employee's goals
- The use of various assessments to determine skills, interests, values, and learning style
- Determination of whether PLA is an appropriate resource to accelerate the path to a college degree
- Assistance with networking and interviewing skills to prepare for new opportunities
- Providing ongoing support as needed

Many companies offer advising as an adjunct to their tuition assistance programs. This is done as a means to help employees make informed choices about their education and training.

The time needed for L&D advising varies depending on the individual. For self-starters, a half-hour may be time enough to validate their choices or to offer helpful suggestions. For others who don't know which first step to take, they may need several hours. An important factor is that advisors do not do the work for the individuals. They must - and will - help to provide clarity, make assignments between sessions, and assist with research. But advising is only successful when the employee takes ownership of the process.

L&D advising is an area that we are fully involved in at CAEL. Our organization works with companies to provide one-on-one L&D advising for employees that can take place either in person, by phone, through Skype, or by email. It is often blended with other online resources to make the process more robust and meaningful to the employee.

Group Advising

L&D advising also takes place in small groups. The process and goals are similar, but the group environment provides an opportunity for employees to build a support network, to hear the questions others may have, and to share the results of any assessments they take.

Supervisor-As-Career-Coach

Both group and individual advising can be provided internally or by an external contractor. The key is having someone who has been trained to provide career advising or coaching, and has experience working with adult learners. Some companies expect their managers to play this role, and this can be especially successful when advising is logically connected to the performance review process where developmental opportunities can be identified. To be an effective advisor, supervisors will require specific training in learning and development advising.

Where to start

1. **Identify the needs within your company.** Clarify the goals you want to achieve for your employees and your organization.
2. **Secure executive support.** This is key for a successful career development program, sending a message to both the managers and staff that such activities are of prime importance.
3. **Determine the best format.** Do you want an internal or external program? Individual or group advising? Live or online resources? The answer is likely tied to your organization's size, budget, and goals.
4. **Shop around.** Always be on the lookout for options, especially if you're not certain which type of program you want.
5. **Build an internal communication plan.** Letting your employees know that you care about their career development can reap benefits beyond numbers of participants.
6. **Measure results!**



Conclusion

So now you have the tools you need to improve your company's career development resources, you've chosen the strategies to put in place, and you're ready to stand back and let the career map or L&D advising services operate themselves for your company's benefit. Or so you think...

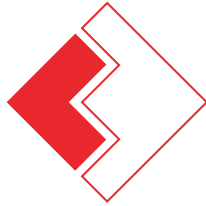
Think of it as another part of your company's infrastructure.

Sure, you've followed all the steps. But a career map or L&D services will not do all the work themselves. Your company needs to constantly assess the quality of its career development resources, make sure that your employees know that the services are readily available, and be prepared to make tweaks and improvements in the services whenever necessary.

Think of it as another part of your company's infrastructure - just like the lights, the computers, the electrical wiring and the plumbing of the building that your company calls home. Just as those things need to be constantly checked and measured for efficiency, so do your career development resources in order to make sure you are retaining and building off the skills of your employees. This isn't just for companies who haven't yet received the results they were hoping to achieve. Even if your company is seeing profound employee engagement with the new maps or advising services, there is always room for improvement. In other words, you should always be ready to honestly critique yourself.

You also don't want to be caught unprepared when the economy is again at full speed and your business is in demand by the public. If you fail to constantly assess your employment retention strategies when the economy is looking up, your company may likewise fail to capitalize on its potential with regards to increased productivity and profit margins. And no company wants to be left in the dust when the rest of their industry is doing well.

Your workforce is your company's lifeblood. This is especially true for your entry and mid-level employees. Make sure that they are aware of that fact by helping them to build on their skills sets, for both the benefit of their careers, and the health of your bottom line.



CAEL

Linking Learning and Work

As a national leader, we strive to lead the evolving national discussion on unique challenges and opportunities linking adult learners and work. We advocate and innovate on behalf of all adult learners, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, to increase access to education and economic security and to develop and provide effective services and tools. We work to enhance our thought leadership role through our research and work with adult learners, postsecondary education institutions, employers and government.

©2013 CAEL
www.cael.org