

CAREER TRANSITION 2030

From disruption to direction

**THE
RIGHT
WAY**

Introduction

In today's landscape, change and transformation are more prevalent than ever. **Redundancies are on the rise and are predicted to continue in this vein well into 2026.** Employers⁽¹⁾ anticipating workforce reductions are citing a variety of factors driving the need for cost savings, many of which are outside of their control:

- Economic challenges (34%)
- Market shifts (27%)
- Adjusting to a lack of demand (24%)
- Automation (21%)

Meanwhile, up to 43 million UK workers⁽²⁾ will need upskilling by 2030, with 11 million relying on non-traditional learning pathways.

Organisations want to support their people through turbulent times, but a severely unpredictable climate has created a challenging environment that both business leaders and employees are unsure of how to navigate. By examining data from research and combining it with insights acquired from UK HR and Talent leaders, **we explored best practice in career support:** from preventing talent loss where possible through internal mobility, to enabling successful transitions for those exiting the business.

When change takes place, the most important thing for any organisation is to **support their people and empower them to navigate uncertainty with confidence** – seizing it as a moment of opportunity to further their careers. Read on to find out more.

(1) [ManpowerGroup MEOS Q3 2025](#); (2) [IBM Addressing the AI Transition in Skills and Jobs 2025](#)



*HR leaders are navigating a period of unprecedented change, where **transformation is constant and workforce agility is no longer optional**. We've seen how reactive approaches to redundancy are giving way to proactive, people-first strategies that build resilience and readiness across the employee lifecycle.*

This report explores what outplacement will look like by 2030, offering insights drawn from market data, client experience, and conversations with UK HR and Talent leaders. It's designed to help you reframe career support as a strategic enabler of retention, engagement, and future workforce capability.



Sarah Heron

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Methodology

Our thanks to the following for their valuable insights that contributed to this report: Stuart Coyle, Skills and Capability Manager, Phoenix; Internal Mobility Manager, Global Financial Services; Career Transition Services Operations Delivery Manager, Global Financial Services; Elisa Pearson, UK & Ireland Human Resources Director at IBM; HR Business Director, Global Technology; Becca Goodair, Lead ER Specialist at Sainsbury's; Andrea Welsh, Chief People Officer at Contollo Group; and Charlotte Rickard, Senior HR Change Manager at Santander.



The Future of Career Transition

Five best practice trends

1. Support ahead of the curve

It's often said that **nothing in life stays the same for very long** – a sentiment that rings particularly true in the world of work, where change and transformation remain inevitable. 1 in 4 (24%) businesses⁽³⁾ planned workforce reductions in 2025 and there's little to suggest this will change any time soon, with **redundancies⁽⁴⁾ set to increase in 2026**, taking UK unemployment from 4.5% to 5%.

Generally, career transition support, or outplacement, is deployed as a distress purchase – a solution bought in direct response to organisational change. And while this follows standard consumer behaviour – buying what we need, when we need it – **there is a strong case for taking a more proactive approach to supporting careers and transitions.**

LinkedIn's latest Workplace Learning report⁽⁵⁾ revealed growing recognition from organisations on the matter, with over a third (36%) now dubbed 'career development champions' due to their commitment to providing ongoing, comprehensive development initiatives to their workforce. Meanwhile ManpowerGroup⁽⁶⁾ found that **when backed by regular career support, employees feel sharper and increasingly self-assured in their skillset** – with 61% saying they feel more confident in their ability to find another job within the next six months.

61%

of employees feel **empowered to secure employment** within the next six months **when backed by career support**



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It's the right thing to do, we should treat people the same when they leave as we do when they join the organisation.

- Andrea Welsh, Chief People Officer – Contollo Group

1. Support ahead of the curve

Organisations invest in outplacement support because **they want to ensure their people are taken care of** and can achieve a successful outcome in the face of adversity. The intention to put their employees first is there; but in waiting until redundancies are taking place to provide this level of support, business leaders are inadvertently **making for a more challenging and uncertain career transition process.**

Instead, forward-thinking organisations are **taking a more proactive approach to build skills and a mobility-mindset**, ensuring their people have access to tools such as coaching, on-demand learning and networking opportunities – to name just a few – throughout their tenure.

This way, employees can futureproof themselves on an ongoing basis, so that when change becomes necessary, they're far better equipped and **ready to navigate any period of uncertainty with confidence and resilience.** As Benjamin Franklin said: *“Change is the only constant in life. One's ability to adapt to those changes will determine your success”.*

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When they exit the organisation, if we can do anything that makes them say ‘they looked after me’ that’s critical... it’s a small world.

- HR Business Director – Global Technology organisation

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We found that framing career support in terms of futureproofing your career, and deploying it before exits are taking place, really helps people. Whether it’s 1:1 coaching or a learning grant, it helps people prepare themselves for when transition does take place, and they can then go and pursue a new career much easier.

- Stuart Coyle, Skills and Capability Manager – Phoenix



2. Mobilise to retain

When career transition support is sought reactively – once the restructure has been planned and redundancies are being made – it becomes a remedial solution. Deploying career support so late in the change and transformation journey can **limit engagement and lead to undesirable loss of talent.**

Instead, the future of outplacement will be founded upon organisations taking a longer-term perspective – looking ahead to 2030 – and **viewing career support as an enabler of internal mobility and retention;** a trick that many are missing right now.



71%

of employees say their career has stalled **due to insufficient career support**



While over 80% of businesses⁽⁷⁾ regard internal mobility as “critical” to their talent management strategy, less than 1 in 5 employees⁽⁸⁾ have changed role internally over the past 5 years.

This can likely be attributed to the fact that, despite almost two thirds (62%) of employees⁽⁶⁾ believing there are *opportunities* for movement within their organisation, 71% say **they aren’t receiving the level of support needed to actually pursue them.**

2. Mobilise to retain

The kicker here for employers is that when people(8) have regular access to comprehensive career support, **they're over 2x more likely to apply for internal roles and stay with the business** – an inclination that could easily stem the unwanted loss of talent during a period of change.

It really does beg the question: why deploy career support only to help people secure employment *outside* of your organisation, when **it can be just as easily leveraged to support retention**, particularly in a world where skills needs are changing so fast?

2x

with access to career support, employees are twice as likely to **pursue internal mobility opportunities**



Internal vacancies



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More and more companies are moving to a skill currency... looking for transferable skills rather than specific industry experience. We try and focus our efforts on what we can do to mobilise and support our colleagues internally, to help them stay and grow their careers with us. We see this as healthy movement, keeping people motivated to find alternate career paths with us and pursue them with confidence.

- Internal Mobility Manager – Global Financial Services organisation

This is something the aforementioned ‘career development champions’(5) have already worked out; with 44% **providing tailored internal mobility programmes** and over half (59%) proactively sharing internal job openings.

When workforce agility and organisational mobility are high, change and transformation initiatives no longer need to result in a mass exodus of talent you’d rather retain. **In acknowledging career support as the 2nd highest driver of employee engagement(9)** and using workforce data to understand skill gaps and employee appetite, organisations can generate a detailed view of where and how talent could be redeployed during times of transformation.

(9) [Right Management The State of Careers: Career Equation 2025](#)

3. Augmented, not replaced

As we move through AI adoption, **employees are increasingly acceptant of utilising it as part of the working day**, with 78% of people⁽¹⁰⁾ already using it in some way. On top of this, 57% of employees⁽¹¹⁾ say that AI can support them professionally, a 38% increase from the 1 in 5 who said so in 2023. Furthermore, 85% of people⁽¹²⁾ believe **AI will even enhance their roles and improve their professional skills**.

So it comes as no surprise that **we're also seeing technology high on the wish list for people going through a career transition** – with 59% wanting a blend⁽⁸⁾ of human touch and tech in their support – whether its AI-powered assessments that analyse skillsets or tailored job matching and personalised training recommendations. People want learning and career support made easy, and **AI has the power to streamline the experience even further across the next five years**.

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When looking at technology we also need to remember the generational aspect. We have individuals from more generations than ever before undertaking the career transition experience and therefore the need to have a wide portfolio of offerings and entrance points is going to be even more vital. Maybe those who are technology natives will be wanting to engage with the technology versus those who are used to talking to a human will still want to talk to a human.

- Elisa Pearson, Human Resources Director, UK & Ireland – IBM

59%

of employees want a **blend of human touch and technology** to form the foundation of their career support



3. Augmented, not replaced

While these innovations are undoubtedly creating a much better journey for individuals navigating change, **it could be argued that it's the introduction of AI into the coaching realm that is most exciting**. Enter stage right: the coachbot, which is becoming increasingly popular as a means to **improve the accessibility of coaching support when budgets are tight**, particularly during times of change and transformation.

Now this isn't to say AI could – or should – replace human coaches. **Human interaction will always be the most powerful driver of accelerated learning and growth** when it comes to coaching support. But there is real value in having access to an AI coach in between sessions. Whether an individual needs advice on a problem they've encountered when searching for a job or is looking for some help with homework assigned by their human coach, **AI can provide people with inspiration in the moment**.

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My ideal offering would be an always-on digital led service with the ability to have expert coaching interactions, tailored to the specific items that each individual is looking for support with.

- Career Transition Services Operations Delivery Manager – Global Financial Services organisation

This way, **learning never has to stop** – or be put on hold until the next session – and instead, people can get the answers they need, when they need them, and continue to take purposeful steps towards career growth.

AI is more than just a cost-saving measure – **it's a tool that can supplement the expert and essential guidance provided by a human coach**, enhancing the employee experience during turbulent times.



4. A people-centred approach

With AI continuing to sit at the forefront of almost every conversation, many in the HR profession are questioning what the future looks like. The perspective of the HR leaders we interviewed is that **career support should always be grounded in human interaction.**

Technology can facilitate always-on learning and alleviate administrative burden, but it **cannot replace the emotional, human support that people need, especially when navigating change.** And it's in high demand, with 9 in 10 employees⁽¹³⁾ saying mental health support should be a priority for leaders.

89%

of employees want an **environment of psychological safety** at work



After all, organisational change is never just about the practical implications of losing a job; there's a significant emotional toll, both for individuals exiting the business and those who remain.

Which is where a **human-led approach driven by empathetic leadership and professional coaching support is essential** – helping to create the psychological safety that 89% of employees⁽¹⁴⁾ are looking for.

4. A people-centred approach

Now, while providing this level of support to individuals going through redundancy is likely top of mind for organisations implementing change, it's crucial they remember the impact it can have on 'survivors' as well. As many as two in three (67%) employees⁽¹⁵⁾ have **experienced survivor syndrome since Covid-19**, with three quarters (74%) saying their productivity⁽¹⁶⁾ declined following an organisational restructure.

Bogged down with feelings of guilt and uncertainty around their own future with the business, **employees look to their leaders for reassurance** and to help them understand why such change was necessary. This is where the value of honest and open communication throughout the change process cannot be understated – inviting thoughts and input from the wider workforce to ensure they feel heard and validated. Only then, can leaders⁽¹⁷⁾ hope to **support a positive change experience for all involved**.

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If you get the right leadership communicating in the right way about why changes happen and help those who remain understand why they've taken place, they'll be able to flourish and be successful. It's vitally important that during any period of change, our leaders are essentially wrapping their arms around these people and encouraging them speak openly and freely about any concerns

- HR Business Director – Global Technology organisation

Outplacement will always be about helping individuals who have lost their jobs achieve a meaningful and sustainable outcome, far beyond just their next role. But the knock-on effects for those who remain cannot be ignored and should be addressed in much the same way – with **human-centric support that places empathy and care at its heart**.

87%

of employees say that **empathetic leadership directly supports positive change**



5. The time for generic outplacement is over

It's been clear for some time that **climbing the corporate ladder is not the only path that employees see for themselves**, with almost half (45%) of younger individuals⁽¹⁸⁾ looking to explore different industries and roles with a complete career change.

On top of this, 56% of businesses⁽¹⁹⁾ are placing more emphasis on skills when recruiting talent, and research⁽²⁰⁾ has found that **nearly two in three (59%) employees will need reskilling by 2030**.

In line with taking a truly human-centred approach to career transition, the uniqueness of each individual and their respective journey through this landscape must be acknowledged and reflected in their support. **The time for generic outplacement is over**, and taking a sheep-dip approach to organisational transformation is no longer viable.

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Colleagues are looking for a suite of options that they can use to tailor make their own bespoke package that works for them and their specific needs.

- Becca Goodair, Lead ER Specialist – Sainsbury's

59%

of employees
will need to
be **reskilled**
within the next
five years



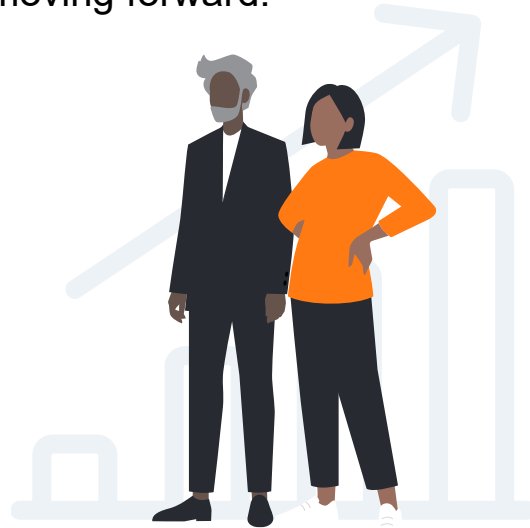
5. The time for generic outplacement is over

This is why **data-driven career support**, fuelled by psychometric assessments, skills surveys and workforce insights, is the future of outplacement. **Support becomes hyper-personalised and flexible**, facilitating career transitions that are aligned to each individual's life, learning style and aspirations; **helping them to think differently about their career** while providing the skills needed to deal with ongoing change. And the proof is in the pudding on this one, with two thirds (67%) of employees⁽²¹⁾ saying that **assessments have benefitted their career decision making** and helped them grow.

While it may not be a strong suit for a lot of organisations⁽²¹⁾ right now – **only 1 in 3 say they are effective at generating and utilising workforce data** – there is a definitive appetite to improve, with over half (53%) of businesses **planning to invest in assessments** to better support the careers of their people moving forward.

2 in 3

employees say assessments have **directly supported their career growth**



(21) [Right Management: Human Insights 2025](#)

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We frequently use feedback surveys from colleagues around their experience going through the redundancy process. By collating this feedback, we use this to better understand what people are looking for, so that we can then make suggestions and direct them to use elements of the support that will work best for them as an individual.

- Charlotte Rickard, Senior HR Change Manager – Santander

When used correctly, **assessments can provide people with the foundational platform to take career ownership** by driving greater awareness of what they want and what they offer – improving their ability to identify relevant opportunities either internally (as a redeployment option) or within the external market.

And with organisations striving to utilise workforce data more effectively, **employees will be far better equipped to navigate change successfully.**



Key Takeaways

Steps organisations can take to best support their people through change

Four key takeaways

Our ever-evolving state of flux is **driving the need for increasingly agility within organisations**, which in turn is necessitating more regular change and transformation initiatives. In order to make a success of these projects throughout the next five years and beyond, **here's how business leaders can best support their workforce in times of change:**

1. Put people first



Approach organisational change and transformation with empathy and understanding, **recognising the emotional impact it can have on everyone in the business**. Coaching as a key component of outplacement will provide the necessary support for individuals going through redundancy, but it's on business leaders to **ensure the wellbeing of their remaining workforce is supported just as thoroughly**.

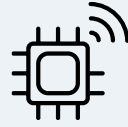
2. Be proactive



Invest in careers and people throughout their tenure, not just at the point when redundancies become necessary. Regular, proactive use of career support **equips employees with the resilience and readiness for navigating change** – alleviating some of the stress and enabling them to make a successful transition outside of the organisation, or identify suitable opportunities within the business that align with their motivations and skills.



3. Leverage technology



Forward-thinking organisations are **leveraging AI as an enabler of career mobility and growth**. From digital career portals to coachbots, technological advancements have the power to **provide uninterrupted learning for employees going through change** – helping them acquire the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a challenging market.

4. Utilise data



Design career support programmes based on tangible data over gut feeling. **Insights empower both individuals and organisations**, providing employees with the self-awareness needed to pursue pathways that are aligned to their wants and needs, while ensuring businesses possess the insight needed to make informed talent decisions. **Data, when leveraged correctly, can drive transformation projects and retention goals.**



*Businesses have a crucial role to play in helping their people keep their skills relevant and **understand how their experience, knowledge and passion applies to future careers**, both within their organisation and externally.*

*We're seeing **individuals thinking differently about their careers** – prioritising lateral moves that support career satisfaction, learning opportunities and flexibility.*

*Organisations can't just rely on a strong brand to attract and retain talent; **they need to provide an environment for people to thrive**. Career management, flexible learning and a coaching culture will help organisations stand out.*



Pedro Venus
UK Sales Director –
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Interested in learning more?

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Elevate engagement. Increase retention.**

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