

HUMAN INSIGHTS

Using assessment data to support
career mobility and growth



**THE
RIGHT
WAY**

Introduction

To succeed in the modern world, businesses must have high mobility – but what does this actually mean? Mobility necessitates an array of different qualities, including flexibility, agility, and adaptability – all of which are byproducts of successfully building and nurturing a workforce that actively wants to learn, develop and grow.

One way to ensure enhanced organisational mobility is through optimal data utilisation – 67% of surveyed employees say assessments contributed to their personal growth. Assessments, and the data they generate, have the power to foster increased self-awareness in individuals, while providing businesses with detailed insight into their workforce. When leveraged correctly, this can support individual development, inform organisational investment and enable greater adaptability for both parties.

Why then, are we seeing increasing levels of stagnation in organisations throughout Europe?



With people not wanting to take on additional responsibilities, no longer pursuing promotions and demonstrating a general unwillingness to consider alternate career paths, organisations are becoming stuck. In response, there's been a notable uptick in the demand for data as business leaders seek answers to a seemingly impossible riddle.

But simply having data isn't the answer – it's how leaders use it that really counts. With this in mind, we wanted to understand how businesses are using assessments and how data utilisation can influence employee stagnation.

Read on to find out how the two are connected, from our survey of 2000 working professionals.



Pippa Cronk
Senior Consultant, CPsychol

Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuwide, among a sample of 2000 respondents of varying seniority levels, all of whom were aged 16+. The data was collected between 28/03/25 – 01/04/25. Censuwide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuwide is also a member of the British Polling Council.



Stagnation Drivers

What's causing this recent trend of immobility?

Employee mindset

Despite over half (53%) of organisations saying they look to help employees in their career with assessments of skills and capabilities, **workforces have become increasingly stagnant in recent years.**

Our Europe-wide research(1) found that just 18% of employees have changed jobs within their organisation since 2020. But what's arguably more concerning, is the fact that **only 18% of employees are considering changing their role within the same organisation in the next two years.** People are exhibiting an overwhelming resistance to career mobility, and our latest research suggests that mindset is playing a key role.

>1 in 5

of employees are **considering a role change within the same organisation** in the next two years



Our own beliefs and attitudes, especially in relation to our ability and potential, can heavily influence the way we operate at work.

Individuals with a growth mindset are resilient, embrace failure and are constantly looking for ways to learn and improve.

Whereas a fixed mindset leaves people reluctant to try new things, and with a view that setbacks are evidence that they lack innate ability. Unfortunately, it appears a significant proportion of the workforce are struggling to move from a fixed mindset standpoint to one of growth.

- **28%** of employees fear failure and setbacks at work
- **31%** don't like change and prefer to stick with what they know
- **30%** would feel apprehensive about any changes to their role and responsibilities

In an unpredictable and often volatile world of work, agility is essential to success. However, businesses cannot adapt and grow without their people being willing to do the same.

So should leaders be doing more to facilitate the necessary mindset shift in their teams, before employee rigidity leads to organisational failure?

Failing to look ahead

That said, the impetus behind employee mobility and growth never rests entirely on the individual. **Organisations must do their part as well, which is where many appear to be falling short.** Yes, 53% are using assessments to support careers, but what about the other 47%?

Our recent European research also found that **just 7.6% of organisations are focused on developing a workforce that can adapt to changes and be flexible.** Combine this with the fact that businesses are now going through an average of 10 change projects per year(2), and you've got yourself a recipe for disaster.

The rate at which the world is changing means we can't necessarily predict what skills and qualities will be needed for success in five years' time. What organisations can and should do, is support workforce agility by **looking beyond immediate performance data, and instead focusing on individual potential**, to inform targeted development support.

“Focusing not just on employees' performance, but also on their career aspirations and potential, is crucial to enabling workforce agility and ensuring long-term success.”

Pippa Cronk, Senior Consultant, Right Management



However, when we asked leaders what they have in place to build skills and help employees become more agile and ready for change, less than half said they provide access to assessments (43%) or coaching (47%). And even more worrying, is that **1 in 10 said they have no support in place at all.** This lack of investment in employee development then influences the way people perceive their employer – **with 57% saying they believe their company places more importance on performance than potential.**



The psychological contract between employee and employer should never be underestimated. To remain competitive, businesses need their people to want to step outside of their comfort zones and seek continuous improvement.

But if organisations fail to invest in their people or to even discuss 'potential', where's the incentive for individuals and teams to truly stretch themselves? **And is it possible for employers to then retrospectively rectify this stalemate?**

Resistance from leadership

With employers and their people at somewhat of an impasse, organisations are increasingly looking to data to help – **with over half (55%) of leaders saying they use assessments to generate insight into their employees every six months or more often.**

However, having the data will only take you so far, as shown by the fact that our Europe-wide report discovered that **just 33% of respondents believe their organisation is effective at using data in workforce planning.**

Being able to take hard data and transform it into workforce insights is a critical organisational skill, enabling businesses to invest their development budget where it matters and make informed talent decisions.

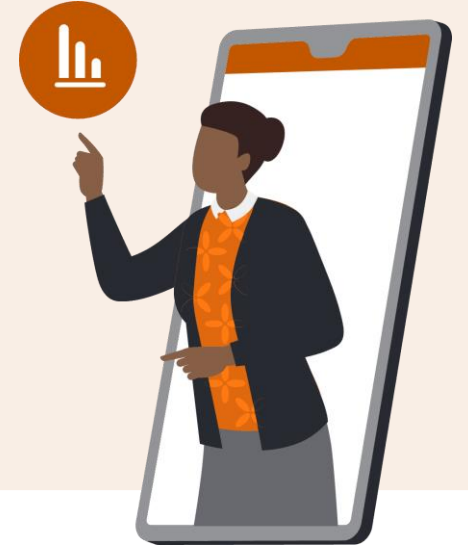
Unfortunately, our latest research suggests **many organisations lack this ability and are therefore resistant to using data.** When we asked leaders how they use assessments in their organisation, only 33% said they use them to invest development budgets on the right talent.

On top of this, a combined **42% said they view assessment data as completely unnecessary or “nice to have”, but not as an essential component of talent management.**

This ignorance towards the value of data driven insights is without a doubt contributing towards the ongoing stagnation issues seen in workforces across Europe.

66%

of organisations are **ineffective at using data** to support workforce planning



With the speed at which the world of work is changing, employers need to be supporting the upskilling of their workforce to futureproof their organisation. Data has the power to aid this initiative, but only when used correctly.

It is something to be leveraged, not simply collected for peace of mind. It's all well and good being able to say you have data on your people, **but what's the point if leaders aren't then using it to inform employee development and career progression?**

A problematic collective perspective

When businesses fail to recognise the true power of data driven insights, they'll often turn to assessments too late – using them remedially in an attempt to fix a problem, as opposed to proactively as a tool to support workforce growth.

This is shown clearly by the fact 65% of respondents to our Europe-wide survey said they primarily use assessments as a lever to retain talent; which begs the question: **if assessments are only ever deployed to help leaders decide which employees they should let go or keep, what message does that send to your workforce?**

Perception is a powerful thing. Once employees have begun to associate assessments with negative connotations, it can be hard to change this view. In fact, **26% employees said they would feel concern if asked to take an assessment at work**, viewing it as a signal that they'd been identified as an underperformer.

1 in 4

employees hold a **negative association toward assessments**



At this point, even if leaders are looking to use assessments to support workforce development and mobility, they'll likely struggle to generate the required engagement and uptake for a positive ROI. **When employees lack trust in their employer's motivations, they're far more likely to demonstrate resistance.**



In the end, the way in which businesses use career interventions will heavily determine the success they have in supporting their people. **Proactive and regular use of assessments can support a culture of learning and growth.**

But what can leaders do if there's already a collective perspective that assessments are only ever used to put out fires, and are now something be feared?



Mobility enablers

Taking steps to better support career mobility and continuous development

Four key actions to take

While workforce stagnation can be damaging, it isn't irreparable. There are steps organisations and their people can take to leverage assessments and data driven insights more effectively, in order to support enhanced mobility and growth:

1. Growth mindset

We partner with Matthew Syed Consulting to measure growth mindset using the Mindset Advantage instrument – the only BPS accredited psychometric tool available that provides insight into the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours associated with a growth mindset. The tool can help employees:

- **Develop the self-awareness** needed to make a continuous, conscious effort towards building and embracing a growth mindset that will enable greater mobility
- **Understand their strengths and development areas** in relation to nine core behaviours associated with having a growth mindset
- **Utilise a bespoke personal development plan**, aligned to these insights, to support their ongoing development in this area

2. Demystify potential

Without context, the word 'potential' can be a vague concept. Telling an employee they "have potential" means nothing without helping them understand how they can realise it. Providing access to assessments that explore personality and mindset will:

- **Grant tangibility to the concept of potential for employees**, helping them see that they have the toolkit and ability to grow beyond their current self
- **Help businesses understand which individuals want to grow**, thus better informing the investment of their development budget
- **Open lines of communication between employers and their people**, ensuring employees feel empowered to pursue stretch assignments and career support



3. Work with a third-party organisation

Establishing a culture of growth requires consistency across the leadership population; a challenging feat when some leaders within a business are resistant to using data. Working with a third-party organisation to support the process can:

- **Open lines of communication between leaders** who recognise the value of data driven insights, and those who don't, allowing the former to advocate for its use
- **Educate leaders on the importance of data** and how it can be used to ensure they invest their budget where it matters most
- **Demonstrate a clear and tangible ROI on assessments** through comprehensive reporting, making a powerful business case for why utilising data is so crucial

By taking the necessary action, organisations who have historically been unable to reap the rewards of effective data utilisation, **can join the 66% of leaders who say they regularly leverage assessments to support the ongoing growth of their business.**



“Leveraging the right assessments to provide employee insights will support organisational mobility and growth, while also empowering individuals to realise their potential and support career development.”

Pippa Cronk, Senior Consultant, Right Management

4. Role-modelling

It's no secret that employees will look to their leaders to pave the way and set an example. If there's a perception within the workforce that assessments are something to be feared, leaders have the power to change this. Role-modelling and open communication will:

- **Normalise the use of assessments** as a career development tool, demonstrating that they aren't something to be feared
- **Debunk the perception that assessments are only ever used to rectify poor performance**, helping people understand how they can support their careers
- **Facilitate the development of a growth mindset within the wider workforce**, as employees begin to understand and see the benefits of engaging with assessments

Interested in learning more?

We'd love to chat.

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Elevate engagement. Increase retention.**

Right Management partners with organisations to translate business needs into impactful talent programmes, offering over 40 years' experience in outplacement, assessment, coaching, mobility and change. We work with you to design human-centred programmes that help you develop, retain and optimise a workforce for the future.

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