

The ultimate HR guide to

Internal mobility

Discover the common threats when it comes to internal mobility and how to act on them



With the “war for talent” taking place and a new generation of “job-hoppers” entering the workforce, organisations are finding it more challenging to attract, retain and engage talent. This can explain why organisations are increasingly pursuing an “internal talent mobility strategy”: They are trying to **find the talent they need inside their own organisation instead of outside**. Internal mobility allows employees to make horizontal, vertical and global moves within the same organisation. Hiring from within the organisation benefits both the organisation and the employees.

The biggest advantages of implementing an internal talent mobility programme are the following:

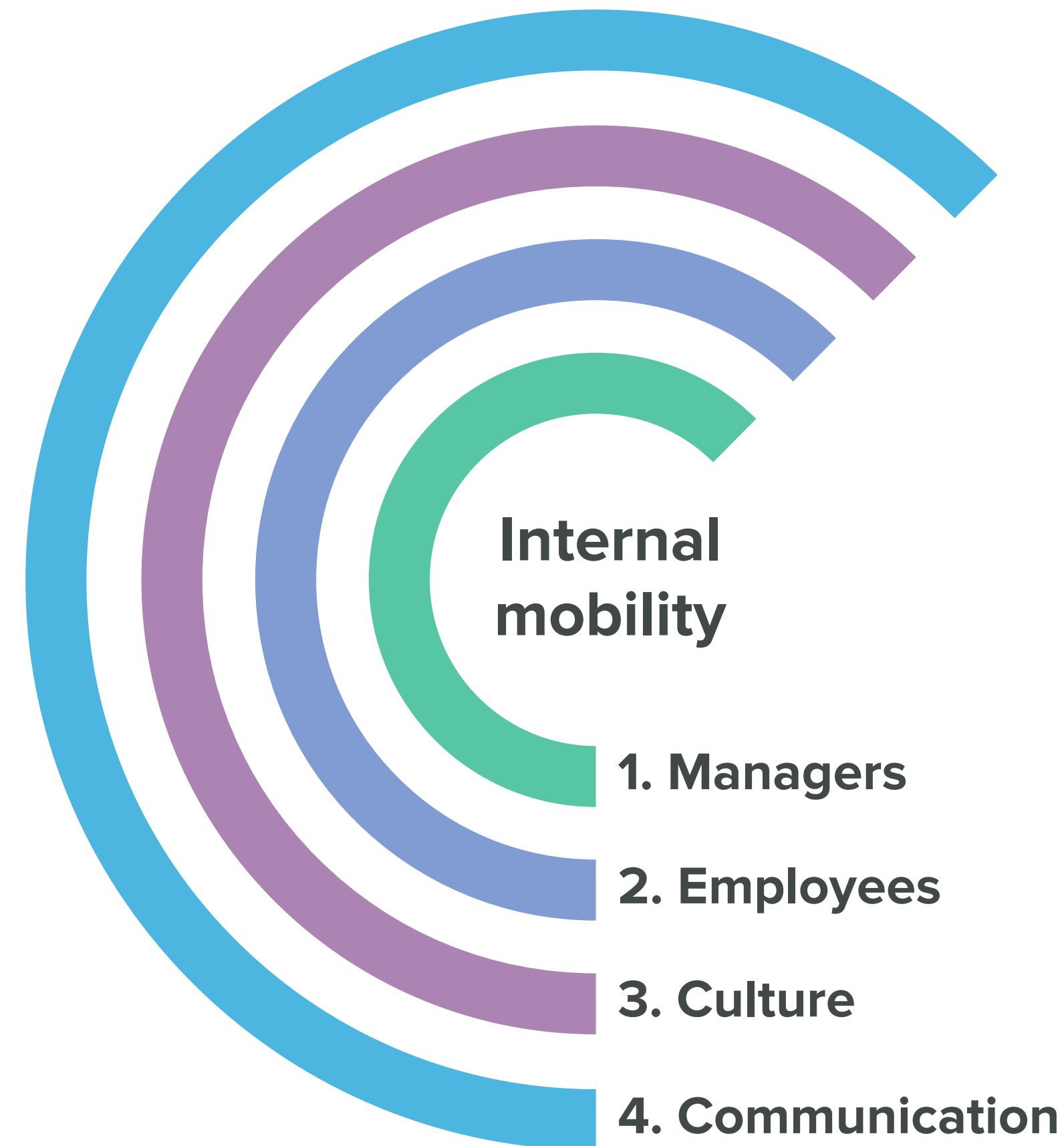
- Higher retention rates
- Better performance
- Boost employee engagement
- Higher job satisfaction
- Reduce recruiting time and cost

Nonetheless, in spite of its benefits and growing importance, there are a lot of threats along the road to internal mobility, making it challenging for organisations to implement a successful internal mobility programme. **This mini guide will cover the threats you have to bear in mind and will advise you on how to anticipate these threats.**



Threats

We can identify four main threats when it comes to internal talent mobility:



It is important to act on these threats when you want:

- Everyone in your organisation to be on board with your internal mobility programme;
- A culture that supports internal mobility and considers it as natural to make internal moves;
- To communicate correctly and frequently in order to make everyone aware of the opportunities within the organisation.

1. Managers

When it comes to how managers cope with internal talent mobility, there exist a couple of common threats:

- They look for an existing skill set rather than employees' growth ability
- They hold back their greatest talent, because they don't want to lose their top talent to other teams or departments
- Recruitment managers are too focused on external hires
- They feel offended when an employee wants to move internally, which leads to employees being fearful to reach out to their manager about an internal move

How to get managers on board

Reward managers for every employee they have supported and helped make an internal move. Encourage them to keep count of the **exact number of employees** they have allowed different roles. This way managers are being rewarded for **acting like coaches** and for **releasing 'their talent'** to other parts of the organisation. Employees' internal moves will turn into a **positive experience** for both the manager and the employee.

Involve the employee who is transitioning in the process of looking for a new candidate to fill his/her previous position. The employee can help the manager **create the vacancy, sum up the necessary skills, look for possible candidates...** This will make the manager more confident that the position will get filled and his/her team will be completed again soon. This can remove some of the manager's pessimism about the transfer.

Convince managers that allowing employees to move internally gives a **positive sign to the entire team**. This demonstrates that they **shouldn't exit the organisation to obtain growth opportunities or to switch careers**. Furthermore, it's better to encourage employees to make an **internal move than to lose them to competitors**.

“Organizations that promoted internally are 32 percent more likely to be satisfied with the quality of their new hires

- Deloitte

2. Employees

Employees can be hindered from making an internal move or experience an unsuccessful transition move for several reasons:

- They are reluctant to leave their safe space
- They aren't prepared enough for a change of roles
- They are scared to express their desire to move to their manager
- Wrong talent is moved

How to get employees on board

Involve employees in the **process of promoting** internal mobility. You can ask employees to **participate in a promotion video** that explains what is expected from an employee who wants to make an internal move. By involving them in “the making of” this video, you will already make them **excited and engaged** even before the actual promotion video is distributed.

Encourage employees to do **job-shadowing** and allow them to work on **projects with people from other departments**. This way they will get in touch with other **teams**, expand their **network** and become **aware of the opportunities that exist** in other departments. This can stimulate their desire to make a move.

Have the **right technology in place that matches your employees with the open vacancies** in your organisation. This will not only improve the employee's **experience and lower the barrier** to make a move, but will also **encourage employees** to move internally. This way not only employees who are actively looking for a new role will be engaged, but **also more passively looking employees** will discover that they have other opportunities within the organisation.

“People who get the opportunity to continually develop are twice as likely as those on the other end of the scale to say they will spend their career with their company.

- Gallup Research

3. Culture

Employees can be hindered from making an internal move or experience an unsuccessful transition move for several reasons:

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- They aren't prepared enough for a change of roles
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- Wrong talent is moved

How to build a culture around internal mobility?

Obtain the **reputation** of having a **culture that encourages employees' growth opportunities**. By offering **training and learning opportunities** your employees will have the feeling that the organisation is truly **investing in them**. In addition, you will improve their skills and prepare them for **different roles**. An effort you can make is introducing a **"buddy system"** where a fellow-employee or a manager acts as a coach for the employee who wants to make an internal move.

Support cross-departmental collaboration. Your organisation could implement a **"20 percent time"** policy, like Google does, where employees can dedicate 20% of their time on **side projects** that have nothing to do with their current role, but still add value. **Spending time on other projects and trying different roles can help employees discover which role they might find interesting.**

Set **clear goals** in your organisation when it comes to internal mobility and create **policies** around these goals. You might want >50% of the vacancies filled by internal candidates, but in order to achieve this goal you should have clear policies on this matter. For example, guarantee that the hiring team **looks at internal candidates first, before searching externally.**

“The entire organisation should promote a culture that not only welcomes internal mobility but also champions it.

- Deloitte

4. Communication

“Communication is key to success”, yet it is a challenge to communicate well on internal mobility:

- Employees are often unaware of their organisation’s internal mobility programme because communication is scarce
- Only employees who are actively looking to make an internal move are aware of the open vacancies
- There is no transparent and easy-to-use technology to manage the communication process

How to communicate about internal mobility?

It is **not enough to post the open vacancies on your intranet** and to let the initiative in the hands of your employees. You should organise events such as a **“job in the spotlight-day”** and **make a lot of noise** about these events. This way you can get employees more **excited and aware** of the opportunities within the organisation.

Sharing **success stories or video testimonials** from people who have made **successful moves** within the organisation can make **employees more excited and less anxious** to do the same.

There should be **a transparent and easy to use technology in place to communicate** about internal mobility and to **spread the open vacancies** to the employees. Employees shouldn’t find out through the grapevine that there was an open vacancy that has already been filled without them even knowing about it.

What about the size of your organisation?

Do you feel like internal mobility is a struggle in your organisation, even though you are handling the above-mentioned threats quite well? This can be due to the size of your organisation: **In comparison to large organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises don’t benefit from their size when it comes to internal mobility. To begin with, they have less open jobs** to which employees can transition. Secondly, their workforce is less heterogeneous, which diminishes the opportunity to change roles internally. However, this doesn’t imply that employees from small and medium-sized enterprises don’t have the need to change roles internally and internal mobility should be ruled out in.

Conclusion

Now it's up to you to take action and make your internal mobility programme successful! Get managers on board by rewarding them for supporting internal moves, and show them that the transitioning employee will help fill the position. Furthermore, you should explain them that allowing employees to move internally gives a positive sign to the entire team.

Employees can become more engaged when you involve them in the process of promoting internal mobility, encourage them to do job-shadowings, work on projects with other teams and implement the right technology.

To build the right culture around internal mobility, you should offer your employees plenty of learning opportunities, support cross-departmental collaboration and have the right goals and policies in place. Lastly, but equally important, **communicate frequently and widely** about your internal mobility programme: organise events, share success stories and use the right technology to facilitate the process. **The benefits that come along with internal mobility will be worth the efforts!**



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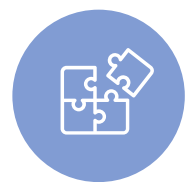
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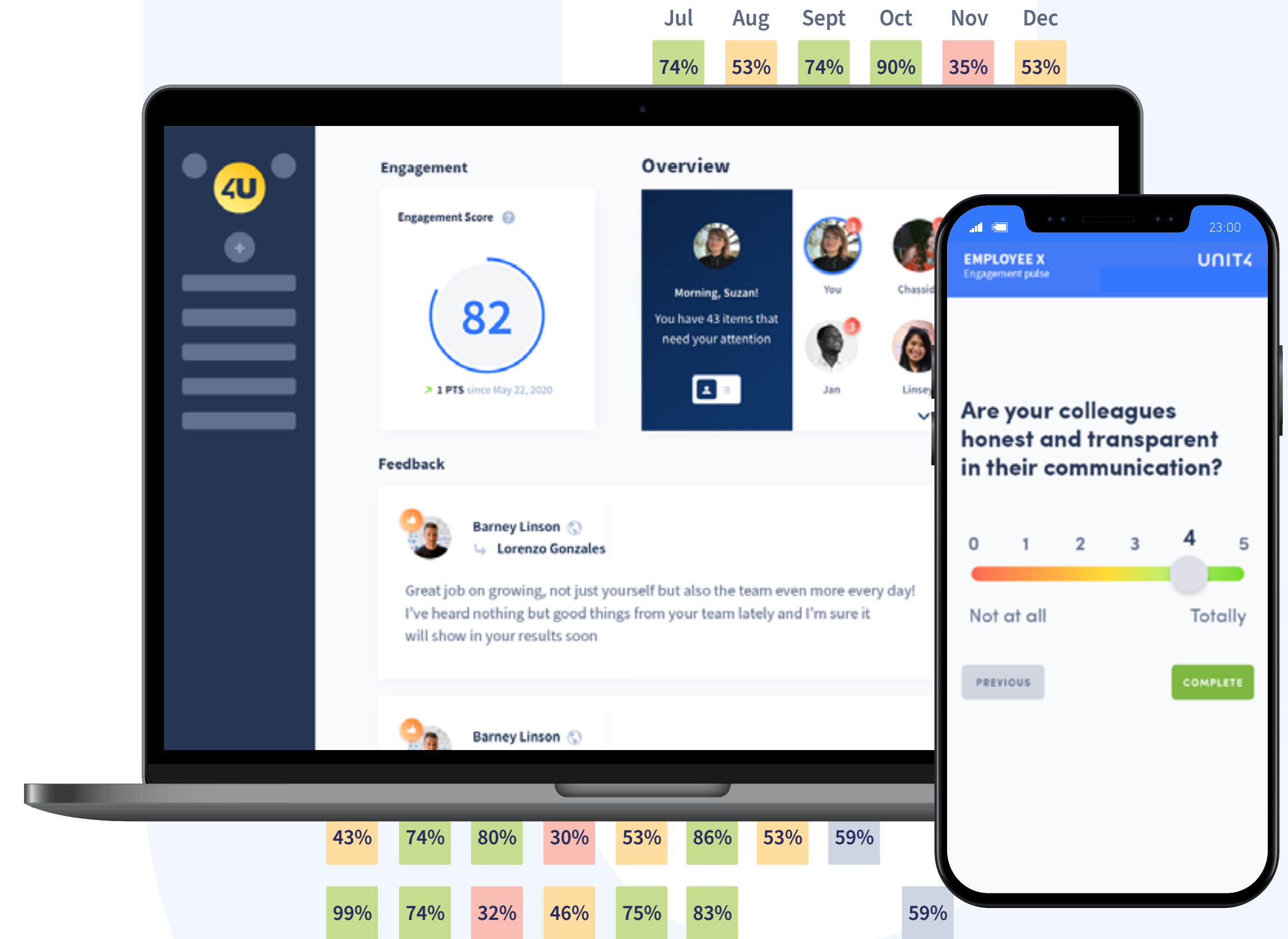
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