

4 TALENT
CHALLENGES
FACING U.S.
GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES

AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM



Much like every other sector worldwide, the US government has faced numerous challenges over the past year. The rapid switch to remote work, major staffing shortages and growing skills gaps are proving increasingly challenging; especially when compounded with the global pandemic and the changing US administration.

In this guide, we will explore the four major challenges facing US government agencies, and how you can overcome them.



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KEEPING REMOTE WORKERS ENGAGED, NOW & IN THE FUTURE

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Talent challenge #1

KEEPING
REMOTE
WORKERS
ENGAGED,
NOW AND IN
THE FUTURE



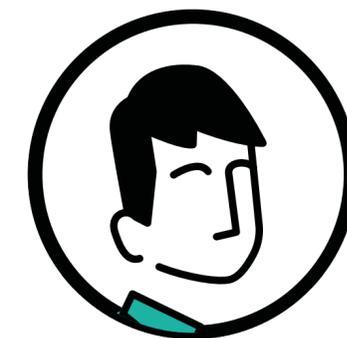
According to the Deloitte HCM Trend Report, remote working network capabilities grew by 400% for the US Army alone. The global pandemic has accelerated the speed at which public sector organizations must adapt to the digital environment, and that means supporting the widespread shift to remote working.

82% of US government executives expect to **keep working remotely** into the future - half of whom say they want to work remotely four to five days a week. Pandemic or not, many government workers are realizing the benefits of remote working, and will expect to have this option going forward. But with all the benefits of remote working comes a potential drop in employee engagement levels as people feel disconnected from their colleagues and lose the sense of camaraderie from spending face-to-face time together in an office.



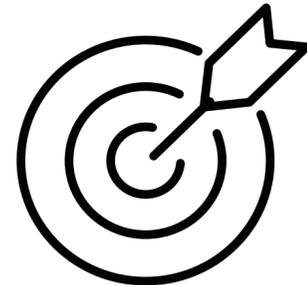
HOW TO KEEP REMOTE WORKERS ENGAGED:

- Help employees maintain a sense of belonging with a learning experience platform (LXP) such as **Totara Engage**. This ensures your people can share knowledge, collaborate on projects and communicate with colleagues across the agency. Having a dedicated place to discuss ideas and work together online keeps everyone engaged and feeling connected, even when working remotely.
- Run regular surveys to understand employee engagement levels, and use this as a benchmark for engagement trends and future improvements. Employee engagement reporting will help you understand engagement levels within your agency so that your HR team can make improvements to your strategy where needed.



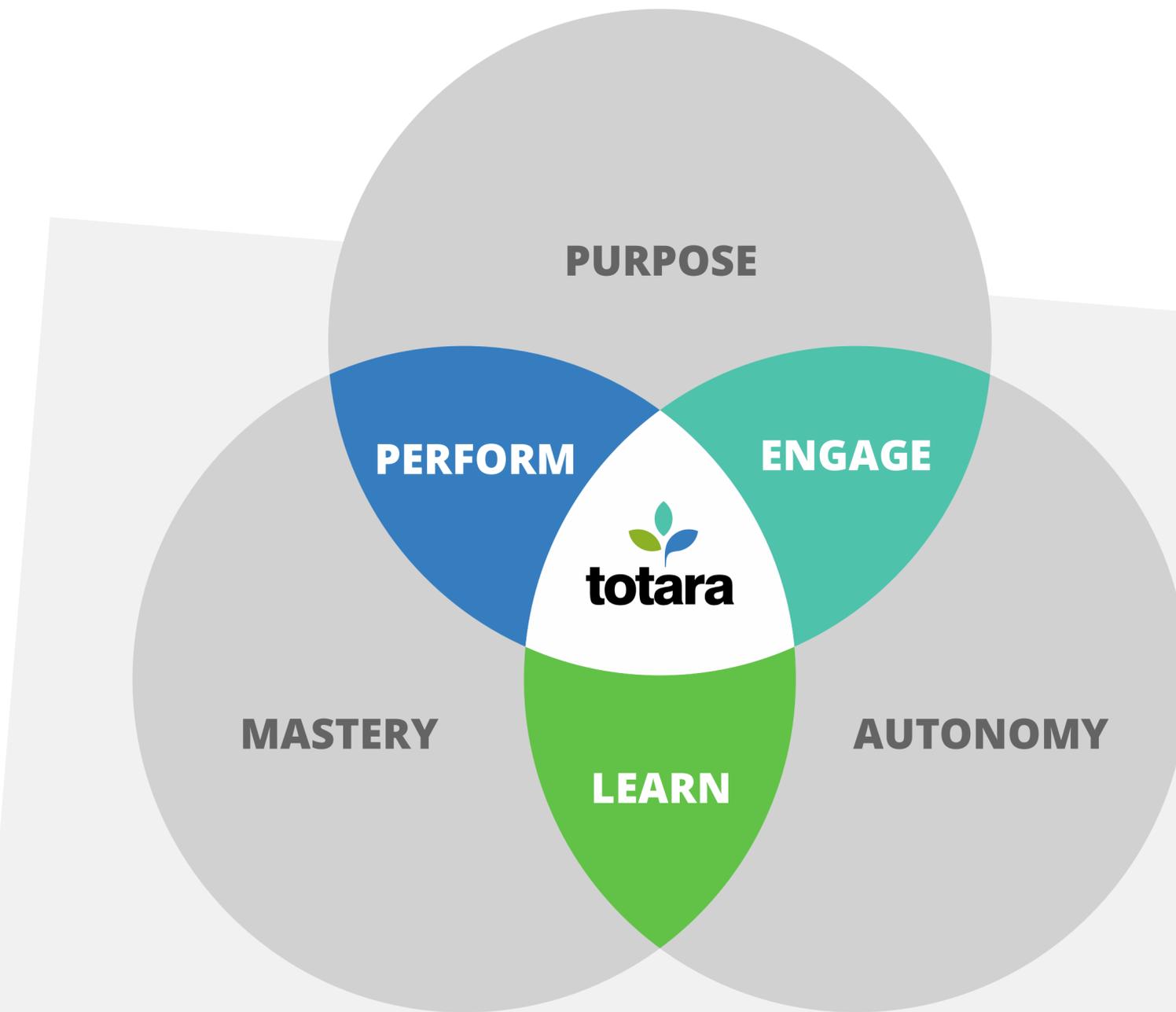
WHAT MOTIVATES US AT WORK?

Daniel Pink's book, *Drive*, presents three key motivators:



- **Mastery:** Desire to master and improve our skills
- **Autonomy:** Having the space and safety to contribute to our roles
- **Purpose:** Align and collaborate around shared goals

No matter where your employees are working, supporting them in achieving mastery, autonomy and purpose will keep them motivated, engaged and feeling like part of the wider team.



LEARNING

- Mastering new skills / behaviors
- Formal / directed
- Informal / self-directed

ENGAGEMENT

- Aligned with agency goals
- Peer to peer collaboration
- Initiative and trust

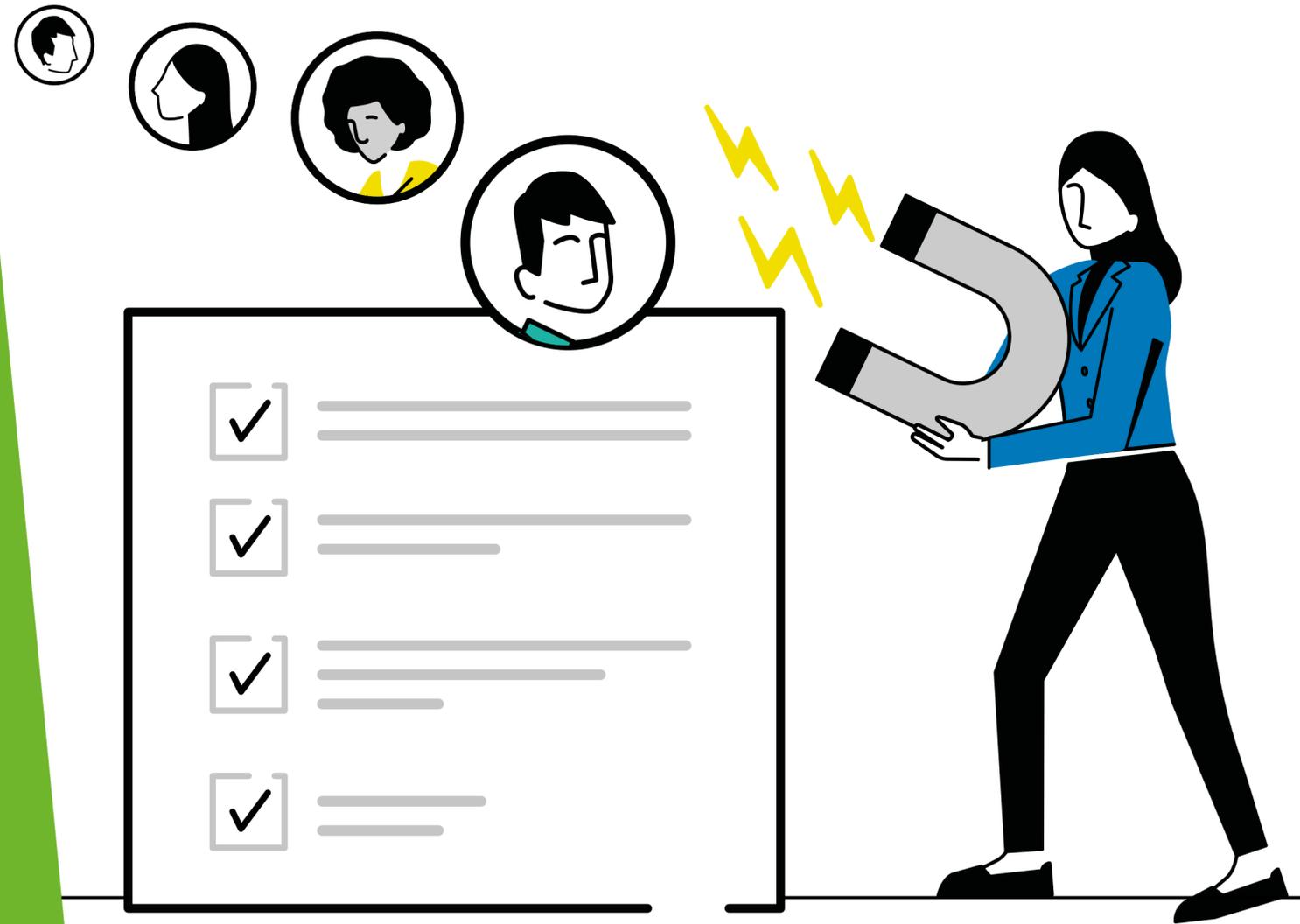
PERFORMANCE

- Productive use of skills
- Continuous feedback
- Coach / mentor culture



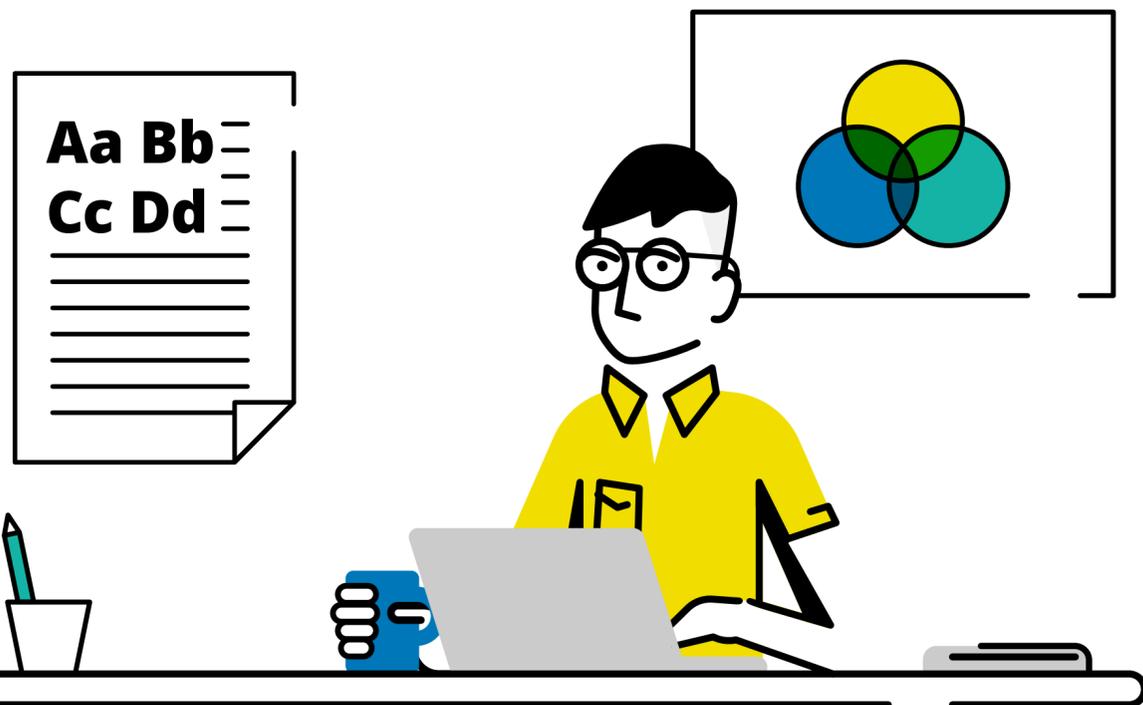
Talent challenge #2

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING NEW TALENT



The US government **has a hiring challenge**. The **median age for US public servants** is now 45.6 - higher than almost every other American workforce. With staff retirement numbers set to soar in the next few years, this leaves government agencies with a dilemma on their hands. How can agencies like yours attract and retain millennial and gen Z employees, and plug the looming staffing shortages with new workers?

This is a twofold issue. Firstly, “boomer” and gen X workers are staying in the workforce for longer - particularly in government roles. This leaves less space for new talent to join the government workforce. Secondly, when these employees do eventually retire, the changing expectations of existing workers means that many government agencies aren’t ready to support new talent sufficiently. If government workplaces don’t adapt to meet these new expectations, staff shortages will only become more of an issue, and recruitment drives will result in rapid turnover.



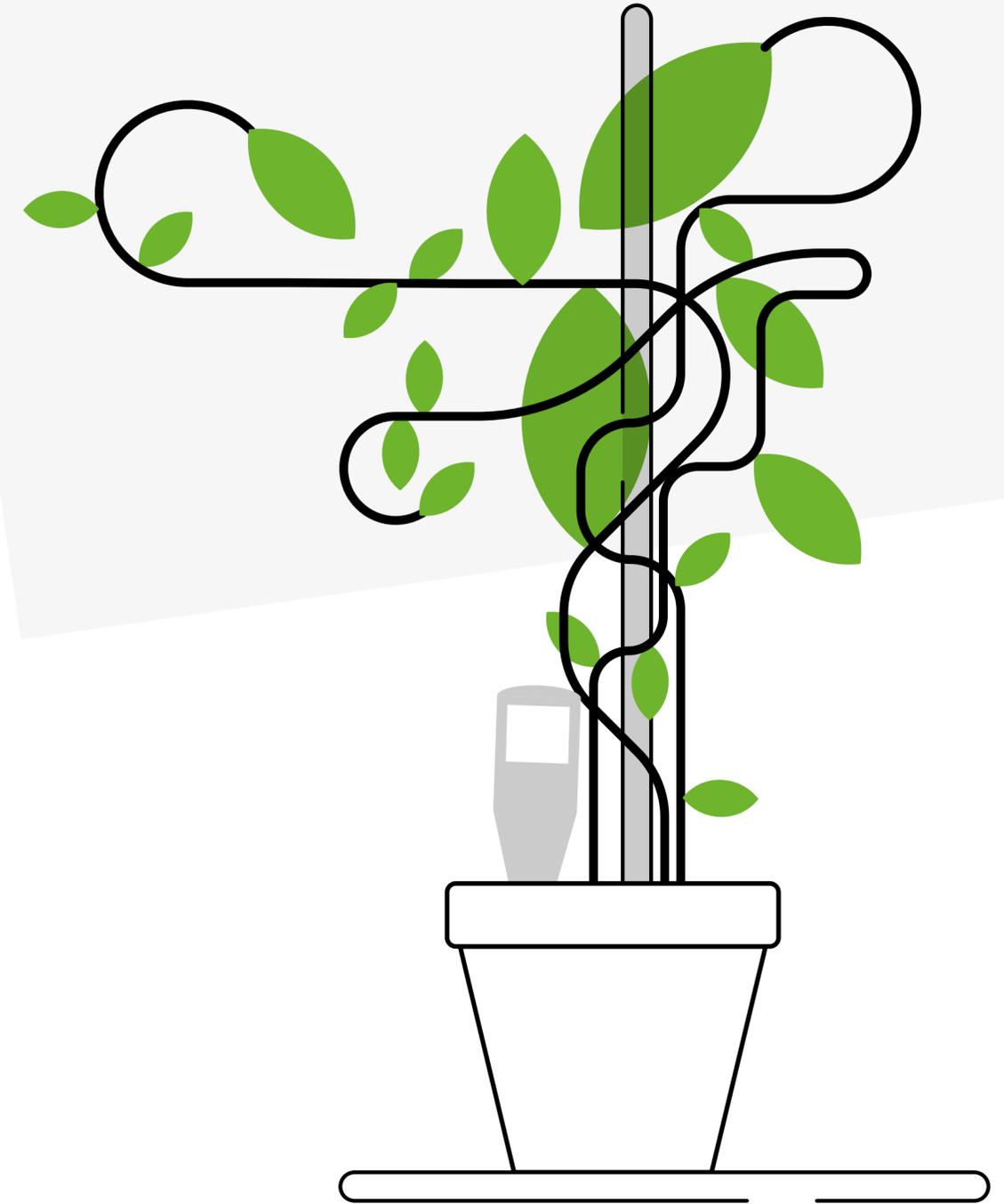
“JUST 17% OF FEDERAL WORKERS ARE UNDER 35, COMPARED TO ALMOST 40% OF PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS.”

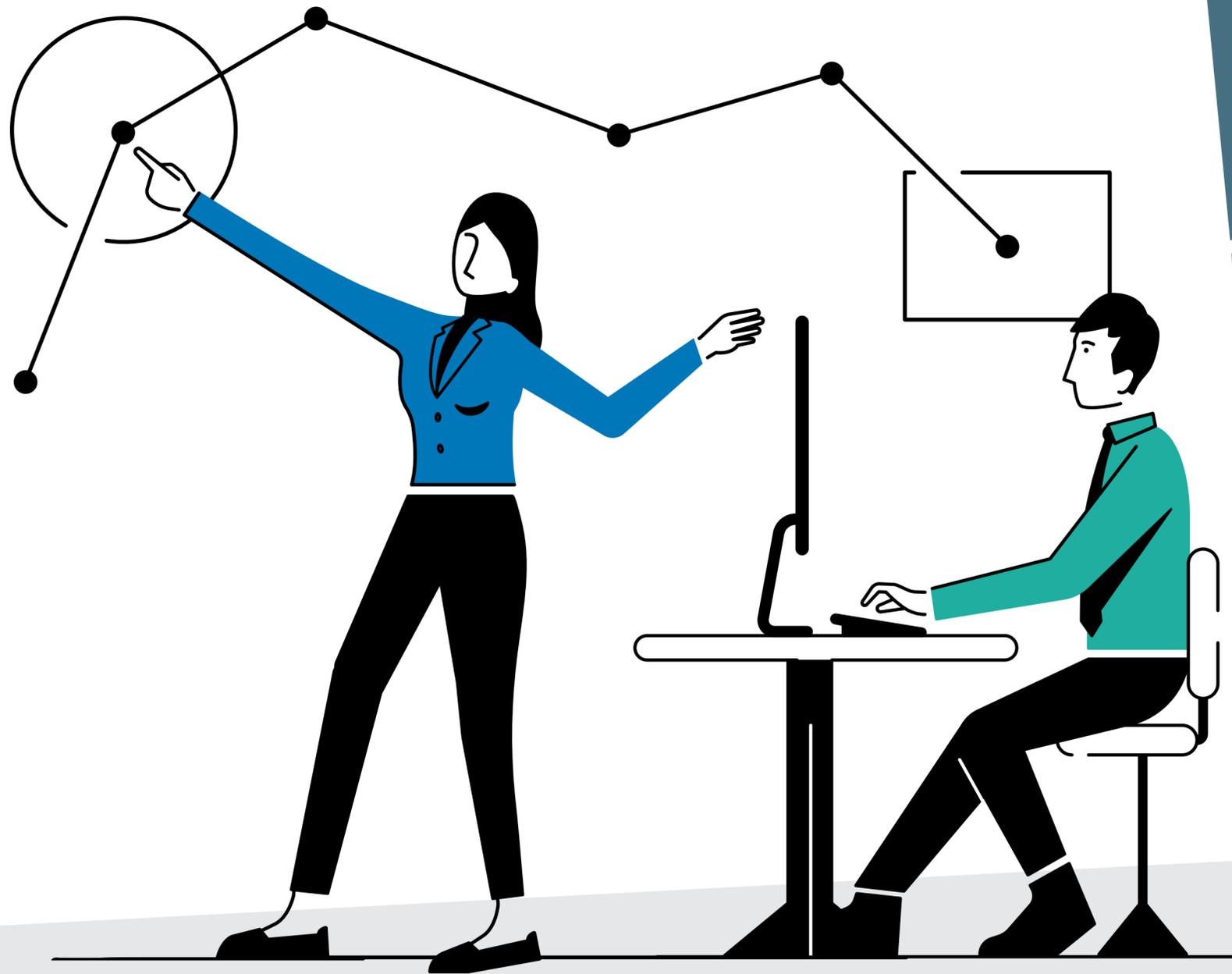
Politico



HOW TO DIVERSIFY YOUR TALENT:

- Support creative thinking and problem solving with a user-friendly LXP. Automated processes remove tedious admin work leaving more room for creative projects.
- Take a holistic approach to managing the workplace experience. Remove friction, frustration and confusion by aligning communications across learning, engagement and performance management efforts within a single integrated platform to ensure your messaging is clear and supportive.
- Build knowledge banks and facilitate knowledge sharing to enable employees to learn from their experienced colleagues.
- Create career paths with clear learning journeys and objectives. Use a performance management system to align competencies with performance goals, and monitor and manage staff capabilities to improve the upskilling process.
- Set up coaching and mentoring programs to train up employees and give them useful connections throughout the agency.





Talent challenge #3

RESKILLING EXISTING TALENT

The federal government is facing a major skills shortage. Your government workers need to adapt to maximize their impact in the coming years. Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends reports that two major changes HR must make are:

- 1** Increasing new capabilities to thrive in the digital age through digital fluency and analytics
- 2** Changing the organizational design to incorporate more agile and team-based work

The World Economic Forum's 2020 [Future of Jobs report](#) states that the top 10 vital skills that today's employees will need by 2025 are:

-  Analytical thinking and innovation
-  Active learning and learning strategies
-  Complex problem solving
-  Critical thinking and analysis
-  Creativity, originality and initiative

-  Leadership and social influence
-  Technology use, monitoring and control
-  Technology design and programming
-  Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
-  Reasoning, problem solving and ideation

All of these skills will become increasingly important for government agencies in the coming years as they learn to navigate new technology requirements, increasingly complex cybersecurity threats and new ways of working.



HOW TO RESKILL YOUR TALENT:

- Update competency frameworks to include the skills needed to become more adaptable and resilient.
- Create easy-to-use, fun and interesting learning paths for employees, giving them the tools they need to update and review their skills on a regular basis.
- Support collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, and reward employees for their contributions.
- Review the skills you need and create competency goals to align performance management with reskilling goals.

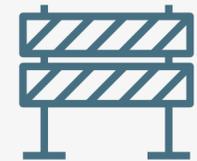
**“69% OF GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS
RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF
RESKILLING, BUT ONLY 32% FEEL
READY TO TACKLE IT.”**

Deloitte Insights

- Nurture an intentional learning culture:



**1 SET SMALL,
CLEAR GOALS**



**2 REMOVE
DISTRACTIONS**



**3 ACTIVELY
SEEK FEEDBACK**



**4 DELIBERATELY
PRACTICE SKILLS**



**5 REFLECT
REGULARLY**

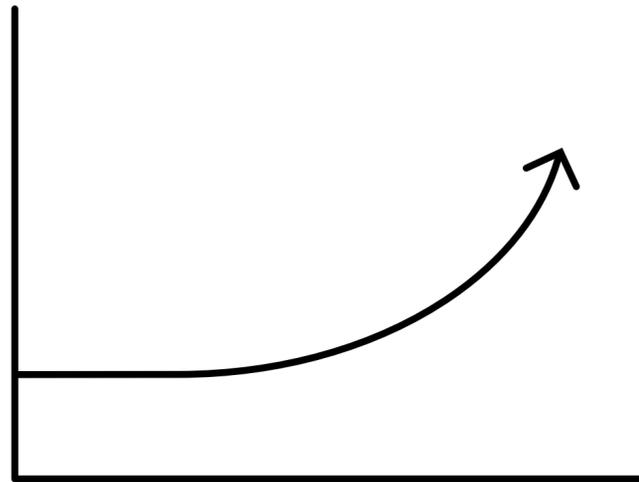
Talent challenge #4

INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND REMOVING ROADBLOCKS



Efficiency will always be a concern for federal agencies. The more efficient your processes, the more you can achieve, making the removal of learning and development roadblocks a priority for federal government agencies.

19% of government employees say that a lack of visibility across the organization is a common cause of frustration and delay. Improving communications and workflows is key for agencies looking to increase efficiency, and will help your people achieve their goals without getting tied up in additional administrative processes.



HOW TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY:

- Utilize adaptable technology that fits to your exact needs, saving you considerable time and money
- Standardize and consolidate training by function, geography, agency type or objectives
- Introduce a learning experience platform to break down silos and facilitate agency-wide mentorship and user-generated content
- Share training courses with other agencies to reduce duplication of effort
- Choose a single platform to ensure that government agencies can better manage version control and shared resources while keeping the system unique to each agency

WHERE DO I START?

Fortunately, US government agencies have the ideal solution in Totara's Talent Experience Platform. The platform comprises three systems, which combine to support learning, engagement and performance management:



the learning management system (LMS)



the learning experience platform (LXP)



the performance management system

Totara Learning has directly supported large department-wide implementations for Federal agencies. With services including project management, consulting, technical integration & migration services, infrastructure & security, post implementation & ongoing support.

Totara's Platform is designed to be open, extensible, flexible, and secure. Since 2010, we have attracted more than 1800 organizations with over 19 million end users and currently support 42 US agencies.

We believe in giving customers the freedom to constantly adapt their talent development solutions for an ever-evolving world through our Open-Core strategies.



REQUEST A DEMO

Request a demo to see how Totara can transform your agency's L&D strategy and help you face today's challenges.





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