Newsroom | Workday

New Workday Global Research: Stalled Career Growth Is Driving Top Talent to Quit

Promotions are Down in 10 of 11 Industries, and Internal Hiring has Fallen 8%

Employees are Feeling Anxious About Unclear AI Strategies

PLEASANTON, Calif., Sept. 9, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Workday, Inc. (NASDAQ: WDAY), the AI platform for managing people, money, and agents, today released the next iteration of its Global Workforce Report, which uncovers a talent crisis building inside organizations. While employment statistics point to a cooling labor market, Workday data shows a different kind of pressure building inside companies: a continued exodus of top performers, stalled career mobility, and AI strategies that leave employees feeling disconnected.

The report, "The Hidden Talent Drain: Reinvesting in Employee Growth to Unlock Your AI Advantage," uncovers a critical disconnect. As leaders fixate on hiring challenges, they're missing the real threat: an internal drain of talent that is reshaping organizations from the inside out. It's a silent crisis, where unclear career paths and a lack of direction are driving away high performers eager to grow. The problem isn't opportunity—it's the failure to connect people to company strategy at the very moment AI is accelerating change and uncertainty.

"AI may be rewriting the rules of work, but it cannot replace the value of engaged, motivated people," said Ashley Goldsmith, chief people officer, Workday. "The companies that succeed will retain top talent, create meaningful growth opportunities, and have a clear strategy for human-AI partnership that drives results."

Data from Workday Recruiting, HiredScore, Workday Peakon Employee Voice, and Workday People Analytics – aggregated from hundreds of millions of anonymized transactions and interactions across a range of companies and employees globally – identify three urgent challenges for organizations:

- **The Best People are Leaving.** High performers were leaving with increasing alarm across 75% of industries last year. That trend is growing, with attrition rates up across 100% of industries this year. The most significant increases were in retail (64%) and healthcare (28%). Replacing them is harder than ever: more than half of open roles now take over 30 days to fill, and a quarter stretch past 60 days, highlighting the challenge of finding and securing new talent.
- **Internal Career Growth Has Stalled.** High performers are leaving at accelerated rates due to lack of growth. Promotions are down in 10 of 11 industries, and internal hiring has fallen 8%. This means fewer opportunities for people to advance their careers without leaving the company. When growth stalls, engagement erodes, and top talent starts looking elsewhere.
- **AI Strategy is Getting Lost in Translation.** As AI reshapes work, companies are failing to bring employees along. The report found that 44% of employee comments made in organizations' internal employee surveys mentioning strategy and AI are negative. This highlights a clear disconnect between leadership and the front lines, slowing down change and eroding trust.

The findings underscore that retention and career growth are no longer optional – they are mission-critical for companies seeking to protect performance, maintain engagement, and stay competitive in a rapidly changing workforce. Organizations that invest in clear career pathways, human-centered AI strategies, and transparent communication are best positioned to retain top talent and win in the AI era.

For additional information

- Read the full report, "The Hidden Talent Drain: Reinvesting in Employee Growth to Unlock Your AI Advantage"
- Discover more about the trends outlined in the report, "New Research Signals a Talent Drain Hiding in Plain Sight"

About The Report

Findings from "The Hidden Talent Drain: Reinvesting in Employee Growth to Unlock Your AI Advantage" are based on a combination of Workday-proprietary and third-party data. External data sources include two double-blind surveys conducted by Hanover Research in July 2025. The first survey included 1,700 business leaders from North America, the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The second surveyed 982 job seekers in North America. Internal data is based on aggregated, de-identified customer data from Workday Peakon Employee Voice, Workday People Analytics, Workday Recruiting, and HiredScore.

About Workday

Workday is the AI platform for managing **people**, **money**, and **agents**. The Workday platform is built with AI at the core to help customers elevate people, supercharge work, and move their business forever forward. Workday is used by more than 11,000 organizations around the world and across industries – from medium-sized businesses to more than 65% of the Fortune 500. For more information about Workday, visit **workday.com**.

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This press release contains forward-looking statements including, among other things, statements regarding Workday's plans, beliefs, and expectations. These forward-looking statements are based only on currently available information and our current beliefs, expectations, and assumptions. Because forward-looking statements relate to the future, they are subject to inherent risks, uncertainties, assumptions, and changes in circumstances that are difficult to predict and many of which are outside of our control. If the risks materialize, assumptions prove incorrect, or we experience unexpected changes in circumstances, actual results could differ materially from the results implied by these forward-looking statements, and therefore you should not rely on any forward-looking statements. Risks include, but are not limited to, risks described in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"), including our most recent report on Form 10-Q or Form 10-K and other reports that we have filed and will file with the SEC from time to time, which could cause actual results to vary from expectations. Workday assumes no obligation to, and does not currently intend to, update any such forward-looking statements after the date of this release, except as required by law.

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