

Maccabi Leverages Talent Intelligence to Bolster Career Development



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A Large-Scale Healthcare Organization Offering Comprehensive Care

Maccabi Healthcare Services is one of the premier healthcare organizations in Israel. Headquartered in Tel Aviv, the company operates through a decentralized model with five regional centers across the country. Its workforce of over 10,000 employees and 6,500 contractors collectively provide primary healthcare services to over 2.7 million members. With the ongoing global shortage of healthcare talent, workforce retention is not just a priority for Maccabi—it's a business imperative.

Creating a Strategy to Retain Top Talent and Promote Career Development

The healthcare talent supply challenge was compounded by widespread frontline burnout brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Facing a rapidly changing talent market, Maccabi knew it needed to innovate its strategies for identifying, retaining, and developing talent.

"While our decentralized operations work from a member-service perspective, it adds a layer of complexity to HR projects," shared Ifat Alfasi, Head of Learning and Development, Maccabi Healthcare Services. To generate widespread buy-in, it was clear that whichever talent solution Maccabi chose needed to be universally accessible and relevant across the organization.

To maximize the relevancy, impact, and adoption of a talent solution, Maccabi first gathered data from across the organization to identify key themes around how it could better serve its talent. The HR team began conducting surveys, focus groups, and exit interviews. "The data collected within the company supported global trends that identified personal and professional development as a motivating factor among employees today. Over the past few years, we have observed that career development is one of the most important factors for employees at work," said Ifat Alfasi.

Summary

Challenge

- Creating strategies to identify, retain, and develop talent amid a global healthcare talent shortage.
- Increasing employee engagement and internal mobility, and reducing turnover by providing career plan visibility to promote growth within the organization.
- Identifying skill gaps within the organization and offering personalized learning opportunities at scale for employee upskilling and reskilling.
- Supplying employees with tools to help them understand their skillset and take a proactive approach to their careers.

Solution

- Implemented retrain.ai, a skill-based talent intelligence platform that maps skills to employees and roles while forecasting skill trends in the talent market, enabling employees to identify areas of strength and development opportunities.
- Created personalized skills profiles for each employee that present capabilities and potential upskilling options.
- Managed the transition to a skills-based culture through employee and manager workshops that reinforce a common language.

Results

- Employees gained visibility into their current skillset and received guidance on professional development pathways aligned with their career interests.
- Maccabi was recognized by the Human Resources of Israel Organization as the 2022 first-place recipient of the HR Excellence in Career Development Award for Personal Development Programs.
- Maccabi has since expanded deployment to connect more employees to skills-based learning and career pathway initiatives.

Such factors include employee experience and connectedness to an organization. "We understood that the barriers to personalized professional development that existed were affecting the sense of belonging and satisfaction of our employees, as well as the organization's ability to locate talent relevant to significant roles," said Alfasi. Maccabi was committed to rebuilding the organization's career

management practices to make career options accessible to employees through learning channels and internal mobility while maintaining transparency and equality.

Proactively Addressing Talent Challenges

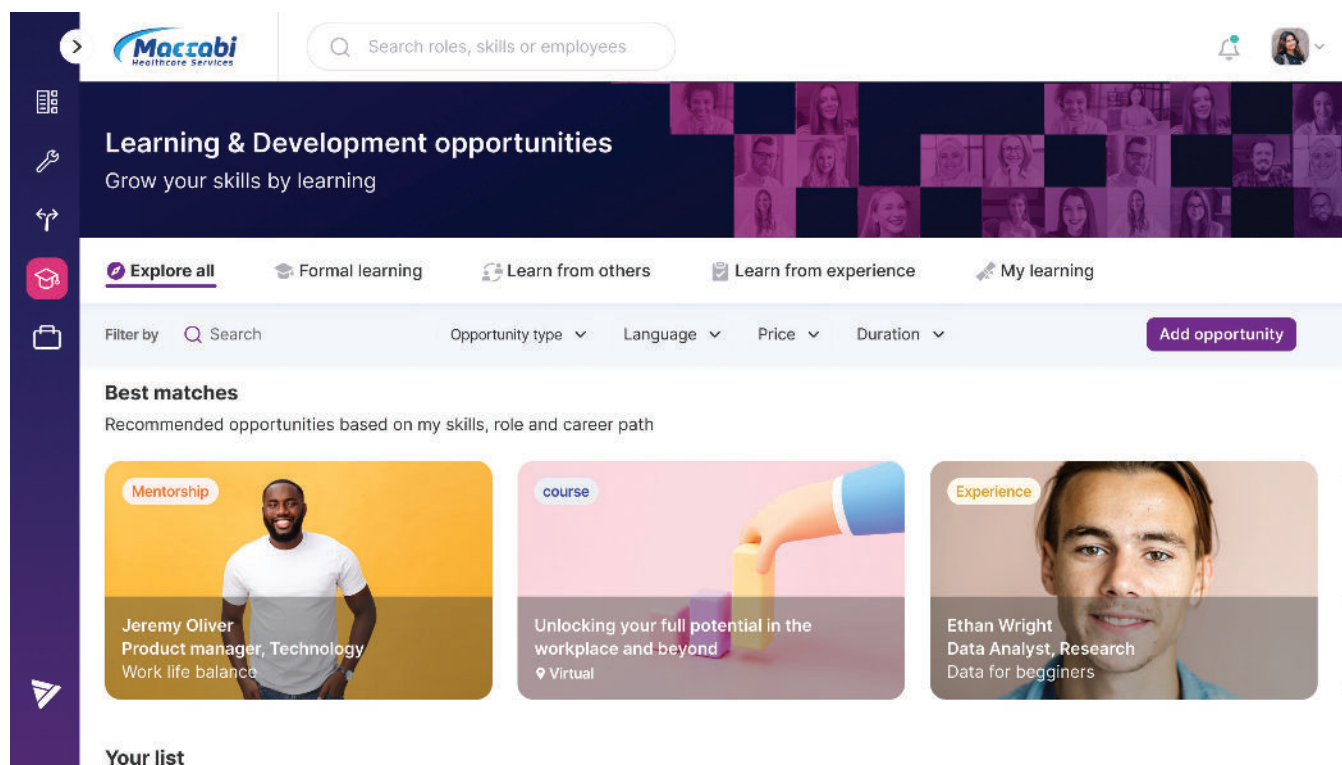
In light of talent market trends, a project was launched to modify current processes and create a new career management concept for Maccabi. The organization started thinking about professional development as a rock-climbing wall with multidirectional pathways rather than a series of siloed ladders with clearly defined vertical trajectories. It needed a platform that would bring its vision to life. “Traditionally, individuals move vertically within a healthcare sector, such as nursing. We didn’t want employees to limit themselves to just developing vertically within their sector; we

want to open everything,” said Alfasi. “If someone has the right skills and capabilities to reach the footing on their left rather than grab the rock above them, we wanted to empower them to do that.”

Maccabi paid particular attention to its infrastructure—the organizational culture that significantly permeated all employee experiences. It recognized that in the new world of work, it was no longer enough to focus on capabilities; every employee has capabilities. It’s retention that doesn’t come easily. By embracing innovative ways of thinking, Maccabi believed it was possible to offer opportunities for self-fulfillment, even to employees whose future didn’t necessarily mean promotion within the hierarchy, but across it (see Figure 1).

In this new era, Maccabi envisioned a solution in which employees would not have to wait for organizational response times and would make career decisions themselves, proactively driving their career pathways.

Figure 1: Employee-Facing Learning and Development Interface



Source: retrain.ai, 2022

Maccabi empowers employees with tools to identify their skills and forge their unique journey—within a functional vertical or across functions.

Gleaning Insights through Talent Intelligence

In 2020, a third-party vendor introduced Maccabi to retrain.ai, a talent intelligence platform that combines client data, market data, skills taxonomies, and responsible artificial intelligence to increase employers' visibility into their workforce, enabling them to create career visualization and internal mobility pathways for employees. The platform is based on three dimensions—policy, infrastructure, and tools—as well as principles like empowering employees to be proactive in their development.

"We spoke the same language and shared the same values," said Alfasi. "We started talking about skills and thinking through skills frameworks." At the time, the vendor was less than a year old and still refining its platform. "We realized that we could do something great together and decided to start working as design partners," explained Alfasi. "What the vendor brought to the table was the AI technology to automatically define roles by skills as well as analyze employees' skillsets and skill gaps, matching them to job opportunities and suggested career trajectories." Detailed skills visibility helped Maccabi better understand the scope of each role and the expertise that bred success within them, and enabled employees to envision their next career move along with the development steps to get there.

What Maccabi brought to the table with this partnership were new use cases made possible by its unique healthcare roles and organizational structure. "For every tool I needed, the vendor adjusted the software to accommodate our needs," shared Alfasi. "Employees and managers use the platform to achieve a better understanding of their own abilities and skills, strengthening their independence in advancing their personal development."

The talent intelligence platform has multiple touchpoints with the Maccabi HR tech stack, such as their recruitment, learning management system (LMS), and people management systems. A platform administrator can match open roles with internal talent, creating a seamless user experience for both talent acquisition and employees.

The values and principles underlying the platform also support Maccabi's new career management concept: Beta Next, named for the belief that every employee should chart their own development path and regularly ask themselves, "What's next?" The Beta Next program at Maccabi incorporates all career and development initiatives into one platform.

Understanding that an organization's development options are a significant attraction for new candidates and an important aspect of its growth, Maccabi uses Beta Next to construct career paths and development opportunities for all employees to foster a sense of belonging and cohesion among employees. "It has enabled us to promote this concept in a detailed and precise manner by combining a technological infrastructure with responsibility for the process in the hands of the employees," said Alfasi. "Using the platform, the employee receives concrete recommendations for positions, experiences, or learning activities that match their current skills, with the information presented in a friendly and intuitive manner reflective of Maccabi's career management concept."

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Maccabi Healthcare Services

Unlocking Skill Insights and Personalized Development

Maccabi wanted to create a career management experience for employees that would be personal, easy to use, and encourage them to take responsibility for their careers. Once employees unlock skill and career development insights by completing an online skills assessment, they gain access to an informative dashboard highlighting roles for which they have high skills match as well as roles within their indicated career interests.

By working with the vendor to identify the skill profiles of occupations across the organization, a clear picture emerged of what each occupation requires—a tremendous value to the

organization and employees. The dashboard offers employees visibility into the particular skills they should develop further to prepare for their roles of interest. It also enables Maccabi to access skill match data when filling existing roles (see Figures 2 and 3) and predict skills of the future by monitoring skill demand fluctuations in both the external market and their organization. Its access to external market data stems from the vendor's platform, which uses global skill taxonomies of occupational profiles—information vital for workforce planning, upskill and reskill initiatives.

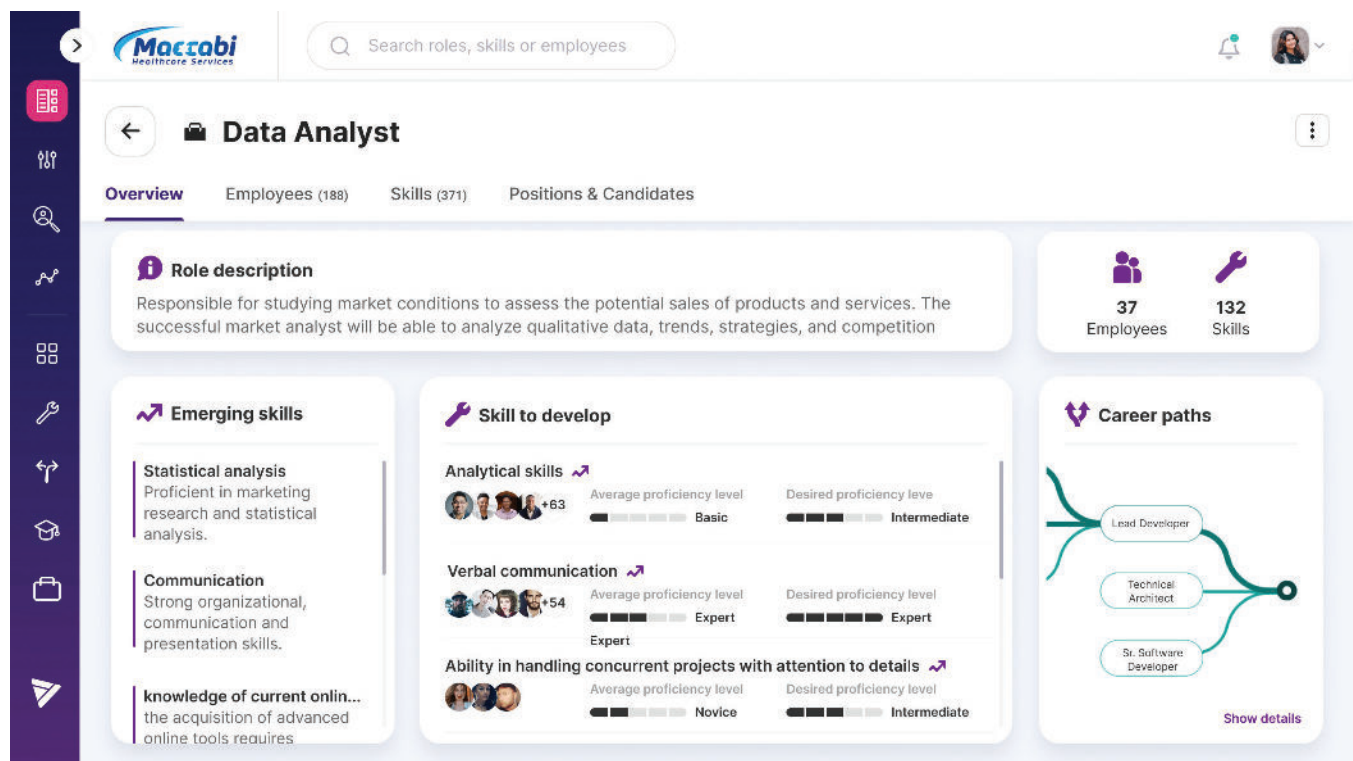
Beyond the dashboard, employees can use the platform to receive intelligent career and professional development recommendations, which reduces the risk of their skillset becoming obsolete while clarifying how to progress toward their career goals. The vendor's AI model presents related professional development opportunities, including internal mentoring programs and online learning content. This comprehensive display illuminates customized pathways and action steps for each employee, allowing them to wisely

choose the footing or hold they will use to navigate Maccabi's metaphorical rock-climbing wall of professional development. Executed within a marketplace concept, employees benefit from a visible or virtual "meeting place" where all opportunities are presented, and employees can propose, negotiate and select their path.

Maccabi views the establishment of the professional development marketplace as a choice that moved the needle across four axes:

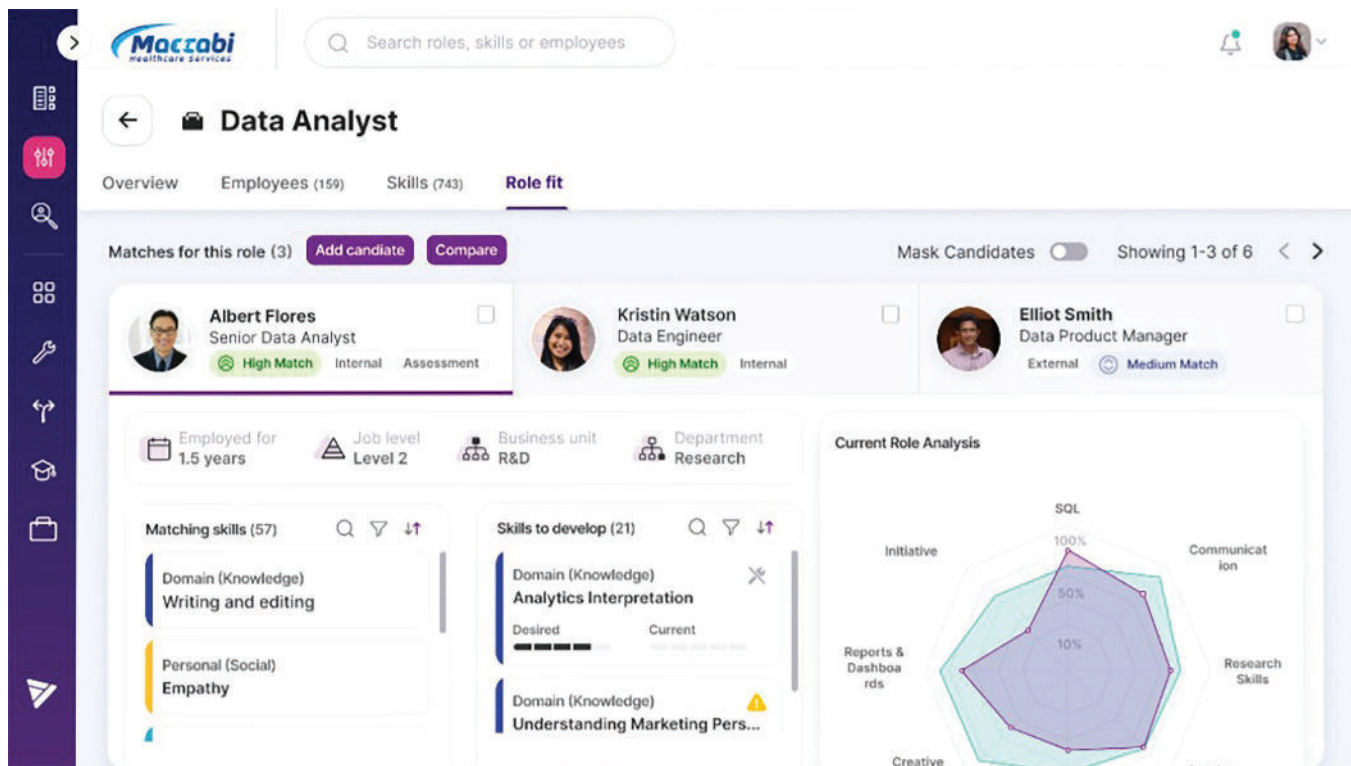
- Personal and professional development in the form of management programs, learning skills, and professional training
- Transitions between positions within the organization
- Participation in a variety of projects in the organization that expand skills, competencies, and networking
- Mentoring and shadowing programs to learn firsthand about positions in the organization, their characteristics, success stories, and development plans for the organization

Figure 2: Talent Acquisition Module



Source: retrain.ai, 2022

Figure 3: Role Fit Dashboard Example



Source: retrain.ai, 2022

"Our goal was to connect the internal marketplace using technological tools that could interface with our existing organizational learning and recruitment systems," said Alfasi.

Adopting a Skills-Based Culture

Maccabi wanted to supplement the platform with internal career growth support programs. In 2022, the organization launched a workshop for employees that equipped them with development tools for leveraging the personal skills mapping assessment they took upon implementing the platform. The workshop allowed employees to explore potential career pathways within Maccabi, create a career acceleration plan, and prepare for career conversations with their managers. In parallel, those employees' managers attended a supplementary workshop that provided them with tools to be active supporters in the development of their employees.

"We believe that part of being a manager is taking care of the wellness of one's team. By preparing managers for development conversations, they could speak a common skills

and career language with employees. Ultimately, by launching development tools for employees and managers in tandem, Maccabi could focus on employee engagement, satisfaction, and growth. Understanding that culture shifts take time, Maccabi navigates the fine line between challenging managers and individual contributors while supporting them through the organizational transition to a skill-based culture.

Results: Identifying, Retaining, and Developing Talent

As a result of the partnership with retrain.ai, Maccabi presented a platform that enabled HR to reach out to employees in a personalized, meaningful, accurate, and timely manner at scale, enabling the organization to efficiently identify talent at times when it's been necessary to pivot in response to both turnover and job creation.

“Now when a role opens, I can view my admin dashboard and see the power skills related to that position. I can also search for people across the organization with the same or similar power skills,” said Alfasi. “I feel confident I have enough information to approach employees with skillsets that align with current openings and invite them to apply. Trusting the data also means that when an internal candidate is identified and hired, we can upskill them more easily, leveraging their knowledge of Maccabi systems and processes, and their healthcare knowledge and building on it. If they don’t have a certain skill, we can identify that and provide a learning experience to get there. All of this means we can earn an employee’s choice to stay within the organization.”

Furthermore, the efficiency with which Maccabi can now identify internal matches enables the company to act swiftly when an individual goes on a planned or sudden leave. “Instead of taking three to six months to recruit someone from the outside when an employee is on leave, we can delegate parts of the role to four or five different people with the right skills for—and interest in—the position. This enables them to try the role and find out if it’s truly an interesting path for them,” Alfasi said, adding that the approach enables Maccabi to leverage the 70-20-10 learning model that conveys individuals tend to learn 70% of their knowledge from challenging experiences and assignments, 20% from developmental relationships, and 10% from coursework and training.

In addition to internal mobility benefits, there are also some budget benefits to implementing a talent intelligence platform. “With the ability to track turnover, recruitment, and the ratio of money spent on external versus internal hires, we expect to see less and less money going towards external recruiting as attrition decreases and we gain visibility into the skills of our existing workforce.”

“*We now have actionable insights that give us visibility into our employees’ skills and where they could progress in our organization. This helps employees work with their managers to identify career opportunities.*

Ifat Alfasi

From an employee perspective, the segments of the Maccabi workforce that have already been onboarded to the platform are overwhelmingly satisfied with the personalized

development opportunities they can access and the insights they receive from their individual assessments. Many have shared strong and positive statements about the platform. One employee voiced a common theme: “This is the first time I’ve been given a tool that helps me look inside myself, identify my capabilities, and define gaps that I can address to reach my career goals.” That is the precise experience Maccabi aims to create for their people. The skills-based, informative path to personalized development has empowered Maccabi employees to be intentional about their growth by creating transparency between their current state and career paths.

The successful innovation of the organization’s talent management strategy has led to national recognition. In 2022, Maccabi won first place in the Human Resources Israel Excellence Competition for Career Development—Personal Development Programs. The solution Maccabi created in partnership with their talent intelligence platform vendor is now a model for organizations across industries seeking to address talent shortages and employee burnout.

Lessons Learned

Creating a synergetic and meaningful partnership with a talent intelligence vendor was paramount to Maccabi. The organization had sought out a vendor that was eager to continue to develop its product and meet the organization’s needs. Maccabi has identified seven factors that led to a successful partnership:

- **Know your goal.** In this instance, Maccabi sought technology to support its desired organizational culture changes. Acknowledging upfront the need for a tech solution is a critical step to building a successful vendor partnership.
- **Ask to meet with the founders.** Alfasi shared that Maccabi had instant professional chemistry with their vendor. Meeting with the vendor cofounders was an important factor, as it gave Maccabi confidence there was vision alignment.
- **Discuss vision and timeline expectations.** Align on vision. Both sides need to share their needs, goals, and timelines. Discussions about timing should not just be about a vendor’s capabilities, but timeframe an organization may need to pilot solutions and implement them effectively.

- **Discuss remaining logistical requirements.** A good match on the surface may not be the right match in practice. Align purchasing, legal, and information security expectations through transparent conversations early on, as these logistics requirements can present potential deal breakers. Maccabi recommends building a shared road map once expectations match so that both sides know what to do and when.
- **Build the relationship and expect the unexpected.** Many factors could alter the course of a vendor relationship. Data privacy laws could change. Unforeseen roadblocks could pop up during the change management process. Seek to establish a solid partnership with consistently transparent communication. Pivoting is significantly easier when both organizations are eager to brainstorm and work together to solve new challenges.
- **Communicate.** Creating open lines of communication forms a reliable partnership. Any early opportunity to be transparent, collaborate, or overcome challenges together can help build a thought-partner relationship instead of a transactional one.

Next Steps: Getting All of HR to Speak the Same Skills Language

The concept of career management at Maccabi didn't arise by accident; rather, it was brought to light by COVID-19 and the labor market crisis. The organization realized that old tools were no longer effective in attracting or retaining candidates. Maccabi and retrain.ai connected at a critical point when it needed an answer for both employee and organizational needs.

Maccabi continues to transform its organization into a skills-based culture, building upon significant progress made in 2022.

This shift can be accredited to thoughtful change management practices while implementing the vendor's talent management and learning & development modules, which fundamentally transform Maccabi's internal talent operations.

Moving forward, Maccabi aims to make skills the unifying thread of all operations, using retrain.ai. Future goals include the ability to view candidate resumes in the same way it views employees' skill profiles, enabling Maccabi to place greater emphasis on candidate skills, goals, and long-term potential as opposed to education and previous titles.

"We don't want to hire externally based on the last job title someone had. Similarly, some of our employees have been here for 25 years. We don't want to promote from within based on what they studied 20 years ago. We want to open doors based on what people bring today," shared Alfasi.

The organization recognizes that active participation in professional development is fundamental for unlocking the metaphorical professional development rock-climbing wall, retention, and employee empowerment to navigate their own Maccabi journey.

Today, skill-mapping is critical. When employees become familiar with their strengths and areas of improvement, they can better understand their own abilities and be precise in their next role choice. The organization, on the other hand, can maximize the potential of employees and how they align with Maccabi's needs and strategy, as well as strengthen the connectedness and personal resilience of the employees.

Ifat Alfasi

About the Authors



Josh Bersin

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.

In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the "home for HR." In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. He is frequently featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.



Jordan Schmitting

Jordan Schmitting joined The Josh Bersin Company as a senior research analyst after interning through the organization's Big Reset Initiative. Passionate about the intersection between behavioral sciences and the workplace, Jordan pursued a neuroscience degree before obtaining her master's in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is a certified HR professional and brings experience from multiple industries, including commercial real estate, industrial process solutions, higher education, transportation and retail.

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The Josh Bersin Company provides a wide range of research and advisory services to help HR leaders and professionals tackle the ever-evolving challenges and needs of today's workforce. We cover all topics in HR, talent, and L&D. The Josh Bersin Academy—built on our research and powered by Nomadic Learning—helps HR practitioners grow key foundational skills. Our corporate membership program provides HR teams and senior leaders with the skills, strategies, and insights to build cutting-edge HR and people strategies through a combination of research, assessments, professional development, exclusive events, and community. In 2022, The Josh Bersin Company introduced the Global Workforce Intelligence (GWI) Project to guide market-leading businesses and their leaders through the challenges of industry convergence while remaining future-focused.

For more details, contact us at info@bersinpartners.com.