



International Journal of Economics and Business Research

ISSN online: 1756-9869 - ISSN print: 1756-9850
<https://www.inderscience.com/ijebr>

Internal promotion in companies in El Salvador

José Adán Vaquerano Amaya, Ana Lorena Mártir

DOI: [10.1504/IJEBR.2025.10069944](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEBR.2025.10069944)

Article History:

Received:	20 August 2024
Last revised:	05 December 2024
Accepted:	14 December 2024
Published online:	21 March 2025

Internal promotion in companies in El Salvador

José Adán Vaquerano Amaya*

Department of Business Administration,
UCA, San Salvador, El Salvador
Email: avaquerano@uca.edu.sv
*Corresponding author

Ana Lorena Mártir

San Salvador, El Salvador
Email: lorenamartir@gmail.com

Abstract: This research seeks to understand how internal promotion strategies impact the retention of human talent in Salvadoran companies. The results have been obtained from the perceptions held by workers in the formal sector of the Salvadoran economy. The objective of this research effort is focused on assessing how the design and implementation of internal promotion strategies by Salvadoran organisations impacts the interest and motivation of the country's workers to pursue a career in the organisation in which they currently work. In addition, work has been carried out to analyse secondary sources, with the purpose of identifying best practices that have been designed and implemented by leading organisations worldwide in the field, to serve as an example for companies in the country.

Keywords: internal promotion; formal sector; working people; human talent management; El Salvador.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Vaquerano Amaya, J.A. and Mártir, A.L. (2025) 'Internal promotion in companies in El Salvador', *Int. J. Economics and Business Research*, Vol. 29, No. 10, pp.1–20.

Biographical notes: José Adán Vaquerano Amaya obtained his PhD in Economics and Business Administration from ETEA (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Córdoba), Córdoba, Spain, 2006; specialising in local and territorial development management. He also holds a Master's degree in Latin American Theology from the José Simeón Cañas Central American University. He is a Professor and researcher at the José Simeón Cañas Central American University. He is the author of books on financial management and investment project formulation, and he has published articles in *ECA Magazine*, *Realidad Empresarial*, *Interconectando Saberes*, *Gestión y Desarrollo Libre*, and the *London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*. ORCID identifier: 0000-0002-7795-5273.

Ana Lorena Mártir is a graduate in Business Administration from the José Simeón Cañas Central American University (UCA) El Salvador in 2002. She is an independent researcher, on administrative, economic and social issues. In addition, she is co-author of articles published in the journals *Estudios Centroamericanos (ECA)* and *Realidad Empresarial of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA)* of El Salvador, the *Revista de*

Investigación of the Universidad de Oriente (UNIVO) of El Salvador, in the Revista Gestión y Desarrollo Libre of the Universidad Libre of Colombia and in the London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences. ORCID identifier: 0009-0002-3757-6452

1 Introduction

In the reality of the Salvadoran labour market, it has become routine for workers to feel that they have no opportunity to grow their professional careers at the companies where they work. This dynamic surely leads to harmful levels of labour dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation. Along these lines, this research project seeks to understand the impact that companies' internal promotion strategies have on the motivation and commitment of Salvadoran workers.

This is because internal promotion as a strategy goes beyond filling vacant positions, for ease or convenience. The important thing is to be clear that internal promotion implies an investment to enhance talent and, consequently, cement organisational growth. In this sense, internal promotion focuses on identifying the professional growth of the organisation's workers, in line with the vision, mission and values of the company (Beaumont-Oates, 2024).

Organisations around the world design and implement internal promotion strategies in an effort to generate a competitive advantage rooted in the job satisfaction of their employees. Given this consideration, the design and implementation of effective internal promotion strategies should be a best practice to guide decision-makers at Salvadoran companies. It has been demonstrated that an optimised internal promotion strategy can produce greater job satisfaction for workers, who find clear improvements in their quality of life, professional development, and therefore their performance and productivity.

For Salvadoran workers, who are known worldwide as hard-working and committed individuals, as well as any worker regardless of nationality, receiving recognition of their worth is an essential element. Nonetheless, it is important to note that in many scenarios, the decision-makers at companies overstep their bounds by demanding more from workers than their job description currently stipulates.

In this sense, leaders of organisations must be aware that one of their many responsibilities has to do with identifying and developing the company's workers and thus benefiting the entire organisation. Because, without a doubt, companies that invest in the development of their workers are investing in the long-term success of the organisation. And when working people know that they have the opportunity to growth and development professionally within the organisation, they are more willing to take on new challenges, feel more committed, and strive to achieve both personal and organisational goals. Because in the end autonomy, skill and purpose are key factors to enhance intrinsic motivation in the worker (Flores-Carretero, 2024).

An effective internal promotion strategy should impact workers' motivation, sense of belonging, and commitment, and have commensurate positive impacts on performance and productivity on an individual and organisational level. Through an internal promotion strategy, an organisation promotes its own workers rather than bringing in outside talent. These strategies are part of a best practice that benefits the workers as well as the organisation, as it involves a process of developing new knowledge, skills, and abilities,

as well as enhancing the motivation, belonging, and commitment that workers at the company feel.

Given the state of global labour markets, the design and implementation of internal promotion strategies is a necessary and timely practice that companies can use. In this sense, it is important to undertake research on the use of internal promotion strategies in Salvadoran companies, to gain an understanding of the experiences and challenges related to these strategies in the Salvadoran business sector. It is important to underscore that the information presented here can be considered by organisations in the country as they design and implement appropriate internal promotion strategies.

Finding a job has become increasingly difficult. In reality, a continued and significant flow of new professionals begins the process of joining the labour market by searching for employment opportunities, thereby diminishing the probabilities of finding a decent job.

According to Sanchez (2017), it is important to highlight that labour markets around the world continue to be ruled by the principles of supply and demand between organisations and individuals seeking employment opportunities. A specific analysis to explain persistent unemployment, labour force participation, and wages is important to underpin an understanding of these supply and demand dynamics.

Along these lines, Zarcero (n.d.) argues that employability is related to the relative ease with which a job seeker is able to find a position. As such, employability should be understood as the capacity to adapt to new professional and personal contexts in order to quickly find quality employment.

In the current Salvadoran reality, finding a job can be an arduous and complex process. Consequently, potential applicants must resort to a series of strategies and resources to increase their chances of finding job opportunities. According to Hidalgo (2021), job searches tend to go through a series of phases:

- Identifying existing job opportunities: Job seekers must have a clear idea of their ideal jobs in function of their training, experience, and skills.
- Determining potential employers: This requires researching companies looking for workers, with job descriptions that fit the applicant's knowledge, skills, and competencies. This research can often be conducted through traditional media, such as the newspaper, or using digital platforms.
- Preparing a resume: The priority here is to develop an updated CV or resume that clearly highlights the applicant's professional information.
- Preparing for the interview: Effective interview preparation means being appropriately informed about the employer and organisation where the interview will be held; this is one way that applicants can show interest, initiative, and proactivity.
- Attending the interview: It is essential to show up to the interview on time, wear formal and appropriate attire, and master appropriate body language.
- Evaluating the interview: It is always an enriching and educational experience to reflect on the interview process, as well as the assessments put forth, to understand the opportunities for improvement for similar situations in the future.

- Getting a job offer: It is essential to read and clearly understand the contents of the proposed contract, and to ask the pertinent questions regarding the responsibilities, duties, schedule, and salary, as well as other important points.
- Onboarding: Once the employment contract is signed, official affiliation with the company begins. This process is also the new employee's first contact with other workers as well as supervisors. Making a first impression is important here.

In summary, the first step to an effective job search is a self-assessment to understand one's level of knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience. This kind of self-assessment will undoubtedly empower any applicant to focus his or her efforts in areas and employment opportunities in which they can stand out and be positioned for success.

In this sense, the internal promotion strategy becomes a powerful alternative to improve the selection process of workers, where potential applicants are not external, but are part of the company's workforce. A situation that makes them valuable elements for the organisation, given that they are hard-working people who are knowledgeable about how the company works, which reduces the costs and time of the insertion process, facilitates the retention of human talent, and increases motivation and presumes recognition of the worker's performance (Paya, 2024).

According to Randstad Research (2018), organisations around the world are experiencing alarming levels of labour turnover, and are searching for profiles that are better fits for their company culture. In this context, 91.4% of companies have undertaken processes to find new employees. Approximately 65.6% of these companies have open positions. Similarly, 55% of the companies have encountered difficulties in identifying candidates with potential; this goes for highly-skilled candidates as well as candidates with normal professional training.

For human resource managers, finding qualified personnel can become a true challenge. An efficient and effective mechanism to handle this challenge is internal recruitment and promotion, as it offers the advantages of reducing the duration and costs associated with a hiring search. Workers are also already familiar with the company policies and workplace environment, positioning them to more easily adapt to new responsibilities.

Indeed, in today's business environment, internal promotion has become a key strategy to build loyalty and retain human talent. However, it is essential to be clear about the fact that the competencies and skills to lead and manage work teams are critical factors that are often overlooked in these processes. This is because there are many cases in which organisations decide to promote a working person. Without a doubt, he can be one of the best workers in the organisation, in terms of technical aspects, a person with a lot of knowledge and experience, but who possibly lacks something to be that leader that the team needs. With this, it is clear that to spread the impact of internal promotion, it is a priority to identify and enhance leadership competencies and skills among the organisation's workers (Human Resources, 2024).

The use of internal promotion strategies is an attractive option when organisational decision-makers prioritise internal growth opportunities, that is, when employees have the opportunity to rise to a higher level position, before moving to fill the open position with an external hire (Sayes, 2019).

Given these considerations, it is important for organisations with open positions to consider the nature and level of the work to be performed, the characteristics of the

company and industry, the company's human talent management policies, as well as intensive selection, hiring, and training policies. There is no doubt that companies will always prefer internal promotion over an external hire, when the company-specific knowledge, skills, and competencies are important, and when internal promotions can be used as a strategy to motivate the current workforce, when the costs of bad hires are onerous, or when a new position becomes too expensive as a result of workers having changed positions internally (DeVaro, 2020).

In this regard, it is interesting to know that 60% of working people would choose to stay and grow in the company they work for. However, only 40% of them see an opportunity to develop a professional career. Even more alarming is the fact that only 46% express real support from the organisation. In this sense, it is necessary to recommend to Salvadoran companies and the rest of the world, the design and implementation of a clear and motivating route or plan, which guarantees workers the existence of true support, with opportunities for them to grow professionally within the company. This is because the best way to retain your best workers is to promote them (Mulcahy, s.f.).

Internal promotion primarily values candidates already working within the company to cover higher-level positions or to be transferred to more complex tasks or challenges that offer more motivation. From this standpoint, the strategy promotes internally by moving workers upward through the hierarchy, within the same area of activities or to a different area at the same level, which surely requires other knowledge, skills, and competencies (Chiavenato, 2008).

In conclusion, in keeping with Bizneo (2020), internal promotion in organisations is an excellent strategy to empower workers, making them feel appreciated for their efforts and performance. Nonetheless, it should be noted that these promotions do not only involve improved conditions, but rather they also imply a greater burden of responsibility and authority for the selected workers.

Today, at the height of the internal promotion strategy, use of this arrangement seeks to obtain a competitive advantage and potential opportunities for the organisation, particularly in terms of retaining human talent. Grupo Montaner (2018) writes that the benefits that a company may access through effective use of an internal promotion strategy may include:

- Quick adaptation: Workers are already familiar with the structure and operations of the organisation, and are integrated into the organisational culture. This makes adaptation into the new job easier, compared to the assimilation process for an external hire.
- Reduction of turnover: Limits to internal growth in a company often lead to the most knowledgeable, skilled, and competent workers considering employment elsewhere, which generates and enables the flight of human talent. Given this consideration, an internal promotion strategy should be understood as an element for worker identification and loyalty with the organisation.
- Resource savings: A staff selection process using an internal promotion strategy is less expensive compared to external processes in which workers are hired from scratch. This means that companies can invest fewer resources in the selection process, aptitude testing, training, and interviews – to mention a few important considerations – when using an internal promotion strategy.

These benefits contribute to human talent management by promoting and fostering employee loyalty. As described previously, internal promotion can be a practical and cost-effective strategy for companies.

Nonetheless, as with everything in life, the use of an internal promotion strategy for workers within an organisation also poses some drawbacks, especially when promotions are made without considering the goals mentioned above. In this regard, according to Bizneo (2020), some of the challenges that a company may face when implementing an internal promotion strategy include:

- Reduced availability of human resources, as the number of knowledgeable, skilled, and competent workers within the organisation decreases considerably.
- Endogamy: Overuse of an internal promotion strategy can lead a company to be less competitive in the labour market by failing to integrate valuable external talent and new ideas into its ranks.
- Rivalry: There is always a risk, even with the proper implementation of an internal promotion strategy, that some workers will feel they have been negatively affected by the decisions made.

Internal promotion is a practical and effective strategy for human talent management offices in organisations around the world. Tecoloco (2016) states that jobs within a company's organisational structure must often be filled unexpectedly, making it essential to have a working knowledge of the professional profiles available in the labour market, while it is also smart to know the human talent already at the company.

The reality for Salvadoran companies is that the use of an internal promotion strategy is an important part of their internal policies. Along these lines and according to Sayes (2019), 58.2% of Salvadoran companies in the eastern region report using an internal promotion strategy as a regular recruitment source, while another 17.3% reported always using this strategy.

Additionally, in its profile study on job opportunities and employability conditions for the municipality of Santa Tecla, El Salvador, the Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social (2019) found that internal promotion was used in 84.2% of cases to cover job openings, while referrals through acquaintances was also reported for 77.2% of the cases.

Indeed, the way in which organisations carry out the recruitment, incorporation, development and participation process of workers urgently needs a transformation. The reality experienced in the subject has remained valid for a long period. However, given the turbulent times we live in today, it is necessary to initiate an urgent process of change. In this regard, 76% of those responsible for making decisions on the management of human talent believe that they have less than two years left to evolve before they begin to suffer from competitive and financial problems. In this sense, the process of finding skilled and competent working people, as well as making them more productive, competitive and keeping them happy, is the maxim of these times (Thomas International Ltd., 2023).

By way of conclusion, it is clear that an internal promotion strategy is an appropriate tactic for companies in El Salvador and around the world, given that it promotes retention, identification, and loyalty among qualified, skilled, and competent workers, who are able to increase performance and productivity as individuals and as part of the organisation overall. Given these considerations, it is essential that human talent units and managers promote and take an interest in retaining their best professionals, of course

without turning a blind eye to the opportunities that an increasingly global labour market may offer.

Table 1 Workers reported on payroll and workers paying into the ISSS healthcare system as of November 2022

<i>Economic activity (ISIC 4)</i>	<i>November (P)</i>	
	<i>On payroll</i>	<i>Making ISSS contributions</i>
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	13,597	13,373
Manufacturing, mining and quarry exploitation and other industrial activities	194,801	192,283
Construction	30,643	28,315
Commerce, restaurant and hotels, transportation, storage, hospitality and food services	235,914	228,617
Information and communication	19,485	19,199
Financial and insurance activities	32,604	32,469
Real estate activities	7,661	7,511
Professional, scientific and technical activities and administrative and support service activities	157,794	151,515
Services	74,232	71,878
Domestic services	1,886	1,861
Salvadorans abroad (SALEX)	87	69
Independent workers	5,563	4,985
<i>Private sector</i>	<i>774,267</i>	<i>752,075</i>
Public administration	106,069	106,008
Decentralised institutions	20,266	19,837
Social security institutions	23,431	23,431
Non-financial companies	7,442	7,430
Financial companies	3,334	3,334
Local governments (municipalities)	35,433	33,060
<i>Public sector</i>	<i>195,975</i>	<i>193,100</i>
<i>Total workers</i>	<i>970,242</i>	<i>945,175</i>

Note: Workers reported on payrolls and workers who effectively paid into the ISSS healthcare system as of 2022, reported by Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social (2022).

Source: Reported data

Definitely, the leaders who promote a new culture of human talent management must have high levels of faith in the development of workers. That is, they talk what they talk and walk the walk, with the firm conviction that the processes established to make good decisions regarding human resources work. These are, therefore, leaders whose hires can work in different functional areas of the organisation, it takes them little time to achieve higher levels of productivity with new hires and greater retention of workers, which can imply greater satisfaction (Thomas International Ltd., 2023).

The Salvadoran workforce is young and growing. Nonetheless, access to the labour market continues to represent a challenge for many, especially those with low formal

education or limited technical skills. As a result of this dynamic, unemployment, informal employment, and the lack of opportunities for professional development are constant obstacles for many would-be employees.

The capacity of the formal sector of the economy to absorb more workers has been limited. These data are according to the definition of the formal sector posed by DIGESTYC (2021) as the portion of the labour market made up of salaried employees and workers in companies with five or more employees, freelance workers and employers of companies with five or fewer workers who perform professional, technical, administrative, or management tasks.

Table 1 shows the total number of workers paying into the Salvadoran Social Security Institute, that is, the total number of formally employed workers in the country.

As shown in Table 1, productive activity in El Salvador includes a wide range of economic activities that workers undertake. Government institutions are also important employers. As of November 2022, there were 945,175 workers formally employed in El Salvador as reported in contributions to the Salvadoran Social Security Institute; 752,075 working in the private sector and 193,100 in the public sector.

2 Research methodology

With regard to the methodology used for this research project, a directed survey was used to gather data from primary sources; study information was thus obtained directly from formally employed workers in the Salvadoran private and public sectors. Data collection was performed from January to August 2023.

The directed survey tool was developed as a Google Form. Furthermore, the instrument for data collection contains questions whose answers are dichotomous (yes or no). The collected data were processed and analysed using SPSS v.22 statistical software.

The selection and review process for secondary sources was done through an extensive and wide-ranging review of trustworthy publications.

To calculate the sample size, it is important to note the national scope of the study, with a sample of 292 formally employed workers, out of a universe of 970,242 such workers as of 2022.

This is a statistically valid sample, given the statistical parameters used for calculation: a 2.5% confidence level (Z); a 95% probability of acceptance of the desired attribute in the population (p); a 5% probability of rejection of the desired attribute in the population (q); and a 2.5% estimated error for the research (e).

With regard to the data analysis process, the tables presented in the research findings section of this report were produced by cross-referencing each of the four classification variables – worker generations, working format, service time at the organisation and experience in the field – with the nine questions from the study data collection tool.

Regarding the type of research, it is mixed, that is, quantitative-qualitative-descriptive-exploratory. Qualitative given that according to Barrantes (2014) this research fits with the naturalistic or naturalistic-humanistic-interpretive scientific paradigm, as it focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the findings from human actions and life in society. Along the same lines, according to Abarca et al. (2012), one must be clear about the fact that, regardless of their divergences, both qualitative and quantitative data have an equivalent epistemological value, given that they are collected using rigorous techniques and methods. Also, in accordance with Hernández et al. (2014), it is a

quantitative and qualitative research since it proposes the dissemination of generalisable results to the entire universe. Likewise, it is descriptive since it focuses on identifying the particularities of the population investigated and, it is exploratory, because it is a problem that in the Salvadoran labour reality has not been moderately studied, which is why the results presented here are not must be seen as fully conclusive.

It should also be underscored that the main goal of the study was to develop a sense of the use of internal promotion strategies in formal employers in El Salvador, from the perspective of the workers.

As a general conclusion, it should be pointed out that this research opens the possibility for other studies to be developed, always focused on determining in more detail the use of the internal promotion strategy in Salvadoran companies and its impact on the expectations of the working people, as well as to propose specific initiatives and programs so that equality, racial diversity and inclusion in the workplace are promoted in Salvadoran companies, as measures that positively impact performance, productivity and competitiveness at a personal and organisational level.

3 Research findings

Given the competitive nature of global labour markets, the design and implementation of internal promotion strategies that fit the national context, structures, and organisational culture should be a common practice for organisations in the country.

The core intention of this research endeavour was to develop a deeper understanding of the topic of internal promotion within Salvadoran companies. The findings shared in the four subsections in this part of the report are a product of cross-referencing the nine questions from the data collection survey with the classification variables of worker generation, working format, service time at the organisation, and experience in the field.

3.1 Internal promotion strategies in formal companies in El Salvador according to worker generation

In the hiring processes undertaken by today's organisations, the generational identity of job applicants is a factor very much taken into account. Organisational workforces are made up of baby boomers as well as workers from Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. Identifying and understanding worker profiles according to their generation is of undeniable benefit for human talent managers and departments, as it gives them idea of the social environment in which each group grew up and developed. This knowledge can shed light on the way workers may act in regard to job offers and the internal promotion strategies that companies intend to use.

The day to day reality for human talent management in companies around the world clearly illustrates that applicant age is an essential factor to consider in internal promotion strategies or external processes to hire any worker to cover a vacancy.

It is thus of fundamental importance to know what each generation thinks about internal promotion strategies. In the data obtained for this study, although the data collection tool was applied with representatives from all generational blocks, the majority of the responses came from Generations Y and Z, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 illustrates that 61% of the workers (2% baby boomers, 4% Generation Z, and 53% Generations Y and Z) report having received information on internal vacancies.

Despite the fact that these data suggest that half of Salvadoran workers receive information about job opportunities within their companies, 39% of workers still do not receive information about these opportunities. This trend represents an opportunity for human talent managers to take full advantage of the in-house staff with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to perform satisfactorily at higher positions within the organisation.

Table 2 Internal promotion strategies by worker generation

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Questions/answers</i>	<i>Baby Boomers</i>		<i>Generation X</i>		<i>Generations Y or Z</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Q1	Are you aware of the available internal vacancies in the company where you work?	2%	2%	6%	4%	53%	34%
Q2	Can you easily find the internal vacancies?	1%	2%	3%	6%	32%	55%
Q3	Can you easily request the internal vacancies?	1%	2%	4%	6%	35%	52%
Q4	Do you clearly understand the application process for internal positions?	2%	2%	4%	5%	38%	49%
Q5	Do you feel supported by your peers and colleagues to explore internal vacancies?	2%	2%	4%	6%	45%	42%
Q6	Does the organisation you work for encourage internal mobility?	1%	2%	2%	7%	37%	50%
Q7	Does your immediate supervisor facilitate the process of applying for internal vacancies?	1%	2%	3%	7%	38%	49%
Q8	If you had the opportunity to apply for an internal position, would you do so?	2%	1%	7%	2%	70%	17%
Q9	Do you receive any information on internal growth opportunities at the company where you work?	1%	2%	5%	5%	38%	49%

Source: Taken from Hidalgo et al. (2023)

Additionally, 59% of workers (1% baby boomers, 6% Generation X and 52% Generations Y and Z) report that they face obstacles when it comes to applying for an internal job opportunity (Q3); 59% of the respondents (2% baby boomers, 7% Generation X, and 50% Generations Y and Z) report that their organisation does not encourage them to grow internally (Q6). Nonetheless, 79% (2% baby boomers, 7% Generation X and 70% Generations Y and Z) report that they would like to grow within the company structure (Q8).

These research findings clearly show how generational identity impacts workers' decisions to continue their professional growth at a company or seek opportunities elsewhere. The findings also show that Salvadoran workers of all generations express dissatisfaction that they are not able to apply for internal growth opportunities, as well as the little encouragement that organisations offer for internal growth. This situation

represents a real challenge for human talent managers and offices: designing and implementing strategies and processes that can help workers apply for internal vacancies and opportunities, given that most are interested in doing so.

A good example of this is the security company PROSEGUR, which has fostered an organisational culture focused on promoting equal opportunities for all of their workers, as an essential component of company development. These efforts have helped workers to understand their level of performance within the company and recognise opportunities for improvement, as well as optimise their pathways for internal growth (Cegid, n.d.).

It is also noteworthy that workers from Generations Y and Z – workers under the age of 40 – are often very technologically adept and fit well in healthy working environments at respect and value workers. Google, for example, seeks to ensure that its employees are comfortable at company facilities by offering a value-added element of recreational areas that are designed to coexist with areas for daily productive activities. Google has recognised that the younger generations increasingly appreciate workplaces with comfortable facilities; in their branches around the world, they seek to make sure that workplaces have areas for relaxation, which is encouraging for Generations Y and Z, as well as all other workers. In this sense, Google sets an example that should be followed when it comes to human talent management, given the conditions it creates for worker wellbeing (GQ México y Latinoamérica, 2019).

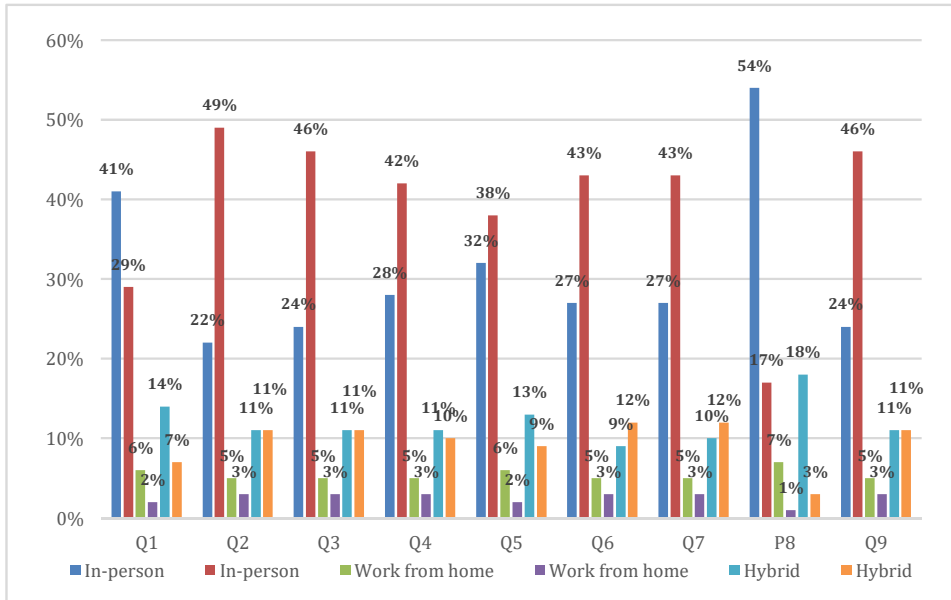
Definitely, senior managers of Salvadoran companies must view the internal promotion strategy as a source of opportunities, which, if properly used, will be responsible for the generation of important benefits at both a personal and organisational level. Hence the importance of understanding the internal promotion strategy as a process that goes beyond a simple job promotion, since when well implemented it crystallises into an emblem of trust and recognition, which contributes to the strengthening of the loyalty and morale of workers, as well as the retention of human talent. In this sense, for the reality of Salvadoran companies, the design and implementation of internal promotion strategies can be an important driver to strengthen stability and internal knowledge, the culture of continuous learning and encourage workers to constantly improve.

3.2 Internal promotion strategies in formal companies in El Salvador according to workplace format

It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked a true revolution in business management around the world, especially when it comes to the way that workers connect to their workplaces. Understanding how these different working formats impact the internal promotion strategies for Salvadoran companies is thus a priority. These working formats can be established in each organisation according to productivity considerations, operating costs, and the need for flexible work schedules.

Given these considerations, it is important to assess the formats under which employees are currently working at their respective organisations. In the case of this research endeavour, most of the respondents are workers who perform their jobs in person, at the workplace. There has been a significant reduction in home office and hybrid working formats in El Salvador after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, or due to other reasons.

Figure 1 Internal promotion strategies according to job format (see online version for colours)



Questions

- Q1 Are you aware of the available internal vacancies in the company where you work?
- Q2 Can you easily find the internal vacancies?
- Q3 Can you easily request the internal vacancies?
- Q4 Do you clearly understand the application process for internal positions?
- Q5 Do you feel supported by your peers and colleagues to explore internal vacancies?
- Q6 Does the organisation you work for encourage internal mobility?
- Q7 Does your immediate supervisor facilitate the process of applying for internal vacancies?
- P8 If you had the opportunity to apply for an internal position, would you do so?
- Q9 Do you receive any information on internal growth opportunities at the company where you work?

Source: Taken from Hidalgo Zelaya et al. (2023)

Figure 1 shows that 70.0% of workers in El Salvador report that they perform their jobs in person, leaving 30.0% who work from home or through hybrid working formats. With regard to the internal promotion strategies, the findings show that 61.0% of the respondents (41.0% who work in person, 6.0% who work from home, and 14.0% who work through a hybrid arrangement) are aware of the job opportunities available within their organisation (Q1). This finding suggests that the workers, regardless of their working arrangements, report that their organisations are not effectively communicating with them about opportunities for growth within the company. This once again clearly points to the need for greater concern on the part of human talent management units to better communicate the internal promotion strategies.

Additionally, it is important to note that 49.0% of the employees who work in-person at their offices report that they cannot easily locate the internal growth opportunities

(Q2); another 46.0% report that they encounter difficulties when it comes to applying for open positions within the organisation (Q3). Nonetheless, 79.0% (54.0% who work in person, 18.0% who work under a hybrid arrangement and 7.0% who work from home), report that they would be interested in applying for an internal vacancy (Q8) if the organisation gave them the opportunity to do so.

These results suggest that there are still organisations in the Salvadoran business world who continue to rely on in-person working arrangements, meaning that it should be a priority for these companies to design their facilities to be comfortable and encouraging for workers to reach their full productivity and performance potential.

Once again, the case of Google is a useful example of a company that does excellent work in this area. Google facilities resemble a university campus, including cafeterias, sports fields, and spaces for rest and relaxation, among others. This stands in contrast to the Salvadoran reality in which many companies barely have the minimum infrastructure they need for the workplace. Despite this, workers show up each day to do their jobs. The case of Google is a useful example for these organisations to follow, as a company that is truly committed to making extra efforts to ensure an appropriate workplace environment for its employees (GQ México y Latinoamérica, 2019).

In the reality that Salvadoran workers face, for many employees reaching their place of work can require 2.5 hours in traffic, taking several busses, driving for hours, or even venturing out in the early morning hours to be able to make it to the office on time. These are real reasons that should spark a reflection among decision-makers in Salvadoran companies and encourage them to provide decent and worthy spaces for their workers.

Along these lines, it is also worth noting the multiple justifications and advantages for an organisation to seriously consider the need for its workers to have appropriate workspaces, including the facilitation of effective, direct and fluid communication, especially in face-to-face environments. Companies that require their workers to be physically present at their facilities, such as transportation, food services, healthcare, or textile companies, to name a few, should carefully consider factors such as workers' positions, job descriptions, industry type, and others, in determining the most appropriate working arrangements.

In the Salvadoran business reality, it is necessary for decision makers to conceive the internal promotion strategy not only as a way to grow in the hierarchical structure of the company, but rather as a collective movement towards success and continuous development. of the organisation. To achieve this, it is necessary to design and implement effective strategies, as well as take advantage of innovative technologies. Because what it is about is forging a solid future, based on the fact that each promotion not only enhances personal professional careers, but also cements the path towards sustainable growth and a strong organisational culture.

3.3 Internal promotion strategies at formal companies in El Salvador, by length of service time at the employer

Understanding how the length of service time that employees have at a company affects their perceptions around internal promotion strategies is a relevant aspect to consider. The majority of the respondents for the data collection tool for this study were workers with less than one year of service time or between one and three years of time at the company.

Table 3 Internal promotion strategies at formal companies in El Salvador, by length of service time at the employer

<i>Time working at the organisation</i>		<i>Less than 1 year</i>		<i>1–3 years</i>		<i>3–5 years</i>		<i>Over 5 years</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Questions/answers</i>									
Q1	Are you aware of the available internal vacancies in the company where you work?	19%	16%	21%	14%	7%	4%	14%	5%
Q2	Can you easily find the internal vacancies?	12%	23%	11%	25%	4%	7%	11%	8%
Q3	Can you easily request the internal vacancies?	12%	23%	12%	23%	5%	6%	10%	8%
Q4	Do you clearly understand the application process for internal positions?	12%	23%	15%	21%	5%	6%	13%	6%
Q5	Do you feel supported by your peers and colleagues to explore internal vacancies?	14%	21%	18%	18%	6%	5%	13%	5%
Q6	Does the organisation you work for encourage internal mobility?	14%	21%	13%	23%	4%	7%	10%	9%
Q7	Does your immediate supervisor facilitate the process of applying for internal vacancies?	14%	21%	15%	21%	5%	6%	9%	9%
Q8	If you had the opportunity to apply for an internal position, would you do so?	28%	7%	28%	8%	9%	2%	15%	4%
Q9	Do you receive any information on internal growth opportunities at the company where you work?	14%	21%	14%	22%	5%	6%	11%	8%

Source: Taken from Hidalgo Zelaya et al. (2023)

Table 3 shows that 61.0% of Salvadoran workers report that they are aware of the job opportunities available within their organisation (Q1). Nonetheless, 23.0% of the workers who have been at their companies for less than one year, and 25.0% of the workers with one to three years of service time report that it is difficult to find the vacant positions at their companies (Q2). Additionally, workers with less than one year of service time and those with one to three years similarly report that their companies do not motivate them to grow within the organisation, at 21.0% and 23.0%, respectively for Q6.

Nonetheless, 70.0% of workers (28% of those who have been at the company for less than one year, 28% of those with one to three years of service time, 5% of those with three to five years, and 15% of those with over five years of service) report that they would be interested in applying to open internal positions (Q8). These results reflect the

fact that a large proportion of workers are motivated to continue to at the companies where they currently work. Given these findings, taking advantage of this dynamic should be a top priority for human talent managers, in order to retain valuable talent while further empowering the company with knowledgeable, skilled, and competent workers.

There is no doubt that all organisations should pay close attention to their workers' career paths as a way to meaningfully reduce turnover. An effective way to avoid this type of situation is to undertake an ongoing education and training program for workers, to offer them the knowledge, skills, and competencies that can help them perform effectively and efficiently.

As shown in Table 3, the wide majority of workers have from one to three years of service at their organisation, or less than one year. Given the results presented in the previous subsection that indicate that the majority of Salvadoran workers are under the age of 40, it is reasonable to conclude that given the youth of the country's workforce, companies should seek to ensure that their workers can chart a career path within their organisations, providing them real opportunities for growth.

For some companies in El Salvador, this would mean erasing the stigma that suggests that education and training for workers to improve their knowledge, skills, and competencies is a bad investment, given the latent risk that they may leave to find work at another organisation. One company that was able to demonstrate how strengthening training and education programs for their workers can be a core pillar for personal and organisational growth, is Grupo Carrefour.

According to RRHHDigital (2019), the Code Academy program that Grupo Carrefour implemented has demonstrated that offering courses specially tailored to meet the needs of its workers, including practical and online formats, has allowed them to develop wider knowledge and learning methods, improve skills and competencies, and foster a sense of organisational belonging. With these measures, the company is investing in the future leaders of its different productive units, while also making an impact on its dependence on outside hires and reducing hiring costs.

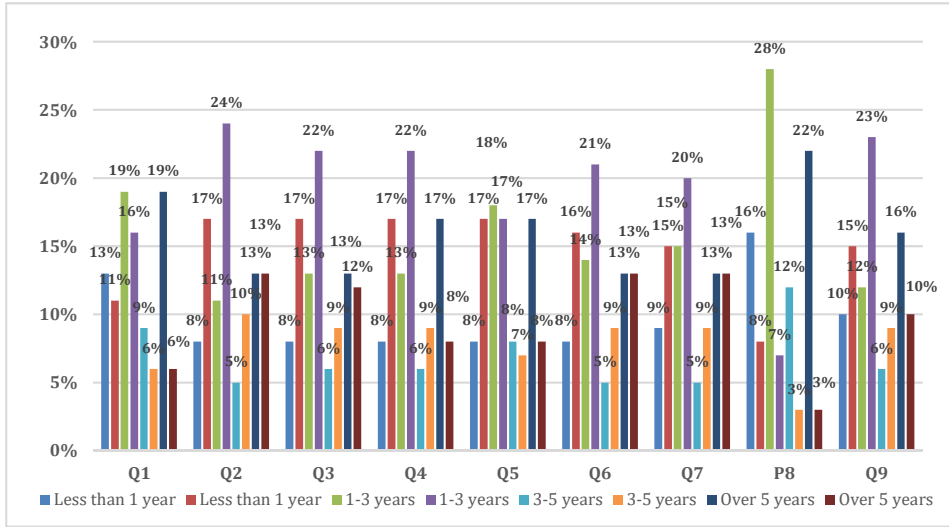
Indeed, the design and implementation of internal promotion strategies in organisations, today, is an important practice to promote a process of sustainable growth in companies. In this sense, it is essential that decision makers of Salvadoran companies realise that when talking about internal promotion, we are referring to investing in existing human talent, whose profitability translates into strengthening the culture. organisational and in ensuring a solid future. This is because, when the internal promotion strategy is properly integrated into the organisation's DNA, through innovative platforms for human resource management, vital transformations can be triggered in individual aspirations and in the general outlook of the company.

3.4 Internal promotion strategies at formal companies in El Salvador according to workers' experience in the field

Work experience is an essential factor for workers to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will allow them to reach higher levels of performance and productivity at their jobs. This experience also promotes positive links and relationships with other professionals, while growing their contact list.

In view of these findings, an analysis and understanding of the workers' specific experience in the field are key elements to consider, given the importance of work experience for effective internal promotion strategies.

Figure 2 Internal promotion strategies at formal companies in El Salvador according to workers' experience in the field (see online version for colours)



Questions/answers

- Q1 Are you aware of the available internal vacancies in the company where you work?
- Q2 Can you easily find the internal vacancies?
- Q3 Can you easily request the internal vacancies?
- Q4 Do you clearly understand the application process for internal positions?
- Q5 Do you feel supported by your peers and colleagues to explore internal vacancies?
- Q6 Does the organisation you work for encourage internal mobility?
- Q7 Does your immediate supervisor facilitate the process of applying for internal vacancies?
- P8 If you had the opportunity to apply for an internal position, would you do so?
- Q9 Do you receive any information on internal growth opportunities at the company where you work?

Source: Taken from Hidalgo Zelaya et al. (2023)

As shown in Figure 2, the workers with the highest participation were those with one to three years of experience in the field, at 36%.

The results show that 63.0% of the workers at Salvadoran companies (17.0% with less than one year experience in the field, 24.0% with one to three years' experience, 10.0% with three to five years' experience, and 13.0% with over five years) report that they face difficulties in applying for internal job opportunities (Q2). Additionally, 56.0% of the respondents (17.0% with less than one year experience in the field, 22.0% with one to three years' experience, 9.0% with three to five years' experience, and 8.0% with over five years) reported that out of the few job opportunities that are shared with them, they are unaware of the application process (Q4). Lastly, 79.0% of the respondents (16% with

less than one year experience in the field, 28.0% with one to three years' experience, 12.0% with three to five years' experience, and 22.0% with over five years) expressed that they are interested in developing a career path plan with the organisation for which they are currently employed (Q8). These findings indicate that regardless of the experience that workers have in the field, they are all motivated to stay at the company and develop new knowledge, skills, and competencies to reach higher levels of performance and productivity.

Clearly, some of the main reasons that workers in El Salvador have limited experience in their fields may include reduced access to job opportunities, low levels of formal education and training, and low wages in the formal sector of the job market.

Job offers in the country usually require extensive work experience for most positions. Unfortunately, the wage scales offered are not commensurate with the level of experience requested. It should also be noted that the organisations themselves are primarily responsible for developing their workers' knowledge, skills and competencies. Nonetheless, the Salvadoran reality is that very few companies are truly committed to this responsibility. Once again, the case of Google stands out as an example, as the company is not only focused on the prior work experience that their employees bring to the company; the recruitment process heavily weights applicants' adaptability and flexibility (Barrachina, 2018).

It is admirable to see how a large and well-recognised global organisation such as Google is clear on the fact that it is not enough to simply focus on their employees' experience; they must also radically value soft skills development. This says a lot about the company, given that it also strives to identify and develop other knowledge, skills, and competencies in its workers, and offer them ongoing training and educational opportunities. Sadly, in the reality for work in El Salvador, these aspects are not often considered in recruitment processes, with little attention paid to developing workers' soft skills. These dynamic clearly suggest that Salvadoran organisations should not only focus on the knowledge or experience that workers bring to the table when they are first hired or through internal promotion; they should strive to go further such as in the example set by Google.

We must not forget that an adequate internal promotion strategy can be an effective motivator for workers, in the sense that it offers them the opportunity to grow professionally in the company. Within the Salvadoran business reality, these types of opportunities can fuel a true sense of belonging and commitment. Situation, which, without a doubt, can have an impact on the personal and organisational level in higher levels of performance, productivity and competitiveness.

4 Discussion

Salvadorans are known around the world as committed and hard-working people. It is precisely this stereotype that decision-makers in organisations often misinterpret, placing demands on their workers that go beyond the knowledge, skills, and competencies outlined in the job description of the positions for which they were hired. Given this trend, this research study focused on understanding the impact that the use of internal promotion strategies generates for workers in companies in El Salvador. The study also examined best practices that have been designed and implemented by leading organisations around the world on these matters.

One clear conclusion from these findings is that workers in Salvadoran companies are highly motivated to apply for internal job opportunities. Unfortunately, it is also important to highlight the high level of misinformation among these employees, due to poor communication by human talent managers and departments at the companies. This study was able to determine that on average, 57.0% of workers express that they do not have updated information on the opportunities for their career path within their organisation.

Nonetheless, workers at Salvadoran companies are meaningfully motivated and want to grow their careers at their current organisation, with 79.0% of respondents sharing this intention. These trends indicate that workers in the country are indeed willing to continue to be a part of their organisations, despite any discomfort they have with their working environment and wages. It is also important to note that 59.0% of respondents reported that the organisations they work for do not encourage them to grow internally. These responses make it clear that Salvadoran companies have their work cut out for them when it comes to demonstrating real interest in having their employees pursue a career path within the organisation, and thus retaining their human capital.

In conclusion, the findings from this study suggest that there are relatively few companies in El Salvador that design and implement effective internal promotion strategies. This is in contrast to the reality that shows that most workers in the country are very much interested in and motivated to pursue an internal career path, despite the abundant misinformation about the opportunities and process, which may be responsible for the fact that most workers do not apply for internal vacancies.

And as a general recommendation, it is essential that decision makers in Salvadoran companies establish clear and fair criteria for the internal promotion strategy. Situation that involves periodically carrying out performance evaluation processes and creating permanent training and professional development programs. This is because only in this way can it be guaranteed that all workers in the organisation have access to the possibility of being considered for promotions, thus contributing to the creation of a more equitable and motivating work environment. It has been proven that transparency in the promotion process is a determining factor in maintaining and enhancing morale and calming possible resentments among workers who wish to progress in their professional careers. It is definitely a fact that companies that design and implement internal promotion strategies generally achieve a reduction in staff turnover, because workers feel valued and recognised for their work and dedication.

Acknowledgements

Knowledge-building is an arduous task, and would not be possible without the efforts of a committed team. We wish to acknowledge Tatiana A. Hidalgo Zelaya, Jesús H. Martínez Martínez and Alejandra E. Molina Platero, all of whom are students who have graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas and who I had the privilege of guiding in their graduation project, 'Internal Promotion at Salvadoran Companies', for their contributions that have made this report possible. Our most sincere gratitude for your work and contributions.

References

- Abarca, A., Alpizar, A., Sibaja, G. and Rojas, C. (2012) *Técnicas cualitativas de investigación*, Ciudad Universitaria Rodrigo Facio, Editorial UCR, Costa Rica (accessed 15 May 2023).
- Barrachina, L. (2018) *Google como modelo de gestión de personas* [online] <https://www.luciabarrachina.com/2018/01/08/google-como-modelo-de-gestion-de-personas/> (accessed 7 March 2023).
- Barrantes, R. (2014) *Investigación: un camino al conocimiento Un enfoque cualitativo, cuantitativo y mixto*, Costa Rica.
- Beaumont-Oates, W. (2024) *Developing a Robust Internal Promotion Plan* [online] <https://www.thomas.co/resources/type/hr-blog/developing-robust-internal-promotion-plan> (accessed 6 February 2023).
- Bizneo (2020) *Promoción Interna. Guía de la promoción de empleados en una empresa* [online] <https://www.bizneo.com/blog/promocion-interna/> (accessed 11 April 2023).
- Cegid (n.d.) *CASO DE ÉXITO: PROSEGUR* [online] https://www.cegid.com/ib/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/09/caso_exitoprosegur_v2.pdf (accessed 12 May 2023).
- Chiavenato, I. (2008) *Gestión del talento humano*, in Sacristán, P.M. (Trad.), McGraw-Hill, Mexico City.
- DeVaro, J. (2020) *¿Contratación interna o contratación externa?*, May, DOI: 10.15185/izawol.237.v2.
- DIGESTYC (2021) *Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples 2017 El Salvador* [online] https://www.bcr.gob.sv/documental/Inicio/vista/PUBLICACION_EHPM_2021.pdf (accessed 19 December 2022).
- Flores-Carretero, E. (2024) *El beneficio incalculable de la promoción interna* [online] <https://estrellaflorescarretero.com/la-promocion-interna/> (accessed 10 December 2022).
- GQ México y Latinoamérica (2019) *La magia de las oficinas de Google* [online] <https://www.gq.com.mx/maquinas/gadgets/articulos/la-magia-de-las-oficinas-de-google/1587> (accessed 20 February 2023).
- Grupo Montaner (2018) *Promoción interna: Tendencia en las organizaciones* [online] <https://montaner.com/blog/tendencias-promocion-interna/#:~:text=La%20promoci%C3%B3n%20interna%20es%20un,empleados%20como%20para%20los%20empleadores> (accessed 2 May 2023).
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C. and Baptista, M. (2014) *Metodología de la investigación*, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, México.
- Hidalgo Zelaya, T.A., Martínez Martínez, J.H. and Molina Platero, A.E. (2023) *Promoción interna en las empresas salvadoreñas*, Graduation Final Project, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas de El Salvador.
- Hidalgo, B. (2021) *Las fases en el proceso de búsqueda de empleo* [online] <https://afloraconsulting.com/las-fases-en-el-proceso-de-busqueda-de-empleo/> (accessed 5 February 2023).
- Human Resources (2024) *Maximizando el Impacto de la Promoción Interna: La Importancia del Liderazgo Efectivo* [online] <https://www.equipo humano.com/maximizandoe-el-impacto-de-la-promocion-interna-la-importancia-del-liderazgo-efectivo/> (accessed 13 January 2023).
- Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social (2022) *Informe: Trabajadores reportados en planilla y trabajadores que cotizaron efectivamente al régimen de salud del ISSS al 2022*, El Salvador.
- Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social (2019) *Caracterización sobre oportunidades de empleo y condiciones de empleabilidad en el municipio de Santa Tecla, San Salvador* [online] <https://mtps.gob.sv/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/caracterizacion-oportunidades-empleo-municipio-santa-tecla.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2023).
- Mulcahy, S. (s.f.) *The Internal Promotions Playbook: 10 Steps for Planning an Optimal Talent Fit* [online] <https://enboarder.com/blog/internal-promotion/> (accessed 17 February 2023).

- Paya, C. (2024) *Promoción interna: clave para aumentar la motivación laboral* [online] <https://www.obsbusiness.school/blog/promocion-interna-clave-para-aumentar-la-motivacion-laboral> (accessed 23 May 2023).
- Randstad Research (2018) *Informe Déficit de Talento y Desajuste de Competencias* [online] <https://www.randstadresearch.es/informe-deficit-de-talento-y-desajuste-de-competencias/> (accessed 22 April 2023).
- RRHHDigital (2019) *Carrefour impulsa la promoción interna y la transformación digital entre sus trabajadores* [online] https://www.rrhhdigital.com/secciones/formacion/135200/Carrefour-impulsa-la-promocion-interna-y-la-transformacion-digital-entre-sus-trabajadores?target=_self (accessed 12 April 2023).
- Sanchez, M.E.E. (2017) *Mecanismos de búsqueda y calidad del empleo en la zona metropolitana de Saltillo*, Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Coahuila [online] https://www.cise.uadec.mx/downloads/tesis/Maestria2014-2016_SMEE.PDF (accessed 1 May 2023).
- Sayes, C.E. (2019) *La inserción laboral en las empresas de la zona occidental de El Salvador*, Universidad Católica de El Salvador, San Salvador [online] <https://diyys.catolica.edu.sv/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/05-Incersio%CC%81n-AN2019.pdf> (accessed 3 January 2023).
- Tecoloco (2016) *Promoción interna, beneficios para la empresa y el empleado* [online] <https://www.tecoloco.com.sv/blog/promocion-interna-beneficios-para-la-empresa-y-el-empleado.aspx> (accessed 20 January 2023).
- Thomas International Ltd. (2023) ‘7 steps to evolve your talent culture. How to get ahead of the talent culture curve’ [online] <file:///C:/Users/DAE/Desktop/Thomas-How-to-eGuide-V1-final.pdf> (accessed 21 April 2023).
- Zarcero, A. (n.d.) *¿Qué es la empleabilidad? ¿Qué tiene que ver en tu desarrollo profesional?* [online] <https://empapelarte.es/que-es-empleabilidad/> (accessed 25 April 2023).