

## CASE STUDY

# How Trane Technologies Rapidly Launched A U.S. DOL-Registered Apprenticeship Program



# Taking a workforce innovation mandate to national scale at high speed



## TRANE TECHNOLOGIES FACTS



45,000

Number of  
Employees

\$20B

Annual  
Revenue

3200+

Service  
Technicians

~200

Apprentices

10

Sales Regions

Trane Technologies is a global climate innovator that focuses on heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), and refrigeration systems. Core to their business are service technicians that bring efficient and sustainable climate solutions to buildings, homes and transportation. Trane Technologies was facing a talent shortage in their skilled technician workforce due to an aging workforce and the impacts of COVID-19. The shortage was not unique to Trane – many in the industry were also facing shortages in skilled technician roles. Tapping into a new talent pool was necessary if Trane wanted to continue to have a growing technician workforce – a significant contributor to their revenue and profitability. The case for a new approach was clear among business unit leaders as well as functional leaders in HR and workforce development and learning.

To solve this problem, Trane Technologies leveraged innovation and resourcefulness to stand up a national, U.S. Department of Labor-registered apprenticeship program for commercial HVAC service technicians. In a little over 90 days, they created a program that widened opportunities to workers who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs) that have the interest and aptitude to become professional service technicians. Led by a nimble Workforce Innovation team, Trane Technologies **debunked the idea that registered apprentices are unrealistically resource intensive to develop.**



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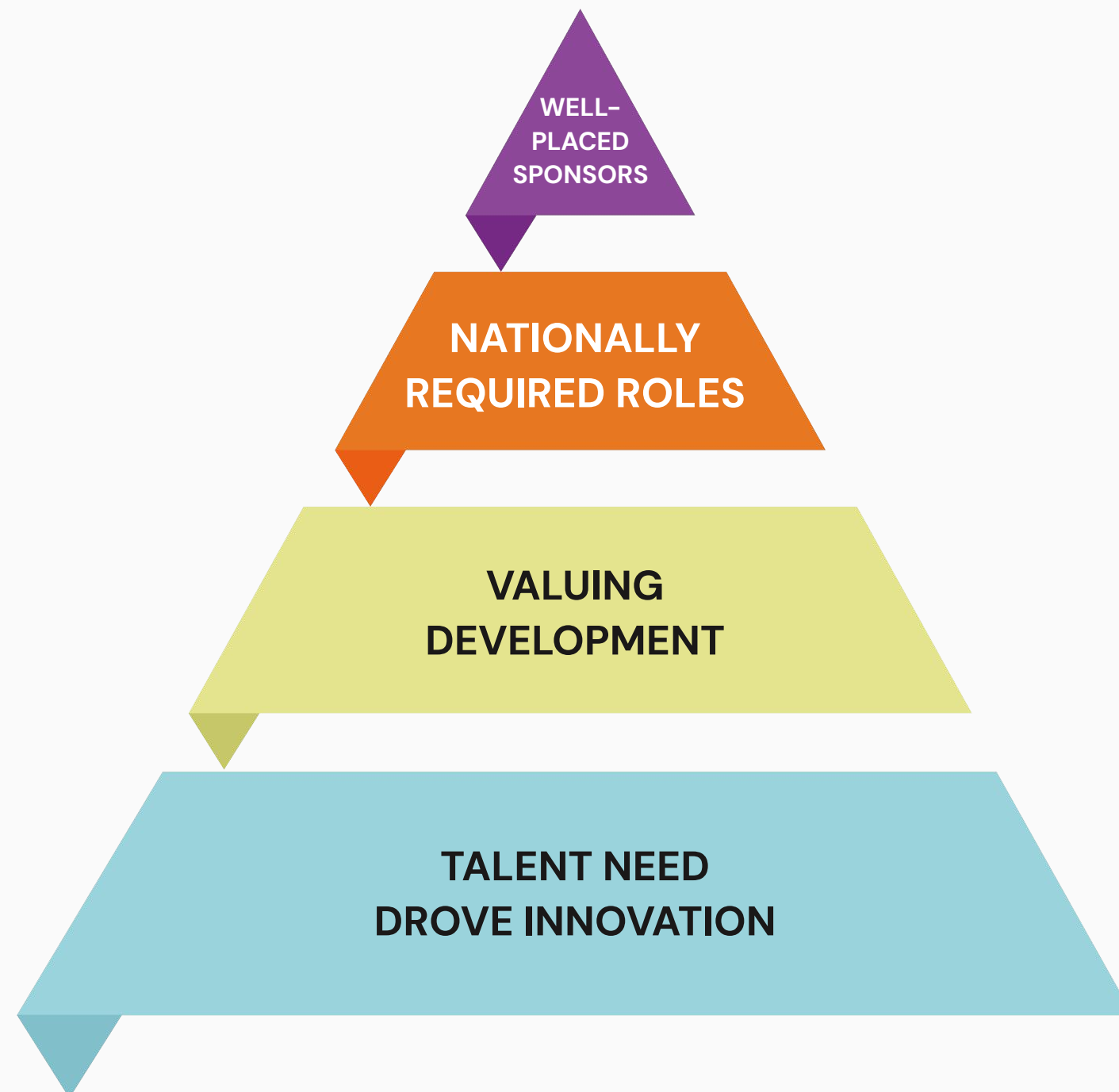


MICHELLE MURPHY

Vice President, Americas Human Resources

# Top-down alignment streamlines time to deployment and scaled impact

A well-placed set of sponsors are key elements to ensuring the right level of support up and down the organization



#### 4 Trane Technologies strategically chose project sponsors who:

- Held national revenue accountability
- Drove the people agenda across the business
- Had the insights to inform process consistency regionally

This group, aligned by their shared agenda, created crucial regional buy-in, and ensured that the program's design fit into Trane Technologies' operating model.

3 The goal to build a national pipeline of service technicians informed the decision to develop a registered apprentice program that scaled across geographies.

2 Trane Technologies' culture of innovation and commitment to learning, development, and career opportunities underpinned its investments in the technician workforce.

1 Trane Technologies faced a talent shortage in skilled technicians. This shortage drove leaders to further innovate for its workforce and assemble **a team dedicated to widening its talent pool** to maintain growth and profitability.

# Start by repackaging and improving the resources you already have, even as you build

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

### Leverage partners to develop required technical instruction (RTI)

Leveraging a nationally standard, centralized learning platform hosted by a certified external provider helped Trane Technologies quickly go to market and lower content creation costs.

### Formalize internal expertise into an on-the-job training (OJT) curriculum

Internal expertise from HR, learning and development, and front-line senior service technicians as well as from previous regional initiatives were formalized into an OJT training guide.

### Redeploy senior technicians to act as mentors

Senior service technicians that were interested in supporting the next generation gave Trane Technologies a foundation for its mentorship program.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Dedicate a small team to register the program

Trane Technologies **created a workforce innovation function** which led the registration of its Trane Technician Apprenticeship Program with the U.S. Department of Labor. They incorporated best practices with help from a third-party non-profit organization.

### Apply learning systems and tracking

Trane Technologies also drew on the systems already in-place to disseminate learnings and track apprentice progress.

### Develop mentorship standards

Trane Technologies provided mentors with training and resources to ensure that mentors were equipped with the skills to guide and instruct their apprentices effectively.

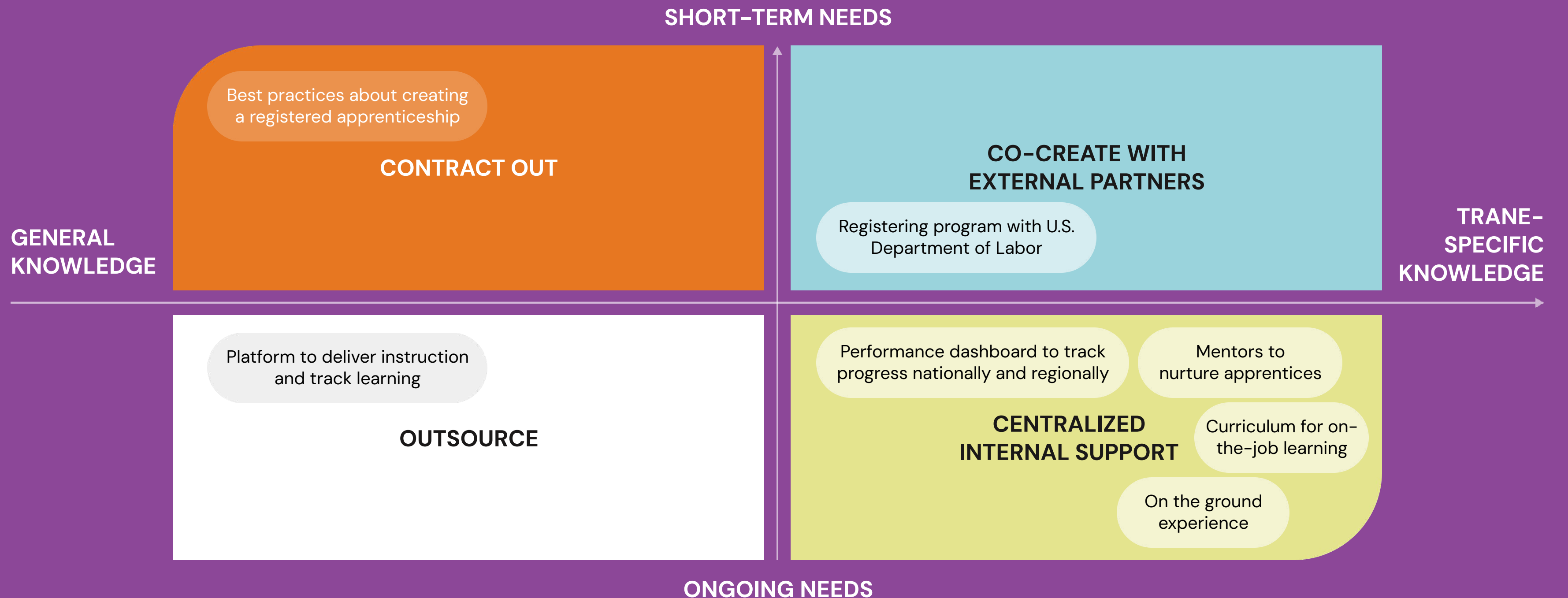


Although necessary, these elements can often be built by repurposing, formalizing, upgrading and redeploying existing assets

# Leveraging others to help for efficiency, speed, and quality



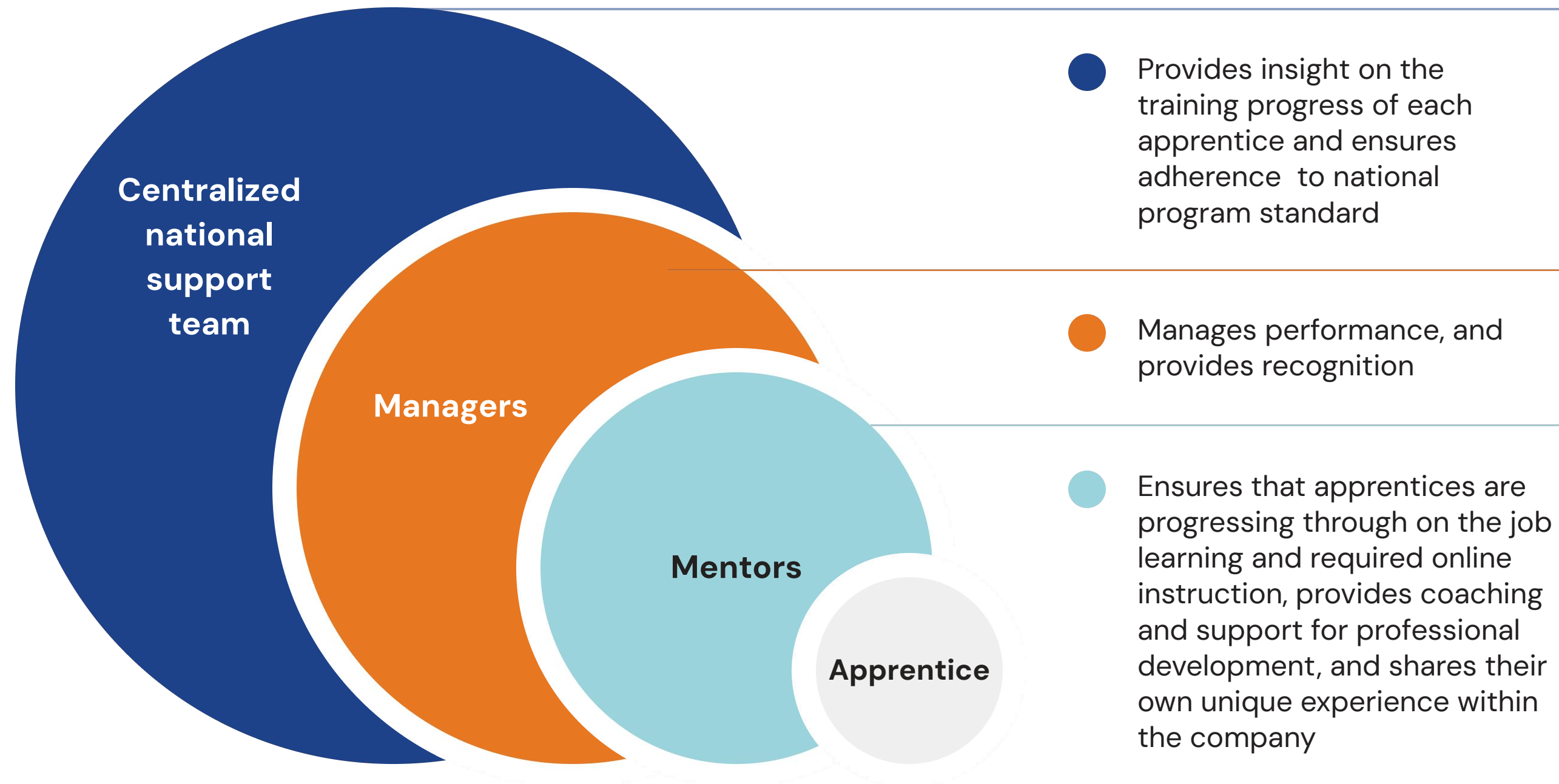
Outsourcing or contracting work that is not specific to your company frees up your internal teams to focus on what they do best





# The day-to-day apprentice experience takes a village with mentors as the "secret sauce"

Mentors are closest to apprentices and play a key role in helping apprentices succeed within the overall program's support structure



## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORSHIP:

- Identify senior technicians who have desire and the aptitude
- Offer training on how to teach hands-on skills and operational ways of working to apprentices

# Be clear eyed about workforce development costs and the tradeoffs of leveraging third party funding



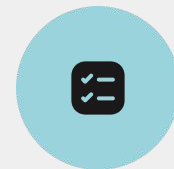
The existing talent supply through traditional sources was not keeping up with the growing need for service technicians

**Trane Technologies recognized that a new approach could help broaden and diversify their workforce.**

Weighing the alternatives of:

- A looming shortage of service technicians creating both revenue and customer satisfaction issues
- Increasing sourcing from competitors' service technician pools that potentially drives up costs across the industry
- Running local apprentice programs within each region that were resource intensive and limited in scale

**Trane Technologies saw going national and accepting the costs of running the program as part of their business model as their best option.**



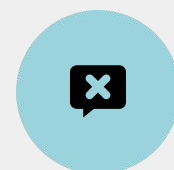
## When to consider building your workforce internally:

- If you have national scale and your company has an ongoing, high volume need for a role that is core to your business
- You already have some of the in-house infrastructure to teach and train workers



## Pros:

- Flexibility in tailoring training to your company's business needs
- Ability to standardize across multiple geographies



## Cons:

- May need to build new infrastructure elements or systems

# Results



Grown **from 25 to 200** apprentices  
in **30 states** in just two years



# 86%

Retention rate for  
apprentices

