Team Development and Organizational Buy-In

LERs are socio-technical systems that are complex composites of human beings, organizations, and machines. This means that relationships between people and organizations are at least as important as technical capacity. The challenges of team development and institutional buy-in are deeply interconnected, with success often hinging on securing long-term commitment from leadership and assembling the right team. In many cases, governmental transitions forced teams to re-establish priorities and prove value to new officials, while a general lack of financial incentives for employers made stakeholder buy-in difficult to sustain. Simultaneously, grantees emphasized the need to have the right people involved on their teams, to properly influence design, and catalyze project success.

What We Learned

Since well-established LER ecosystems were a fairly new concept to many organizations, both internal (within the project team) and external (with additional stakeholders) trust-building processes needed to be established for each project. Being able to effectively and efficiently communicate the value of LERs to each stakeholder, including internal partners as well as l/earners and employers, meant that each team needed to create customized outreach strategies and tools based on their unique contexts.

Grantee Example

Grantees found that gaining buy-in from key decision-makers was critical for scaling adoption. ASU was able to achieve broader scale than expected in their pilot by gaining buy-in from the leaders of six units within the university—leaders who saw the promise of LERs to improve their hiring and talent management processes and were willing to make the changes necessary to try it. This buy-in, along with broader alignment with institutional values and strategies, set up their pilot to have broad reach and create a strong foundation to scale beyond the end of the grant period.

How to Apply It

Identify and engage those with decision-making power. While many people may express interest in the concept of LERs, it requires key decision makers to move implementation forward within their organization. It is important that teams understand who within the organizations they are targeting have legitimate decision-making power and appeal to them by aligning with their operational priorities.

Leverage pilots to demonstrate ROI. Some stakeholders will be more comfortable engaging with and promoting novel technology than others. Some may even be particularly eager. If you can engage those eager adopters and document real world benefits for them, others who may be more hesitant, will be able to see the practical value in LERs.

Helpful Resources

- LER Ecosystem Map—T3's LER Ecosystem Map was a foundational component of SkillsFWD's design and highlights many of the key stakeholders in the LER ecosystem and the roles they play.
- T3 LER Implementation Toolkit : Team and Partner Design—This tool can be used to help project leads identify team members with the right skills and mindset, define responsibilities, and identify potential risks or gaps that you can plan to address.
- LER Project Showcase Partner Overview—The LER project showcase features existing LER projects with established partnerships. This page highlights how those partners work together and the role of a project lead in coordinating those partners.