**Tom Baragwanath**: Hello, everyone, and welcome. We’re still waiting for some people to trickle in at the moment so we might just give them about half a minute before we get started.

In the meantime, for anyone waiting, if you'd like to just share in the chat window where you're attending from in the world, which organization you're with and your present team. And also, just for fun, let’s see how many of those of you out there are working remotely. Thanks.

And Charlie, yes, the webinar will be recorded and the link will be provided following the end of the webinar. Great question.

Some results here from people coming in from all over the world. Fantastic.

What I might do is I'll kick things off now and I'll get everything rolling.

So, good afternoon and good morning to those of us beaming in from the U.S. and welcome, everyone, to today’s webinar hosted by 360Learning, GoCo and Together on how HR teams can champion a ‘people-first’ HR strategy.

My name is Tom Baragwanath and I’m a Senior Content Editor here at 360Learning.

Right now, even with many businesses and organizations around the world starting to return to in‑person work, so many teams are still struggling to stay connected and motivated, especially when we’re all dealing with the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19.

So this situation makes it more important now than ever for HR teams to put people at the heart of their HR strategies. Today, we’re going to show you exactly how to do that through onboarding, mentorship and recognizing learning needs.

As I mentioned before we get started, we’d really love to hear exactly from where everyone is based in the world, which team you're working in at the moment and whether or not you're working remotely. So please go ahead, if you don’t mind, and share that in the chat window. Just let us know.

Now, I'd like to introduce our speakers for the day.

In today’s session we’re going to hear from Allie Collins, Head of Growth at GoCo, about how people‑first onboarding puts people at the heart of HR strategy. Allie, if you'd like to say a few words.

**Allie Collins**: Sure. My name is Allie Collins, like you said. I represent GoCo, which is an HR platform all about helping automate all the HR and onboarding tasks that are involved in people management so that you can focus on the people side of things.

So we automate the admin and empower HR to focus on the admin. And I’m excited to talk to everybody in just a few about the onboarding side of that.

**Tom**: Fantastic. Thanks very much, Allie.

We’ll also hear today from Matthew Reeves, CEO and co-founder of Together, about the value of mentorship in building a people-first culture. So over to you for a moment, Matthew.

**Matthew Reeves**: Thanks, Tom. I’m Matt, CEO and co-founder of Together. We make software to help organizations run effective matching programs. So I'll just be speaking to how you can introduce mentoring into your organization to help put people first and drive a learning culture in your organization.

**Tom**: Fantastic. Thank you. And you'll also see there, so we were set to be joined by Head of Learning at 360Learning Jonah Goldstein. Unfortunately, he's recovering from COVID this week. He's in very good spirits, but he won’t be joining us today, I’m afraid.

So I’m here to sub on his behalf. I’m going to do my best to pass on his wisdom and hope that everyone doesn’t mind dealing with a marginally less handsome presenter.

This is very much the reality of the situation right now in the age of COVID. Things can change super quickly and putting people first is really all about being able to adjust on the fly. So I hope no one minds.

Now, in terms of topics for the day, we’re going to hear from Allie at GoCo about people‑first onboarding and the difference it makes for new hires, followed by myself speaking about the importance of recognizing learning needs. Then by Matthew discussing how to build a people‑first culture through mentorship.

We’ll then finish up with a Q&A session at the end, but please feel free to submit your questions in the chat window as we go because we might get the chance to answer them during our presentations or as we’re handing over.

We’ll also be running a few polls during our presentation so please take a look at those and submit your answers as we go.

Now, I'd very much like to hand over to Allie.

**Allie**: Okay. Wonderful. I’m really excited to be here today. Just like the rest of you, I will start with where I’m from. So I’m coming to you remotely from Houston, Texas where we recently recovered from some really rough storms here that caused lots of problems. For the rest of you in Texas, shoutout to you for all your grit and hanging in there. I see lots of Texas folks here.

So what I’m going to talk about today is the onboarding side of a people-first HR strategy. I represent GoCo and we are all about automating the people work and administrative side of onboarding so that HR pros can really focus on helping new hires feel welcome, included and excited about their new role and integrated into the team, all the things that make up a people‑first onboarding strategy.

I’m going to be talking a lot about GoCo’s role in that. We do want to keep in mind, everyone do keep in mind that a lot of things I’m going to be talking about can be solved with lots of different solutions. The real point here is to focus on the automation however you choose to approach it, whether it’s with GoCo or lots of other solutions out there available. The key is to focus on automation so that we can get to the stuff that I’m going to talk about which is really important people-first approach to onboarding.

With that, on my next slide, so why does the onboarding portion matter? I think this is a question we used to see a lot. There used to be a lot of questions about why is onboarding so important. It’s really a short period within the employee life cycle. Shouldn’t I be focused on retention? Shouldn’t I be focused on advancement and growth? Why is onboarding a priority?

What we find is that onboarding, the data showed that onboarding actually impacts all of those things. So 20% of employee turnover actually happens in the first 45 days of the employee’s journey with you. If those first 45 days don’t go well, that can really backfire for you.

We also find that companies that have a people-first really strong onboarding program can see up to 52% higher retention rate compared to those who don’t. And employees who are onboarded well are 58% more likely to still be at their company three years later if the onboarding program is strong.

And then lastly, 86% of employees decide whether to stay or go within that first six months.

I really think of onboarding as the first 90-day period where I'd like to kind of compare it to a honeymoon phase where if the honeymoon goes well, you are preparing yourself for a really strong marriage. If things are toxic, starting with the honeymoon, it’s very easy to understand why within 45 days that would not go well. Because that honeymoon period is where you're supposed to be excited and feeling included and feeling optimistic about everything that you're about to do in your new job. If we fail at that, we see all the ramifications of that here.

So we see that it’s really important, right? But the data also show that only 12% of employees strongly agree that their companies are actually doing a really great job of onboarding their employees.

So I want to ask you. I think this audience is probably going to be stronger than average when it comes to onboarding programs because you're here wanting to learn about a people-first HR strategy. But I would like to ask you how would you rate your most recent new hire in their onboarding experience?

I think Mary has launched that poll for us so I’m going to give everybody just a couple of minutes to respond here.

So far, I’m seeing a lot of good and average, which is not super surprising. Kind of aligns with the data that we see from employee feedback as well. Maybe just a couple more seconds to respond here.

Okay. I’m not seeing as much movement anymore. So what I’m seeing here is that about half of you rate it as good. About a third say average, but only 6% say excellent. So I want to talk to you about some of those things that we could do to really get you there to excellence.

In addition, this actually got more challenging. We did a survey last October on what the impact of the pandemic was on onboarding. We found that 60% of small businesses say that onboarding is more challenging due to the pandemic. So this was already tough and, now, all of you are under even more strenuous conditions to make this work. It’s even harder than it was before.

Shifting gears a little bit, I want to take you back to your sociology class back in college. Remember Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs where you learned about at the bottom the needs of the average human it starts with you have to have food, water, shelter, clothing, before you can make your way up the pyramid to self-actualization. I think about it similarly when it comes to onboarding in lots of HR tasks where there are some foundational things at the very bottom of the pyramid that have to happen for the new hire before you can start trying to get to the top of actualizing that employee.

So the bottom, there's things like administration and compliance. I have to make sure this person is set up to get paid. I have to make sure that they get involved in their benefits. I have to make sure they're eligible to work here. Verify the I9, get it, collect the W4, make sure that they have the equipment and tools that they need to do their job well before I can start thinking about integration into the team and making them feel welcome and they belong and setting them up for ongoing success.

So that’s kind of how I think about the pyramid of onboarding needs.

Where GoCo and lots of HR systems focus on is on the bottom of that pyramid where there's task‑focus. Where it’s more about getting stuff done to support the employee before people‑focus at the top.

Systems like GoCo help you automate those bottom-of-the-pyramid tasks so that you can really focus your time and energy as an HR professional at the top of that pyramid. That’s exactly what our mission is at GoCo. We want to automate HR tasks and empower you to make work a better place. We do that by focusing on that bottom of the pyramid and trying to support you there so that you can automate and do better at the top.

So some of the things that we offer to make that possible are some really great pre-boarding capabilities. Again, lots of solutions offer things like this, but on the left you can see we have digital offer letters we can send with embedded welcome videos and get a preview of your benefits and really compare your offer to any other offers you might have.

I love the embedded welcome video. I think that’s a really fun way to start with humans and help people see who their team is going to be, especially in a remote world where they may have not actually even been into the office to meet the team. That can be a really great way to put the person first.

And on the other side, once they have accepted the offer, we’re helping you digitally collect and sign the I9s, W4s, the hiring packet, all of that, getting that done before the first day. So you can make the first day all about the human, not the paperwork.

An area where GoCo’s a little bit different from some other HR platforms is our automated workflows feature. So you can see here is an onboarding workflow that we've created where you can actually dynamically create tasks that you want to have happen throughout the onboarding process and automate them, dynamically assign them to the right manager. Dynamically assign due dates based on when they're going to start.

You can have a task go out for different training pieces of the onboarding process, provisioning their supplies and their IT needs. All those things, we’re all about automating in that way.

So I've talked a lot about automation. How does that actually translate to making onboarding more about people? Well, the way I think about it is if you're not dealing with the administrative side, if you're not pushing paper, the things that you can do really make a difference in that early part of the onboarding process.

I think a lot of you probably here send a swag bag on the first day to welcome them. A question I would ask you, though, is is that swag bag customed to the new hire or is it just a couple of t‑shirts with your logo? Is it really representing what that person is all about and what they would truly love, right?

One thing that we do at GoCo is we ask lots of questions in that hiring packet about things you love. Your favorite snacks, your favorite place to go and hang out. Then we’re customizing the swag bag to that.

So that’s a way we also have seen in some psychological studies that— so that’s a way that psychological studies can show that when you make the swag all about the person, maybe you monogram it, maybe you customize it in some way to them, your retention goes up significantly because you've made this about the human and not about the company with your logo.

So that’s one way. Another way is really spending a lot of time immersing the new hire in the company culture, the values and the norms of the business and helping them to connect to exactly what part of that where they fit into that.

I think a lot of companies start with a one‑hour session on here’s our culture, here’s our norms. Are you really sitting and talking one-on-one with the new hire about what their role to play is in that and which parts of that they feel passionate about so that you can use that through their employee life cycle to grow that and cultivate it? That’s how we build really big champions of your brand who feel super connected to your mission, your vision, your values and everything that makes your company special.

These are our values at GoCo and we live and breathe them every day and I hope that your onboarding process can help to cultivate that for your brand as well.

Then lastly, this is just a fun tip. I think there's a lot of controversy right now on HBO Max just came out with a documentary called *Persona* all about the ugly side of personality testing. I’m not a fan of using this necessarily at the top of your hiring process. Once you have hired somebody and you're trying to integrate them into your team, personality inventories can be a really fun way to get to know the whole person and help the other members of the team get to know them too and help them get to know those other members of the team.

So I’m a big fan of the Birkman Personality Inventory, for example. I have all my new hires take it. And on the first day, we get the whole team together to talk about like, “Here’s my Birkman. Here’s the story of me. I’m a blue. I’m a big thinking. Here’s how I like to work with other people.”

It can help you feel more connected to each other and learn things about each other, really accelerate the learnings about each other.

I also like to do the five love languages. I know that sounds kind of unorthodox, but it’s really important to me that my new hires feel appreciated. And everyone feels appreciated in different ways. So I would say I promise if touch is your love language I’m not going to touch you. But if words of affirmation are your love language, then I’m going to make sure that I’m constantly giving you the praise that you need in the work that you need it.

Here’s a couple of other ideas for personality inventories you can use. I even sometimes like to do a BuzzFeed quiz. So if somebody tells me on their hiring packet that their favorite show is *Grey’s Anatomy* then let’s all do it as a team. Let’s all do a BuzzFeed quiz of what *Grey’s Anatomy* character are you. Let’s speak your language and get to the heart of what you care about and what you love.

This is all part of the people-first experience. I’m really passionate about it. That wraps up my part/portion of the presentation but I'd love to kind of geek out on this with you in the chat from here. But I'll turn it over to Tom.

**Tom**: Fantastic. Thank you very much, Allie. It’s a very fun presentation. It’s always good to know that my sociology degree is relevant somewhere, so thanks for that shoutout as well.

**Allie**: I always tell my clients my Bachelor in Psychology is more useful than my MBA, for sure.

**Tom**: Exactly. That’s right. All right. Great.

Moving on from onboarding now, I very much like to speak about how recognizing learning needs is key to a people-first HR strategy for us. So at 360Learning we believe people are more motivated and engaged when they're in control of their own development aspirations.

One of the main ways we do this is to empower all employees to identify, to create and address their own learning needs and to collaborate between teams to address the learning needs of others as well. For us, this is really what a people-first HR strategy means in practice.

So rather than learning on the job being something that happens to people, we really want to make this the responsibility of each individual. So chances are, everyone that’s joining us today has experienced the kind of traditional top-down or prescriptive learning culture at some point in their careers. But through management or HR simply sets the curriculum and learners complete training with no real say in the process and with limited ability to offer feedback on how their onboarding experiences have been going and what their needs are.

We think this kind of top-down strategy no longer really reflects how people learn today. And more than that, it’s also a huge missed opportunity for teams to collaborate together. That’s why we put people in charge of identifying, declaring and addressing their own learning needs and now I'd like to share with you exactly how.

But first, we have another poll question. Before I get started with my session in particular, we’d really like to know a little more about how those of you joining us today are managing learning needs within your own organization. So if you could take a look in the polls tab and answer that question there, that would be fantastic.

Do you have employees themselves determining their own learning needs? Is it up to L&D? Is it up to HR? Or is it really a question for management? And we know that there will be a real variety and a range of practices out there, so we’d really love to hear your responses on this.

Maybe what I'll do is I'll loop back to these results at the end of my session and we can chat about them then.

So at 360Learning, our entire approach to employee development is to empower people to make decisions about their own learning, as I said. So really, this is all part of our philosophy of collaborative learning, because learning should be something people own for themselves and not something that is done for them or, in the worst cases, to them.

That’s why learning needs are so essential to our dashboard. They're one of the first things you see whenever you use our platform. We encourage people to declare their learning needs within our platform and also to respond to other declarations from their colleagues and teammates by sharing their own insights and expertise. So this encourages each individual to take charge of their own development.

Our platform also lets users see the learning needs that are in greatest demand within other teams. This really helps to reinforce recognizing learning needs as a communal exercise and it also shows people what others might need help with and where they can make their contributions.

This is a huge help not only for learners but very much for L&D teams as well as it gives you the ability to get a quick, simple and clear view of the most prevalent learning needs within your organization. This way, you can design and shift the training experiences your teams really want.

In order to address these learning needs, we encourage people to provide detail on exactly what it is they’d like to learn and what they'd like to focus on. So going through this process really forces people or encourages people to think through the implications of exactly what they're looking for, the kind of help they need and who exactly might be able to help them out. It also gives them the option to tag subject matter experts with the skills and expertise needed to answer their questions with training resources and advice.

And because responding to a learning need often requires multiple people to weigh in and offer their expertise and insights, our platform makes it easy to upvote a particular need, communicate on the details and share suggestions on how to respond as a collective. So a lot of times this is where we can add the greatest value, so by sharing our insights, pointing out existing learning resources and making connections between different learning needs and different teams to work together.

It’s also not always about creating new learning material either. There are plenty of occasions where because of these interactions on learning needs, we may realize there's an organization that we already have the right learning resources to address a particular need. So it’s not necessarily always about creating new content but about using what you have as well.

Once a squad of contributors has volunteered to help address your learning need, we then make it easy for people to communicate on their progress, request new information and clarify and refine exactly what is required in order to respond to these needs. This is where we can make the step from identifying and refining a learning need to getting specific about how exactly we plan to address it and what the end result would look like. This might be a new course. It might be a revised course or an updated module. It could even be an entire learning, a whole new learning path if the need that is identified is significant and essential enough.

Next, we also make it easy for L&D teams to oversee all of their learning needs from a central dashboard and to launch projects in response. This way, you can be confident that you're addressing all of the learning needs your teams have declared, and by shipping these projects, you also show your teams exactly how responsive you are to their learning needs and you help them to feel heard and understood.

So this is very much another key part of our collaborative learning philosophy. You can create learning experiences that reflect the full range and depth of expertise and institutional knowledge within your teams. You can apply these resources to respond to learning needs within your organization.

So now, just before I wrap up with the key takeaways, I'll just take a look at where we’re at with the poll. It looks like it’s quite a good range of responses here. We've got 41% of people saying management is in charge of determining needs, 27% for HR, 22% for employees themselves and 10% for L&D. So that’s interesting. It is quite heavily weighted for management there, but with a good spread there with our HR teams getting involved as well, which is encouraging. So some room to put employees themselves, I think, more firmly in charge of this process.

So to wrap up my section, what I'd like to do is just cover some key takeaways on how recognizing learning needs helps us to put people at the heart of our HR strategy here at 360Learning.

So that’s because recognizing these learning needs encourages people to take charge of their own development by empowering them to identify and declare their own needs. Secondly, it makes it easy for people to respond to the needs of others by creating and shipping courses together, working collaboratively. Third, it makes every part of the learning process fun, social and interactive by using peer feedback and collaboration at every step. And then also because recognition is so important. It recognizes people for their contributions to addressing learning needs and adding to our shared institutional knowledge.

So for us, having these channels available to recognize and address learning needs makes it a lot easier to crowdsource the training request that your teams and your individuals are really interested in. This way, L&D teams can build more responsive training roadmaps and deliver what people are looking for.

To summarize and put simply, people out there they want the ability to share their learning priorities. All you need to do is give them a way to tell you. You just need to ask them.

So now, what I'd like to do is hand over to you, Matthew, to speak about the role of mentorship in building a people-first culture. Thanks.

**Matthew**: Perfect. Thanks, Tom.

So I'd like to continue along the lines of learning and development and dig a little bit deeper into mentorship in particular. Before I do that, I just want to briefly explain why I started working on mentoring.

As I mentioned earlier, I’m the CEO and co-founder of Together. We make software to help organizations deliver effective mentoring programs to their employees. But before I founded Together, I worked at a consulting firm called the Boston Consulting Group.

Like all consulting companies, people really are their product and so they had extreme emphasis on professional development and mentoring in particular, so much so they're essential to the way that the business operated and they were well regarded as having a world‑class professional development and mentoring programs.

At the same time, I was fortunate to have exposure to a lot of our clients realize that their employees and organizations didn’t have the same level of opportunities for professional development and mentoring and felt that software could help bridge this gap and that it would help drive better business results.

Not surprisingly, when you do the research there's a ton of benefits to putting people first and giving them learning and development opportunities along the lines of improved employee engagement and improved employee productivity, improved employee retention, and so forth and so forth.

So given that, I’m curious to understand from the audience in your organizations do you have a mentoring program? And just a reminder, there is a separate tab for polls, so please put your answers there not in the chat specifically.

And we’ll use a very loose definition here for a mentoring program. This doesn’t have to be essentially an organized one. It could be a volunteer employee running one off the side of their desk. Got it.

So it looks like an overwhelming majority do not have a mentoring program. So I don't know the makeup of the audience, but any company that has hundreds and into the thousand employees, I can almost guarantee that there is a mentoring program somewhere in the organization and probably many. If your organization is smaller, then I would believe that there may not be an actual mentoring program in your organization.

So why is mentoring such an effective learning and development tool? Well, there's a few reasons for that. First, it's extremely cost effective. Unlike other L&D initiatives, like external trainers or coaches, this knowledge already exists within your organization, be it from one of your senior VPs who's about to retire on you whose knowledge you want to retain as well as your brand new employee that just joined out of university and have a lot of great ideas to share.

Beyond that, e-learning and digital learning modules are great. It’s particularly for compliance but they're not always the most engaging. So it's awesome to see what 360Learning is doing with making it more engaging for your employees. But because they're not always as engaging, they're not as effective and people tend to learn better from other people.

And so because of that, mentoring tends to be better at driving the business results that we talked about along the lines of employee productivity, employee retention and so forth.

And it's always amazing to see when we do these case studies with our clients, the actual you can see in the numbers, if you're looking specific at some of the harder facts like retention or promotion rates within diverse talent, very, very clear change in people that participate in these programs versus those that don't.

So that's what the company gets. What do the employees get? Starting first on the mentee side, I don't think it's surprising that the mentee will hopefully learn something and get some advice from their mentor. But beyond that, one of the biggest values I found in having a mentor at BCG was having a third-party, unbiased advisor.

A lot of organizations are pretty good at giving feedback. Unfortunately, a lot of that feedback comes from your immediate ecosystem. It's your manager, your peers or your subordinates. If you're a manager yourself, that's great, but that is going to have some bias. Those people have to work with you every day so they're probably not going to give you as direct feedback as maybe they should.

And they might have some perverse incentives. They're not going to necessarily give you feedback that would be good for you or good for the organization if it's going to negatively impact their works.

Take for an example delegation. Often, a very common piece of feedback that individual contributors should receive. But if your manager likes the work that you're doing and doesn't want you to give that to someone else who could be a bigger risk, they're probably not going to give you that feedback. And certainly your peers and subordinates are unlikely to tell you to delegate more to them if they don't want to do the work.

So if you have an unbiased advisor, they can talk to you and be like, “You're working 60 hours a week. Are the rest of your teammates working 60 hours a week? If no, perhaps you need to be better at delegating. Let's dig into that and talk about that.”

Beyond just giving that unbiased advice, they're also able to give a broader picture. Because they don't work in your day to day, they can identify broader opportunities across the organization to give you some growth potential.

So that's obvious what a mentee gets, but what does a mentor get? This is probably one of the biggest concerns we get whenever launching a new program in one of our clients’ organizations is that they're concerned they're not going to be able to recruit enough mentors. This rarely turns out to be the case. And if it is a catastrophe, it's probably a symptom of larger underlying issues in your culture.

But the reason recruiting a mentor is not a big issue is, in general, I think a lot of people want to give back to people in their organization that were in the shoes they were in just a few years ago. But beyond being just altruistic, there's a ton of benefits to being a mentor themselves. Of course, they're going to learn stuff, perhaps not as much as the mentee, but any organization for people to move up in their organization likely expects their leaders to be people developers, culture carers and so forth, and being a mentor is a great way to both demonstrate this as well as practice this skill.

So to make this a little bit more specific, we see mentorship used in all different parts within the organization, with all different types of objectives. Of course we see general career development programs. Very common these days as programs focused on improving diversity and inclusion. And the list goes on and on.

This is by no means an exhaustive list here. This is just some examples.

We see some that are extremely focused as well. A lot of our organization, or clients rather that are multilingual and have offices across the globe run programs to help people improve their language skills, for example.

So I'm curious to understand again with the poll here what type of mentorship program, or it doesn't necessarily have to be for mentorship, but what sort of initiatives is most beneficial to your organization at this time?

So I'll give that a couple— I know there's probably a lot of text there to read through, so give you 30 seconds to read that. Career development is coming up as number one. Great. I'm not surprised career development is number one. I am— good for GoCo that onboarding is high up there as well. Surprised diversity is not as high, but very interesting to see. Great.

So none of this is really new, though. Right? I think you can trace the word ‘mentor’ back to ancient Greece. And I'm sure even before then in hunter-gatherers, they probably had some form of mentoring and apprenticeship.

As I said earlier, if I were to go into any of your organizations, if you have maybe 500 employees‑plus, almost guarantee I can find a mentoring program somewhere.

Historically, these are just being run often ad hoc, off the side of someone's desk, in Excel sheet, and it's either a ton of work and so it ends up failing because people get tired of doing it. Or you deliberately keep it small and manageable and so you're limiting the benefit to your organization.

Luckily, in the last few years, software has emerged to help address this issue. That's what Together does, which makes it much simpler to scale and manage one of these programs so that you can offer it to your entire organization.

In particular, we help manage all the core components that you can imagine are in a mentoring program. We help from, step one, with a marketing program, registering users, pairing them together which is often a massive pain point, to helping manage the core logistics of those relationships and then providing feedback and reporting to the administrators.

So I won't go into this slide at all. I'll just leave it up on the screen for a minute, so you have as a tear‑away sheet when you get the recording. I think there are a few questions here. This recording will be shared, but I believe the slides themselves will not be.

So I guess I'll pass it back to Tom and we can start the Q&A.

**Tom**: Sure thing. Thanks very much, Matthew.

So that's right. We'll lead on now into the Q&A session. I guess we've covered a nice sort of full spectrum of the employee experience between mentorship, between onboarding, between learning needs.

So everyone, if you have any questions that you'd like us to answer, they might relate to the subject matter that we discussed today, they might be something that is peripherally related but not directly covered, then please feel free to submit those questions in the question tab.

But maybe I'll get something rolling just myself, Matthew, by turning to one of the points you raised. So very much appreciated the breakdown of the different steps in the mentorship cycle that you described there.

So I wondered if—you mentioned that the pain point can come a lot in that step with pairing mentors. I wonder if you wouldn't mind just explaining maybe some of the factors that are taken into account when you look at how exactly to match a mentor with a mentee, because that's something that I've been through a few times myself. And, you're right, it is very much a pain point and it can be quite tricky.

**Matthew**: Yeah. So it's quite complex. It does depend on the objective of the program. I think we can take career development as an example since that seemed the most popular use case here.

So in general, we would try to understand the goals and skills and areas of interest of the employees and either capture that from a registration questionnaire or take that from one of the organization's other learning systems or talent management systems. So that would be the primary criteria, but we can then layer on additional things, like location level within the organization.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, you don't want to be their direct supervisor. Ideally, it's someone that's third party somewhere else in the organization. So there's actually even more factors, but those that I mentioned are the primary five or so.

**Tom**: Great. Fantastic. Okay. I can see there's another question here in regards to GoCo. So one for you, Allie.

The question, so is GoCo only an onboarding solution? That’s a question coming from one of our attendees.

**Allie**: No, it's not, actually. So GoCo is a complete consolidated HR system. We support all kinds of things like your HRAS, your benefits, administration, onboarding, off-boarding, time tracking. We have some different payroll options. We have an embedded option or you can sync with your own payroll. So it's really a complete HR suite. Lots of things that you could do with it.

Onboarding is definitely one of those areas where I think we stand out for sure, but if you're looking for a way to kind of re-architect your whole people-first onboarding strategy, GoCo has a lot of application across the board there.

**Tom**: Great. Fantastic.

**Matthew**: So two questions that came into the chat. I'm not sure which ones you're reading off, Tom. Should I address those?

**Tom**: Go ahead, please. That'd be great. Thank you, Matthew.

**Matthew**: So two questions on mentoring here. Our organization tried to hire people from disadvantaged backgrounds along with others. How do you mentor these employees without putting on the spotlight on them or making others feel like they're excluded?

So this depends on the size of your organization. Admittedly, if your organization is smaller, this can be extremely challenging. The way that large organizations tend to address this is through employee resource groups that are specialized and focused on particular groups of diverse talent. And it's about having a mentorship program specifically for those talents that ideally are mentored by people that came from a similar path. It's much harder for someone who didn't have that career path to mentor them.

So again, if you have a small organization, which actually leads me into the second question here about I work for a company with less than 150 employees. What company size would you suggest to start a mentorship program?

It ranges quite a bit. Like as a hard rule of thumb, you want is 500 employees-plus I think is about where you get to the point where you could use software. Certainly smaller, you could introduce a manual program would be small enough to manage.

The issue is less about employee size. That is a factor because you do need people that are relevant mentors and if you're too small, you only have one person in your accounting department who's going to mentor them.

But on top of that, your organization does need to be at a point of certain organizational maturity where you do have someone who can be accountable and administer this program. I'd imagine it's somewhat similar for 360Learning that, ideally, you have a learning development department or someone who can really quarterback this initiative.

**Tom**: That's right. No, no, I completely agree. I think what you said really resonates with a lot of our experience too, Matthew, so I appreciate that.

One other question I've just noticed coming in, so there's one here about training analysis and then employee surveys. I'm actually just going to respond because we've got quite a handy blog post looking at the best way to approach employee training analysis. So I'll go through and send that and share that with you there, Kimberly.

But in terms of other questions that we've had coming in, there's another one here in relation to you, Allie, for GoCo, which I think is quite a pertinent question. Do you have any advice in terms of getting buy-in from leadership on purchasing software such as GoCo?

**Allie**: Definitely. We actually have a business case builder on our website where whatever HR software you're trying to evaluate for whatever people-first initiatives you have, we can kind of help you calculate what the ROI of that looks like depending on your size, what initiatives you're trying to tackle, and things like that.

Then I also today, actually, we have a report coming out. So in 2020 we did a State of HR Report this time last year on how COVID was impacting HR then. We just are about to release a new set of results. We've surveyed over 600 HR departments and have really fresh data on what companies are doing, what they're struggling with a year later into the pandemic.

And there's some really good stats in there on what HR's new focuses are in light of the pandemic. I think those can be really powerful as you build that case no matter what it is you're trying to tackle, whether it's mentorship, learning and development. Those are all things that we identified in our State of HR Report as being priorities for HR in 2021. And especially in this like hyper competitive labor market that we're coming into, those things become more important than ever.

And we have lots of resources on at GoCo.io/blog that can help you make that case.

**Tom**: Fantastic. Thanks very much. And now we also have another couple of questions, which I'll wrap together for 360Learning. So I'll take care of those.

So the first is can anyone declare a learning need on the 360Learning platform? And then what happens to needs that aren't upvoted by others? So those are both two very handy questions so.

Yes, anyone within the organization can declare a learning need from all the way through to your latest hire through to the C-suite members.

And in terms of learning needs that aren't upvoted, this doesn't necessarily mean that they won't be addressed or picked up in training courses at a later point. In fact, a lot of the times it might be a learning need that is very niche and very relevant just to a small handful of people but that it's very easy to respond to. So it might just be pointing a particular person to a set of resources that he or she may not have known about. That's what happens to those learning needs.

Right. Do feel free to fire away with any more questions in the tab, if anyone has any other points.

**Allie**: I did see someone was asking for any other tips on onboarding new hires remotely. This has been, like I said 60% of businesses say it's like much harder now, right? I think even at GoCo we're still adapting to that. Obviously, being digital already helps a ton. All these things are confounded by working remotely, if you don't already do that. So I would definitely start there.

But beyond automation and going digital, I think it really comes down to those people‑first tactics. Even if you aren't a huge company with a full-blown mentorship program, we also have, like Matthew mentioned, if you only have a one-person accounting team, how are you going to do mentorship, right?

We actually have a buddy system as part of our onboarding where we match you with somebody who maybe isn't necessarily in your department and maybe isn't necessarily mentoring you career-wise, but somebody who might match your interests, might match your age and the things that you care about. At GoCo, we try to match you on those things.

Like for example, I'm the most senior mother at our company so I ask to always mentor mothers of young children, for example, because I can kind of help them navigate some of the things that are made more complex by that. So that's one way.

I really love just any opportunity to get the team together to meet the new hire. We'll start the week with a game of UNO virtually. I really love House Party is an app you can download on your cell phones. The whole team can and you can go in there and virtually play games together. There's tons of fun games in there.

So I think it's all just about making connections for the new hire and putting lots of friendly faces around them. So that when they get stuck or when they feel like they don't know who to reach out to, they have somebody and they have friendly faces to rely on.

**Tom**: Absolutely. All fantastic points. Great. Well, I wonder if there's any further questions, then please go ahead and submit those in the tab everyone. Sorry, go ahead, Matthew.

**Matthew**: A bit farther up in the chat around reverse mentoring and mutual mentoring, which I think I would call peer mentoring. Certainly peer mentoring is very common, sort of similar to the buddy program Allie mentioned.

Reverse mentoring, our experience is that it can be more challenging to get right, so I would start with something more traditional before trying reverse mentoring. But certainly, peer mentoring have a ton of use cases, be it for onboarding. You can call it a buddy program. For networking, particularly in the remote environment, a lot of our organizations have used the software specifically just for network to be more intentional connecting people across the organization.

**Tom**: Fantastic. Thanks, Matthew. Actually, a great question just come in here from Zachary, which is for me. So, any advice on getting L&D to “let go” of owning learning needs discussions? That's a fantastic point.

And really, what we're trying to do with our platform is to encourage people to think of learning and, in particular, this idea of collaborative learning as being something that that no one in particular owns necessarily. No one team owns. So you might have L&D curating resources and making sure that learning needs are met, but when it comes to the discussion of how to declare and I guess surface and resolve learning needs that it's not necessarily purely just a question for L&D.

I think to answer your question specifically, Zachary, how to get people to let go, it's really about encouraging them to see or encouraging L&D in particular to see that addressing and resolving learning needs isn't necessarily something purely just for them…

**Allie**: Oh, no. I think did we lose Tom?

**Matthew**: I think so.

**Allie**: Okay. I wasn't sure if it was just me. All right so…

**Tom**: I’m back. Can everyone hear me? Excellent.

I think I was almost finished with answering that question but, yeah, Zachary. The right solution, not that software solves everything, that the right software solution can really give people an easier way to declare learning needs and to share learning needs with each other.

And just even a step like that can encourage L&D to let go of owning learning discussions a bit. Hopefully, my answer wasn't too rudely interrupted by my headphones there. Apologies to everyone for that.

Great. Well, that might be enough Q&A for this point, unless Matthew or Allie there are other questions you've seen come in that are particularly pertinent?

**Allie**: No, I don't see any on my side so I think we're good to wrap up on my end. We do have a slide, though, on other ways to reach us, right?

**Tom**: Exactly, yes. Yes, we do. I'd like to just thank everyone here for taking the time to join us today. We very much hope you found these discussions useful and that you'll take our pointers and look for ways to apply them within your own organization, whether it's around onboarding, mentoring or addressing learning needs.

As I mentioned, if you're looking to get in touch with us for any further advice and resources or to take a look at how our platforms work in practice, then we'd very much love to hear from you. You can find the links here and they're available.

So once we're finished as well, I should say you'll receive a link to either Replay or Share this webinar, and we'd very much encourage you to go ahead and do so.

At this point, I'd like to just say thanks once again to Allie and Matthew for your presentations. Thanks to everyone for attending and we very much hope to see you all in the future.

**Allie**: Awesome. Thanks so much. It was great to be here.

**Matthew**: Thank you.

**Tom**: Great. Thanks, both.