

Cornerstone Galaxy for Higher Education

Advance workforce agility to
support student success and
institutional transformation



Introduction

Workforce transformation in higher education

Colleges and universities play a vital role in shaping the future. But today, the academic workforce is under increasing strain. Declining enrollment, rising costs, shifting regulatory requirements, and expanding student expectations demand greater agility from institutions, while competition for skilled talent and accelerating retirements create mounting pressure on operations and long-term planning.

To succeed in this climate, institutions must rethink how they recruit, develop, and retain faculty and staff — and how they align talent strategies with academic and operational goals. A workforce agility strategy can enable higher ed institutions to build a more responsive, engaged, and future-ready workforce.

To support an agile workforce, you'll want to:



Streamline compliance training to meet evolving regulatory, accreditation, and policy requirements



Upskill and reskill employees to keep pace with institutional goals and emerging technology



Uplevel talent acquisition and create internal mobility pathways to attract and retain top talent



Unify talent management to connect learning, performance, and skills data



Use advanced analytics to inform strategic workforce planning and create academic programs attuned to labor market needs and in-demand skills

Introduction

Trends reshaping higher education



Impact

Enrollment volatility

Budget uncertainty and staffing challenges tied to changing enrollment patterns and student demographics

Aging workforce and retirements

Loss of institutional knowledge and increasing need for leadership development and succession planning

Digital transformation

Increased demand for digital fluency among staff and faculty to support hybrid learning and student services

Competition for talent

Difficulty attracting and retaining top administrative and instructional talent in a competitive labor market

Skills-based and no-degree hiring

Shift toward hiring based on capabilities and experience, especially in professional and staff roles

Cybersecurity and data privacy

Greater need for training related to data privacy, research compliance, and digital risk mitigation

Student-centered operations

Expectations for responsive, tech-enabled services, driving demand for new workforce capabilities and structures

With this guide, learn how you can advance higher education workforce agility with [Cornerstone Galaxy](#)

What's inside

5 **Make compliance smarter, faster**

Ensure institutional compliance with accreditation, training, and policy requirements through an automated, scalable solution.

7 **Modernize learning and development**

Empower faculty and staff to develop role-relevant skills and grow with the institution.

9 **Recruit and onboard top talent**

Attract skilled candidates and streamline hiring to fill critical roles faster and improve early retention.

11 **Support internal mobility and career growth**

Create clear career paths and growth opportunities to improve employee satisfaction and longer-term retention.

13 **Develop future leaders**

Build leadership pipelines and succession strategies to ensure continuity in a time of transition.

14 **Train your people to use critical systems effectively**

Equip staff and faculty with the knowledge and confidence to effectively use essential campus systems.

16 **Strengthen higher ed IT skills**

Equip campus IT teams with the expertise to manage security, infrastructure, and digital innovation.

17 **Build essential interpersonal skills with immersive learning**

Enhance collaboration, communication, and student engagement with immersive, real-world practice.

19 **Extend learning**

Engage external learners such as affiliates, volunteers and community members to drive compliance, service consistency, and new revenue streams.

21 **Optimize workforce planning**

Use AI-driven tools to close skill gaps, address shortages, and align hiring with long-term goals.

22 **Unify experiences, data, and insights**

Connect talent systems to improve decision-making and align workforce development with institutional strategy.

23 **Align education to industry needs and showcase student outcomes**

Keep programs market-relevant and help students chart skill-based paths toward meaningful careers.

24 **Why Cornerstone**

Make compliance smarter, faster

Goal: Ensure students, faculty, and staff stay current with mandatory training, licenses, and credentials to maintain accreditation and minimize institutional risk.

Challenges: Managing compliance across campuses, departments, and job roles is complex and resource intensive. Manual tracking increases the risk of missed deadlines and audit issues. Evolving federal, state, and accreditation requirements add further complexity.

Solution

- ✔ Automate delivery of training and reminders to students, employees, and managers, informing them of compliance requirements.
- ✔ Stay audit-ready with reporting on compliance by college, department, or individual.
- ✔ Uncover noncompliance predictive factors and identify areas of impact.
- ✔ Validate and record competencies during real-time observations, by multiple validators, improving competency tracking and reporting.
- ✔ Track all recurring, renewal-based, and multi-year designations at the individual level and across the workforce.
- ✔ Provide multimodal, expertly curated content for your people to recognize, examine, and address behaviors that lead to breaches in safety, privacy, and ethics. (WAG and 508-compliant)



[Explore Cornerstone Learn](#) 

“

Not only is it simpler to deliver compliance training to different units, we experienced a 670% increase in completions for one training from the year prior to implementing Cornerstone.”

Kate Sowrey
Business Analyst, University of Tennessee



40%

the average reduction in time to productivity achieved by Cornerstone customers through streamlined onboarding and training.¹

\$7.4M

the average amount in compliance-related savings for organizations that used Cornerstone over three years.¹

“

When we launched Cornerstone, it was, ‘Oh my gosh, look at what we can do now.’”

Jennifer Clouser
Talent Development Specialist,
The Pennsylvania State





Modernize learning and development

Goal: Deliver personalized learning experiences that develop essential skills, enhance employee performance, and support career growth while keeping employees current with evolving expectations.

Challenges: Higher ed roles are highly specialized. Generic learning content often fails to engage, and demanding schedules make it difficult to prioritize training. Without personalized development pathways, institutions struggle with retention, upskilling, and internal mobility.

Solution

- ✓ Empower employees with a self-driven learning experience highly personalized for their unique goals, ensuring a direct connection to their career aspirations.
- ✓ Utilize AI to align content with individual learning goals, providing tailored recommendations that foster skill development relevant to the employee's career path.
- ✓ Strengthen employee growth through ongoing development conversations and manager-led coaching, fostering accountability in skill development and career progression.
- ✓ Support managers in coaching their teams by providing visibility into skills, credentials, goals, and aspirations.
- ✓ Cultivate a collaborative environment with cohort-based academies and learning communities, promoting knowledge sharing and a culture of continuous learning.

Deliver modern learning and development experiences with Cornerstone [↗](#)

How Cornerstone supports the Foundation for California Community Colleges:



Inclusive access to learning and collaborative spaces for over **135,000 employees**, across 116 colleges in 73 districts in a unified platform



90% engagement, with most employees using Cornerstone at least once per semester



Cornerstone is known in the industry as the **best in class**. And because they'd had large clients before us — the US Postal Service, Amazon, big, big companies — I knew that they could handle the volume, the scale that we were going to need to work at.”

Beth Kay
Director of Professional Development,
Foundation for California Community Colleges



People are able to get the **learning that they actually need for their job, when they need it, in a way that keeps them excited about the work they're doing.**”

Lisa Kelly
Director of the Professional Education
Portal, The University of Georgia



\$6.2M

the value of an upskilled workforce over three years, reducing what you spend on external hires.¹

Recruit and onboard top talent



Goal: Improve hiring outcomes and speed by creating a modern, efficient recruitment experience that attracts the right candidates and supports long-term retention.

Challenges: Higher ed institutions face growing competition for talent, especially in tech, finance, and student services. Legacy hiring processes are often slow, fragmented, or overly manual, creating barriers to a positive candidate experience. Without clear visibility into skills and pipeline metrics, it's difficult to fill critical roles quickly.

Solution

- ✓ Deliver an AI-powered hiring experience that transforms resumes into personalized skill profiles and recommends roles aligned with each candidate's skills and experience – making it faster and easier to place the right people in the right roles.
- ✓ Streamline hiring workflows and enhance candidate communication to reduce time-to-hire and improve the applicant experience.
- ✓ Centralize applicant tracking and team collaboration to eliminate silos and ensure consistent, transparent hiring practices.
- ✓ Assess candidate skills to hire from a broader talent pool and fill critical workforce skills gaps.
- ✓ Implement structured onboarding programs to help new hires integrate quickly and boost productivity from day one.
- ✓ Monitor real-time recruitment metrics to identify bottlenecks and continuously improve hiring processes.

Explore Cornerstone Recruiting [↗](#)

With Cornerstone, San Jacinto College can:



Manage a large volume of applicants and open positions, with a variety of hiring workflows



Streamline the process for internal candidates to express interest in open roles



Enable easy access to the platform for people involved in the hiring process, including those who have never participated before



Quickly engage new hires with welcome videos and interactive activities

“

Cornerstone Recruiting was the only solution that accommodated our varied needs.”

Wayne Wauters
Talent Acquisition Manager,
San Jacinto College.



49%

average reduction in time to hire for organizations that used Cornerstone over three years.¹

Support internal mobility and career growth

Goal: Promote internal mobility and transparent career progression to boost engagement, motivation, and long-term retention.

Challenges: Colleges and universities often struggle to retain skilled talent due to limited advancement visibility and external job competition. Without clear career paths or support for development, employees may look elsewhere for growth, resulting in increased turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.

Solution

- ✓ Provide transparent, actionable insights into career progression opportunities, helping employees clearly envision their future at your institution.
- ✓ Implement a dynamic, AI-driven talent marketplace to efficiently connect employees with open roles, skill-based projects, and mentors.
- ✓ Develop personalized, structured learning pathways that align with employees' career aspirations, supported by mentorship.
- ✓ Create cross-functional project opportunities to broaden employee skill sets, encourage collaboration, and prepare employees for leadership roles.
- ✓ Proactively identify employees with transferable skills, filling critical roles and strengthening workforce agility.

Support career growth and retain your people with Cornerstone Elevate [↗](#)



2.5x

Employees who have clear visibility into their career paths are 2.5x more likely to remain with their employer.



Organizations utilizing structured internal mobility see improved workforce adaptability, higher employee morale, and reduced turnover rates.²



We want to be able to identify employees with specific skills and match them to positions for which they're best suited, as well as find new ways to improve career growth and satisfaction.”

Hope Galvan-McCall
Director of Learning and Talent Management,
Alamo Colleges



ALAMO
COLLEGES
DISTRICT



Develop future leaders

Goal: Sustain academic and operational excellence by preparing a strong pipeline of future-ready leaders across all levels of the institution.

Challenges: Higher education faces a leadership cliff, with increased retirements among senior administrators and department heads. Succession planning is often informal or underdeveloped. Without targeted development, institutions risk losing key knowledge and continuity in leadership during periods of change.

Solution

- ✓ Design leadership training programs tailored to the unique demands of academic, administrative, and hybrid roles.
- ✓ Encourage ongoing development by embedding leadership learning within day-to-day operations and responsibilities.
- ✓ Retain top talent by offering clear career pathways and leadership growth opportunities.
- ✓ Gain visibility into your leadership pipeline and implement proactive succession plans to ensure continuity across key functions.

33% 

With just six performance staff supporting over 1,200 employees, Davenport University launched a custom, multi-campus leadership program — powered by Cornerstone — that increased employee satisfaction, boosted leadership knowledge by up to 33%, and was honored by the Association for Talent Development for excellence in practice.

Build your leadership pipeline with Cornerstone 

Train your people to critical systems effectively

Goal: Equip staff and faculty with the knowledge and confidence to effectively use essential campus systems, including student information systems (SIS), enterprise resource planning (ERP), constituent relationship management (CRM) platforms, financial management systems, and research administration tools.

Challenges: Many higher ed employees struggle with unfamiliar or frequently updated systems due to limited or outdated training. Reliance on peer support, static guides, or trial and error leads to inefficiencies and errors. Traditional training methods often disrupt daily work, and without contextual support, adoption lags and system investments underdeliver.



Solution

- ✓ Offer in-the-moment, contextual support as employees interact with campus systems, helping them complete tasks without leaving the application.
- ✓ Customize guidance based on user roles (e.g., faculty, staff, or advisors) to ensure training is relevant to individual responsibilities and workflows.
- ✓ Track activity and engagement to surface adoption trends, identify learning gaps, and improve support strategies.
- ✓ Reinforce compliance and consistency by embedding up-to-date guidance and policies directly into key systems.
- ✓ Facilitate digital adoption while maintaining the privacy and integrity of student and institutional data.

[Learn more about Cornerstone Guide](#) 

52% 

reduction in time spent searching for content and answers internally and externally.

61% 

reduction in training times for every new deployment of systems, features, or change processes.

63% 

decrease in support calls due to the omnipresent availability of tours, nudges, guides, assistance, learning, and automation.

Source: Customer interviews and benchmarking data



Strengthen higher ed IT skills

Goal: Strengthen critical IT capabilities to ensure data and systems remain secure, responsive, and innovative.

Challenges: Rapid technological advances and escalating cyber threats require higher ed IT teams to continually expand their expertise across cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics, and AI. But many colleges and universities struggle to retain skilled IT talent and to keep internal staff current on evolving technologies. Without access to practical, hands-on training, teams risk falling behind and jeopardize operational resilience.

Solution

- ✓ Provide immersive, hands-on training labs focusing on cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics, software programming, and AI, enabling IT teams to master essential skills.
- ✓ Offer real-time feedback within practical learning environments, progressively challenging employees to advance their proficiency and readiness.
- ✓ Prepare higher ed IT staff for essential certifications, including AWS, Microsoft Azure, Windows Server, C#, R, Python, R, PowerBI, VMware, and others, equipping them with in-demand technical competencies to confidently navigate today's complex digital landscape.

Provide hands-on learning labs with [Cornerstone Content](#) 



Benefits of hands-on learning

- 1 Improved skill retention**
Research indicates that combining theoretical knowledge with immersive practice improves skill retention by up to 75%.
- 2 Enhanced proof of skill with skill validation**
Scoring and real-time feedback indicate knowledge level and opportunities for improvement.
- 3 Safe-to-fail environments that mirror real-life scenarios**
Practicing in test environments allows employees to learn and validate skills without impacting live environments.³

Build essential interpersonal skills with immersive learning

Goal: Equip your workforce and your students with the interpersonal skills needed to engage with empathy, communicate clearly, and build trust, from classrooms to campus services to future careers.

Challenges: Strong interpersonal skills are essential in higher education, yet many faculty, staff, and students receive limited formal training in communication, empathy, or conflict resolution. Employees are often placed in high-stakes, student-facing roles without preparation — just as students navigate career readiness without key soft skills. Traditional training methods rarely offer realistic, low-risk environments to build and practice these vital competencies.



Solution

- ✓ Leverage immersive virtual simulations to help both employees and students develop real-world communication, collaboration, and emotional intelligence skills through realistic, interactive experiences.
- ✓ Implement XR-based role-playing scenarios that prepare faculty and staff for high-impact conversations with students and colleagues — and give students opportunities to practice workplace communication, navigate team dynamics, and build soft skills essential for internships and job interviews.
- ✓ Incorporate real-time feedback and performance metrics into immersive learning experiences, allowing both employees and students to track their progress, address skill gaps, and build confidence in navigating complex interpersonal interactions.

[Learn more about Cornerstone Immerse](#) 

With immersive learning, learners are:



275%

more confident to act on what they learn

4x

more focused during training

4x

faster in completing training⁴

Extend learning

Goal: Ensure consistency, compliance, and quality across all affiliates, volunteers, and corporate partners while also extending institutional impact and generating new revenue streams through community and workforce training initiatives.

Challenges: Universities rely on a broad ecosystem of non-employee contributors. Without centralized training, these groups may operate without a clear understanding of institutional policies, leading to gaps in compliance and service quality. At the same time, many institutions are seeking new ways to engage with their broader communities, support lifelong learning, and diversify revenue beyond tuition — yet lack scalable mechanisms to deliver learning outside of enrolled students.



Solution

- ✓ Establish a secure, centralized learning platform accessible by external learners to ensure consistent onboarding and compliance.
- ✓ Provide role-based, personalized learning aligned with institutional policies and expectations.
- ✓ Track training completions, certifications, and compliance status in real time across employee and non-employee audiences.
- ✓ Facilitate shared learning experiences that promote consistent service quality and institutional alignment.
- ✓ Launch branded learning programs for the broader community — such as professional development, upskilling, and continuing education — to strengthen town-gown relationships and unlock new revenue opportunities.



With Cornerstone, the University of Tennessee provides customized learning portals for students, professionals, and faculty and staff, all with one platform.

“

Each unit can create unique portals for different users while sharing one resource. We also can segment our audience. That’s been an incredible advantage.”

Scott Gordy
Chief Information Officer,
University of Tennessee
Institute for Public Service



INSTITUTE
for PUBLIC
SERVICE



Optimize workforce planning

Goal: Mobilize talent more effectively and align hiring, development, and retention strategies with institutional priorities.

Challenges: Higher ed leaders must balance long-term academic strategy with immediate operational demands yet often lack insight into workforce capabilities. Without skills data and insights, institutions struggle to anticipate talent gaps, plan effectively, or respond to shifts in demand.

Solution

- ✓ Rapidly develop a dynamic job architecture based on market-driven skills insights to align roles with evolving institutional needs.
- ✓ Get an AI-driven inventory of your workforce capabilities, informed by real-time labor market data and higher ed-specific benchmarks.
- ✓ Benchmark your people and their capabilities against other institutions to identify emerging gaps and inform planning.
- ✓ Empower decision-making with easy-to-use visualizations of skill trends, gaps, and talent readiness across units.
- ✓ Support strategic hiring, internal development, and succession efforts through data-informed workforce strategies.

87%

reduction in time to create a complete skills inventory of your workforce compared to manual skills mapping.

Source: SkyHive by Cornerstone customer data

[Learn more about Cornerstone Transform](#)



Unify experiences, data, and insights

Goal: Connect learning, performance, and talent systems to streamline employee experiences and enable smarter decisions across your institution.

Challenges: Disparate platforms and siloed data prevent institutions from understanding how learning impacts performance or where gaps exist. Employees face friction finding resources or navigating systems, while HR and academic leaders lack a holistic view of engagement, development, and workforce skills.

Solution

- ✓ Centralize learning and development with a customizable hub that provides easy access to training, content, and manager check-ins.
- ✓ Drive engagement with a user-friendly interface that simplifies access to essential training and key development tools.
- ✓ Support on-the-go learning with a mobile app that enables training anytime, anywhere.
- ✓ Unify performance, learning, and skills data to reveal connections and guide institutional decision-making.
- ✓ Integrate your tech ecosystem using pre-built integrations, comprehensive connectors, and flexible APIs (including webhooks) to synchronize data and streamline user experiences.

[Learn more about Cornerstone Extend](#) 

Align education to industry needs and showcase student outcomes

Goal: Strengthen your institution's impact and relevance by aligning education to industry needs, showcasing student outcomes, and supporting personalized upskilling pathways.

Challenges: Institutions are under increasing pressure to prove the value of academic programs and demonstrate real-world outcomes. As industry expectations evolve, colleges and universities must ensure their offerings remain relevant and competitive – especially for adult learners, career changers, and employer-aligned initiatives. Without clear connections between curriculum, career outcomes, and learner goals, it's harder to attract prospective students or support lifelong learning at scale.

Solution

- ✓ Ensure your curriculum remains relevant to changing needs across industries in real time.
- ✓ Acquire more learners for your programs by demonstrating data-based career outcomes.
- ✓ Help learners navigate development opportunities based on their skills and goals.
- ✓ Connect learners to meaningful, priority work opportunities in their community.



“

We're continually monitoring the skills most in demand by employers and seeing who can be reskilled. We're really thrilled about the kind of data and very precise information now at our disposal.”

Paul Toupin
Director of La Cité des affaires, Collège La Cité



**Learn more about
Cornerstone Skill Passport** [↗](#)

Why Cornerstone

Cornerstone powers the potential of colleges and universities by helping them develop, engage, and retain the academic workforce needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape. With Cornerstone Galaxy — the complete AI-powered workforce agility platform — institutions can strengthen workforce planning, accelerate learning, and support compliance while enabling their people to grow, lead, and adapt.

For more than two decades, we've helped organizations navigate complexity, modernize operations, and stay ahead of the curve. As a trusted partner in talent transformation, we deliver personalized, data-driven solutions to match the scale and mission of each campus community.

Our platform is designed to grow with you — from onboarding and compliance to leadership development and skills intelligence. Let's build the future of higher education together.

7,000 customers and
140 million users in
186 countries

19 top analyst reports
rank Cornerstone as
a leader (2025)

30+ awards for
outstanding product,
leadership, and innovation

200+ integrations
with our open platform

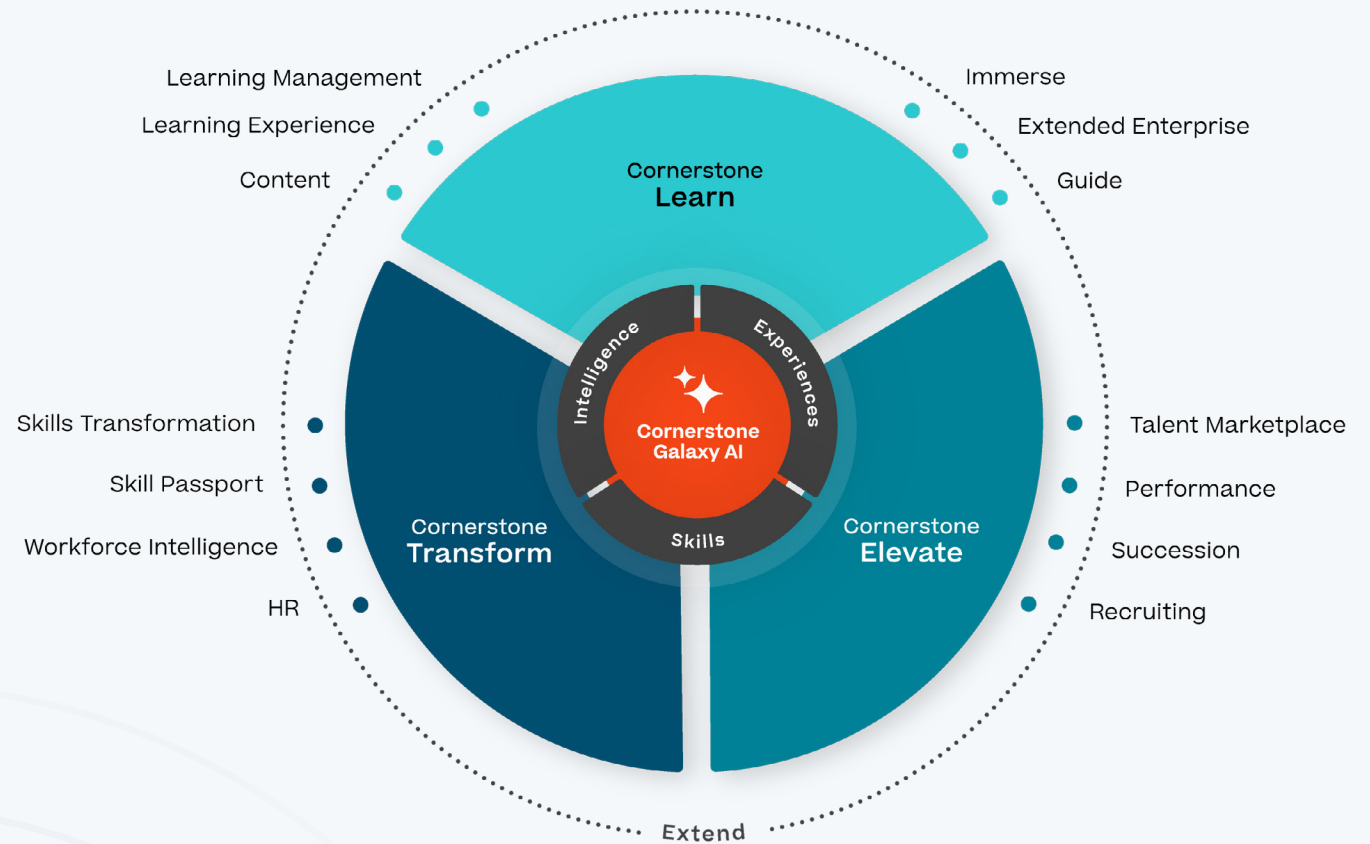


Cornerstone Galaxy

Cornerstone Galaxy is a workforce agility platform that is flexible and extensible so that you can choose only what you need from our breadth of solutions. You can be confident in our partnership to integrate with your ecosystem and grow with you over time.

Cornerstone's trusted core AI technology supercharges the entire Cornerstone Galaxy platform by delivering personalized, adaptive, and immersive talent experiences while advancing the efficiency and impact of HR teams.

Learn more about Cornerstone Galaxy AI [↗](#)



Cornerstone Learn

Develop your people with assigned and self-directed learning. Automate compliance at scale, rapidly upskill your people, and effectively onboard new workers.

Cornerstone Elevate

Enable employee-driven and manager-supported growth with continuous performance management, leadership development, and internal career mobility.

Cornerstone Transform

Stay future-ready with a comprehensive view of the capabilities of your workforce and AI-powered insights into how labor markets, jobs, and skills are changing.

Endnotes

- 1 [“The Total Economic Impact™ of Cornerstone Galaxy.”](#) Cornerstone Resource Corner, Forrester, May 2024.
- 2 [“Ready, set, grow: The building blocks for high-impact talent mobility.”](#) Cornerstone Resource Corner, 2023.
- 3 Carmody, Kelly. [“Addressing the IT skills gap with hands-on learning”](#) Cornerstone Resource Corner, 2024.
3. [“Understanding the Effectiveness of VR Soft Skills Training in the Enterprise.”](#) PwC, 2020.

Cornerstone Galaxy, the complete AI-powered workforce agility platform, allows organizations to identify skills gaps and development opportunities, retain and engage top talent, and provide multimodal learning experiences to meet the diverse needs of the modern workforce.

[Schedule Demo](#)

