

CASE STUDY

Building Succession-Ready Talent Across Multiple Bank Affiliates

How TalentGuard helped a 150-year-old community bank with 550+ employees stay competitive and compliant in banking, while developing and retaining top talent across five companies.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
MUTUAL BANCORP

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OVERVIEW

New Hampshire Mutual Bancorp (NHMB), a holding company for three 150-year-old financial institutions and a wealth management division, sought to modernize its approach to succession, talent, and learning management. With over 550 employees and a centralized HR department, NHMB needed a platform that could scale with its growth while supporting development initiatives across a multi-affiliate structure.

After consulting with Gartner and reviewing potential vendors, NHMB selected TalentGuard to address its critical talent management needs—performance, succession planning, career pathing, and integration with learning systems.

OVERVIEW DETAILS

Company:	New Hampshire Mutual Bancorp (NHMB)
Structure:	Holding company for three community banks (each ~150 years old) plus wealth management division
Employees:	550+ across five entities
Location:	New Hampshire (White Mountains/Lake Winnepesaukee region)
Industry:	Community Banking & Wealth Management
Key Contact:	David Cronin, Chief Human Resources Officer

CHALLENGES



Siloed Development Structures



Limited Succession Planning



Disconnected Learning Systems



Manual Administration

THE CHALLENGE

Regulatory and Market Pressures

NHMB operates in a tightly regulated industry where succession planning isn't optional—it's a compliance requirement. "Succession in banking, in our organization, which tends to be a pretty mature industry, is something we have to pay attention to," Cronin notes. During regular regulatory examinations, banks must demonstrate comprehensive talent development strategies.

Simultaneously, the community banking sector faces unprecedented talent challenges. "Talent and employment in our industry is getting tighter and tighter to find and hold on to that talent," particularly as younger employees bring different expectations for career development and transparency.

Structural Complexity

NHMB's unique multi-affiliate structure created additional challenges:

- **Five Separate Companies:** One holding company provides shared services (HR, IT, finance, compliance) to three community bank brands and one wealth management division, each maintaining distinct brand identities and geographic footprints.
- **Cross-Affiliate Mobility Needs:** "Someone can actually start in one part of the organization", say one affiliate, "and end up migrating to another affiliate for various reasons—either a job opportunity or geographic preferences, or they want to move up to the shared services environment."
- **Inconsistent Standards:** Despite similar roles across affiliates (branch managers, tellers, commercial lenders), there was no consistency in assessing what skills were needed for success or advancement.

Operational Inefficiencies

The existing approach relied on:



Disparate Systems

Excel worksheets, scattered training records, disconnected databases



Manual Workflows

Time-consuming data collection for succession planning



Limited Visibility

Managers couldn't easily see employee development activities or coaching opportunities



Siloed Development

Retail banking had some structure, but back-office functions lacked formal career pathways

TALENTGUARD SOLUTION

Unified Framework Across Affiliates

TalentGuard provided industry-specific banking templates that enabled NHMB to establish consistent role expectations across all affiliates. “When we say a branch manager role requires certain levels of competency in these skill areas, all the banks agree,” said David Cronin, Chief Human Resources Officer. “That’s the foundation work we have to do to create frameworks that they can all agree on.”

Bottom-Up and Top-Down Implementation

NHMB took a strategic dual approach:

Retail Banking Focus (Bottom-Up):

Started with customer-facing roles representing nearly half the workforce—tellers, supervisors, branch managers—where similar roles existed across affiliates and willing manager participation accelerated progress.

Executive Succession (Top-Down):

Simultaneously worked with the CEO to establish frameworks for executive leadership positions, creating talent pools for regulatory-critical succession planning.

Unified Talent Framework

TalentGuard delivered an industry-specific solution tailored to banking and finance, enabling NHMB to avoid starting from scratch. These included:

- Prebuilt job roles and competency models based on labor market data
- Suggested career pathways across job families and affiliates
- AI-enhanced gap analysis and development recommendations

This approach allowed NHMB to fast-track deployment while preserving the flexibility to customize according to internal strategy.



Access to customizable templates has been a game-changer. TalentGuard not only gives us a strong industry-standard starting point, but also the flexibility to tailor it to our needs.

Joanne Pearce
Chief Digital Officer

Configurable Performance Management

TalentGuard's flexible performance module supports customizable components, incorporates employee input, and integrates seamlessly with ADP-- enabling dynamic feedback and team-wide alignment.

TalentGuard demonstrated a highly flexible performance module, featuring:

- Modular review design: job performance, values, goals, job-based competencies
- Customizeable rating scales and comment fields
- Employee-driven inputs with managerial oversight
- On-going check-ins and snapshot tracking
- Export-ready Integration for ADP's compensation module

This solution allowed NHMB to run quarterly or annual review cycles while supporting real-time feedback loops across teams.

Succession Planning and Talent Pools

Role-based dashboards gave managers a centralized view of team performance, real-time progress tracking, and cross-affiliate talent pool visibility. This enhances clarity on bench strength and leadership readiness.

Through role-based provisioning and tailored dashboards, managers could:

- Access a centralized view of their team's performance and development
- Submit real-time logs to track progress
- View and manage talent pools across affiliates

This functionality provided clarity around internal bench strength and readiness for leadership roles.

Seamless Integration with ADP and LMS Platforms

TalentGuard integrated seamlessly with ADP and LMS platforms, using AI to map learning to roles and skills, while supporting automated feedback--positioning it as the single source of truth for talent development.

TalentGuard integrated with ADP and our LMS-providers to ensure a seamless experience for our employees. Features included:

- AI-powered learning maps that link relevant content to specific skills and roles
- Automated course completion feedback into TalentGuard

This setup allowed TalentGuard to function as the single source of truth for job roles while integrating seamlessly with HRIS and learning systems.

IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

Regulatory Compliance Success

“We were able to show regulators our new employee development process--helping them understand the full scope of what we’re trying to achieve.” NHMB now demonstrates clear succession planning strategies to regulators, with defined talent pools and development roadmaps for critical roles.



Employee Engagement and Transparency

Employees now have clear visibility into career paths--with defined skills and development milestones. The platform encourages self-directed growth, empowering staff to own their career journey.

“Employees can now see what their career paths are. We’re not hiding them,” Cronin explains. The platform enables clear visibility into advancement opportunities, whether moving from retail branch environments to wealth management financial advisory roles or transitioning between affiliates.

- **Career Path Clarity:** Employees entering as tellers can now see specific skill requirements and development activities needed to advance to branch manager or supervisory positions.
- **Self-Directed Development:** “We see employees taking initiative -- charting their own career paths and actively managing their development plans.”

Operational Efficiency Gains

The platform consolidates employee data into a single system, replacing scattered records. This gives managers clearer insights for coaching, while standardized frameworks support consistent evaluations across affiliates-- boosting talent mobility.

- **Consolidated Information:** “We’ve consolidate all employee data into a unified system -- replacing spreadsheets, scattered databases and inconsistent records.”
- **Enhanced Coaching:** Managers can now see what employees are working on, making coaching discussions more focused and actionable. “It makes it more real,” Cronin observes.
- **Cross-Affiliate Consistency:** Managers across all affiliates now evaluate similar roles using identical frameworks, enabling seamless talent mobility and eliminating assessment inconsistencies.

ROADMAP

Current Progress and Future Roadmap



PHASE 1 ACHIEVEMENTS (COMPLETED)

- Retail banking frameworks established across all affiliates
- Executive succession planning structures implemented
- LMS integration launched and active
- Regulatory compliance demonstration completed successfully



PHASE 2 IN PROGRESS

- Developing commercial banking frameworks
- Integrating IT and finance departments
- Activating Performance module



PHASE 3 VISION

- Launch comprehensive talent analytics processes
- Optimize cross-affiliate career mobility
- Enabled advanced succession analytics and planning



KEY OUTCOMES

Resource Requirements

“Doing it right takes time and focus,” Cronin explained. “We were limited by internal resources, so we hired someone to support system-related setup and on-going enablement.”

Change Management Approach

Success required active manager participation and a phased, agile rollout. Starting with retail banking delivered early wins and helped build momentum for broader adoption.



We’ve achieved consistency in how we assess individuals’ development and readiness. No matter which affiliate our managers are in, they’re evaluating employees using the same skill frameworks for similar roles-- because talent can move fluidly across the organization.

David Cronin
Chief Human Resources Officer

Key Success Factors

-  Start with engaged departments (retail banking provided early wins)
-  Address regulatory requirements first (executive succession planning)
-  Invest in integration (LMS connectivity delivers ongoing value)
-  Plan for resource requirements (dedicated implementation support is essential)

Industry-Specific Value

For Community Banks

NHMB's experience shows how TalentGuard's effectively supports multi-affiliate financial institutions. It addresses challenges such as:

1. Regulatory succession planning requirements
2. Talent retention challenges in competitive markets
3. Need for consistent standards across multiple entities
4. Generational workforce expectations for career

Client Testimonial

"The biggest win right now is that employees can clearly see internal growth opportunities. When we publish roles, they're visible--and employees know what they need to do to prepare for them."

— David Cronin, NHMB



Looking Ahead

NHMB's journey with TalentGuard represents a thoughtful, phased approach to talent management transformation in community banking. While still in early implementation stages, the foundation is strong: regulatory compliance achieved, employee engagement increasing, and operational efficiency improving.

With infrastructure now in place and resources secured, NHMB is poised for accelerated progress over the next year. The completion of commercial banking frameworks will extend career visibility to their entire customer-facing workforce, while the planned performance management module activation will provide comprehensive talent analytics for strategic decision-making.

As David Cronin notes, "In the next year, we foresee significant momentum"—likely including measurable improvements in internal mobility, employee retention, and succession readiness across all five affiliates. NHMB is well on its way to becoming a model for integrated talent development in community banking.



For community banks and multi-affiliate financial institutions:

Are you prepared for your next regulatory examination's succession planning review?

Can your employees clearly see advancement opportunities across your organization?

TalentGuard's proven success in solving community banking talent challenges—from regulatory compliance to cross-affiliate mobility—can help you build a more engaged, development-ready workforce.

Ready to transform your talent strategy?



Schedule a demo focused on community banking succession planning



Learn about our banking-specific implementation methodology



Discover how other community banks are solving similar challenges



Transform your talent management-- from siloed development to succession-ready.



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