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Beyond Matching:
Talent Intelligence Connects Candidate Potential to a Growing Company's Needs

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As artificial intelligence (AI) has developed, it has demonstrated its usefulness in a wide range of applications.

While human resources professionals see promise in how AI can help them screen candidates, they have questions about the technology's limitations. When trained on incomplete or skewed data sets, for example, AI may replicate conscious or unconscious biases, Jake Silberg and James Manyika at McKinsey write. The result can be software that unfairly excludes candidates who would otherwise offer a good fit.

Aware of these pitfalls, Eightfold chose a different approach: Understanding how artificial intelligence aligns with the talent lifecycle.

To be truly useful, a talent intelligence platform must be able to create proxies and reveal opportunities at each point in these lifecycles. Talent intelligence that can spot patterns and make connections at every point in a candidate's projected career can, in turn, provide insights that help HR professionals find the best match between candidate and role.

Understanding the Talent Lifecycle

The talent lifecycle begins even before candidates present themselves. Companies begin the talent lifecycle when they build a talent brand for themselves. As they share and promote this brand, those companies begin to attract the attention of potential applicants with whom that brand resonates.

As roles within the organization open up, the company defines each role's requirements, then makes its need for qualified applicants known. Some interested people become applicants, forming a talent pool from which the company can choose the most qualified candidates. Eventually, the organization narrows the search to a single candidate and makes an offer.

It's easy to think of the candidate's acceptance or first day on the job as the end of the hiring process. At this stage, however, the talent lifecycle has just come up to speed.

When a new hire joins the company, they typically go through an onboarding process that helps acclimate them to their new role, their new workplace, and their new colleagues. And while the onboarding process will eventually end, learning in the role itself never does. According to Jackie Wiles at Gartner, the number of skills required for any single job increases approximately 10 percent per year. One-third of the skills listed in the average job posting in 2017 are no longer relevant today.

Roles change, and the people who fill those roles will change, as well. Over time, a company's new hire will learn new skills. As they grow, they may begin to seek new roles within the company, or they may decide to leave the organization for opportunities elsewhere. Having left, they may later choose to come back.

Throughout this process, the candidate-turned-employee isn't passive. They are talking to friends, family, and colleagues about their job search, their new role, and their new employer. "What do you do for a living?" is a common conversation opener. It opens the door to further questions:

> **"How did your interview go?"**

> **"Do you like your new job?"**

> **"How are you doing at work?"**

> **"What do you want to do next?"**

The person may also be asked to influence others' career paths: "Do you mind if I use you as a reference?"

Candidates and employees play a constant, active role in their own careers and in others', both inside and outside the workplace. Companies that disregard the role of referrals in the talent lifecycle do so at their peril.

Matching AI to Each Point in the Talent Lifecycle

At each point in the talent lifecycle, artificial intelligence can provide specific benefits to a company. The right AI tools can:

> Improve interactions.

> Improve workflow efficiencies.

> Contribute to higher-quality output.

> Expand the diversity and inclusiveness of the team.

Let's take a granular look at how this happens at various points along the talent lifecycle.

Defining Roles

What skills do your teams lack? What combination of skills belong in a particular role? How many candidates in the job market today have this combination of skills? Which skills might substitute well for others?

Skill sets are essential to success in any role. Yet companies often struggle to understand which skills are actually essential to each position, or how to find talent with the right skills combination.

"The need for critical skills has never been greater. But labor market and talent data suggests that many companies have unwittingly built the wrong workforce to drive their future — and continue to do so," says Gartner analyst Scott Engler.

AI can help HR teams define roles by spotting patterns in how skills intersect in particular roles and how employees learn new skills as they move from role to role.

Marketing Roles

Applicants won't let you know they're interested in a role if they don't know an opening exists. Once a role is defined, it's important to consider how to share it with potential candidates.

How should the necessary skills be presented in the job description? How could those descriptions invite candidates to apply or turn them away? Does the job description invite applicants from diverse backgrounds?

AI can analyze a vast range of job descriptions to help HR professionals understand why to use or avoid certain phrases when marketing an open role. The software can highlight how a potential candidate's profile matches the job requirements, explaining why it believes this candidate is a strong match. It can also be used to analyze compensation and to connect HR teams to candidates' other work.

Screening and Interviewing

Screening and interviewing job candidates is a skill. For many HR professionals, it's a skill that has been learned on the fly. AI can help enhance any HR team member's screening and interviewing skill set.

Top questions many HR professionals face when screening and interviewing candidates include:

> Who should conduct the interviews?

> What questions should the interviewer(s) ask? What information do we want to discover through the interview process?

> What skills does the interviewer need to validate in each candidate?

> How do we standardize feedback among different interviewers in order to compare candidates effectively?

Here, artificial intelligence can help HR teams see the connections between various roles, allowing for better interviewer choices. AI can also highlight how certain skills are demonstrated in a candidate's actual work, creating opportunities for deeper conversations. It can also provide guidance on standardizing feedback to allow for better candidate comparisons.

Making an Offer

Making an offer is an exciting moment, but it's also a tough one. HR professionals don't want to drive away their top candidate, but they're also mindful of the organization's hiring budget and the sensitive nature of fitting compensation for a new hire into the organization's existing compensation structure.

AI can help HR professionals think about how to compensate their top candidate while crafting a job offer. The insights provided by artificial intelligence can help HR teams see how a candidate will fit within the company's structure. It can also help them spot ways to craft the total compensation package in a way that appeals to the specific individual they're hoping to hire.

Onboarding and Employment

No two new hires bring identical skills or learning capacities to the table. When it's time to onboard a new hire, then, it's essential to tailor their training to their specific needs.

Artificial intelligence can help create a development plan and highlight opportunities for early, rapid skill-building. It can also provide a framework for charting each employee's progress over time, suggesting new avenues for skill growth or new roles they can pursue.

Career Growth

When does an employee start looking outside the company? Why do they decide to leave? How should we stay in touch with those that decide to go?

These questions are essential to mitigating employee turnover, yet they can mystify HR teams. With the help of artificial intelligence, however, HR professionals can spot the most common reasons employees leave the company, and the signs that they might do so. AI can also suggest avenues of growth, like promotions or lateral moves, that can keep the employee engaged.

How Our Talent Intelligence Suite Supports Your Talent Lifecycle Processes

What skills do your teams lack? What combination of skills belong in a particular role? How many candidates in the job market today have this combination of skills? Which skills might substitute well for others?

Early attempts to use AI in hiring did little more than scan for keywords. Limiting technology to keyword scans wastes extraordinary potential.

A single, integrated system, however, can analyze and track information throughout the talent lifecycle. This provides ever-richer insights into a professional's opportunities and abilities as they move from applicant to candidate to new hire to veteran team member.

Eightfold's AI is designed to help businesses hire for potential. Consequently, our tools highlight the best in each candidate:

> Why this person is great for a given role.

> Where their strengths lie.

> What their best past work looks like.

> How they can thrive in future roles or opportunities

Today, few people join one company and follow a predetermined career path for the rest of their lives. Careers are active, unpredictable, and constantly shifting.

Our technology accounts for the dynamic nature of 21st Century work. Like your teams, the AI remains active, tracking what your staff are working on, with whom they work, and what they've already accomplished.

This information helps create an up-to-date profile of each employee, helping the organization see which new opportunities are most likely to help each individual team member learn new skills and thrive at work.

> "The employers that get this right will have a more engaged workforce, greater employee retention and better ability to attract top talent,"
>
> **Brian Kopp**
> *Distinguished Vice President of Research at Gartner.*

Why Talent Lifecycle AI Matters Now

HR departments aren't the only ones looking for new meaning in work. Candidates are, as well.

People increasingly want to know what opportunities offer a good fit for them. They want meaningful work and chances to grow, and they're interested in connecting with employers that can provide those insights.

Finding a shared purpose is essential to future business growth, Naina Dhingra, Jonathan Emmett, and Bradley Halpern at McKinsey write. Artificial intelligence can help companies make sense of the vast amounts of data necessary to arrive at key insights about individuals and to spot the connections between them that lead to a sense of shared identity and the growth of common goals.

Using AI throughout the talent lifecycle can also bolster the quality of candidates and candidate pools by accounting for skills in workers who may otherwise be overlooked. These include stay-at-home parents, women who were displaced from the workforce during the pandemic, recent graduates, and others whose recent skill gains haven't taken place in a work setting.

Recruiters can struggle to determine how well those without a recent formal work history will do on the job because there may not be enough recent job information to provide insight. AI can look past the seemingly disparate nature of a crooked career path or an early life spent entirely in school. Instead, AI works on:

> Extracting, analyzing, and validating data for each individual.
> Mapping out each individual's potential based on what they've already accomplished, as well as on what others with similar paths have gone on to do.
> Matching individuals to opportunities based on their skills and potential, not on unconscious biases.
> Analyzing an individual's strengths and qualities as they develop.

Candidates increasingly want to be seen for their individual abilities, skills, and qualities, not for their ability to fill a pre-assigned slot.

"The employers that get this right will have a more engaged workforce, greater employee retention and better ability to attract top talent," says Brian Kopp, distinguished vice president of research at Gartner.
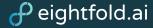
The Future of Talent Intelligence

Whether handled by humans or enhanced by artificial intelligence, talent intelligence faces the same big questions:

> What does the company need to know about this person?

> What does the company need to know about the talent landscape, both in our own offices and worldwide?

> What do we need to understand about each role within our organization, including new roles we create?

> How do we match people to roles?

> How do we share news about new roles in a way that attracts qualified candidates?

> How do we continue to engage people throughout the talent lifecycle?

Keyword scanning and simple algorithmic matching provided an early start to answering these questions. Today, however, the technology has matured, and so has its ability to provide holistic approaches to talent intelligence.

Eightfold's talent intelligence AI looks at candidates and employees throughout their careers, tracking their work in each role and using that information to suggest new paths for professional growth and development. In so doing, the technology provides deep, personalized, and unbiased insights about each person's skills and abilities, allowing HR professionals and employers to support their people throughout the talent lifecycle.

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Eightfold's Career Hub is built on the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform,™ a purpose-built, deep-learning artificial intelligence technology that is powered by an ever-refreshing global data set of billions of talent data points and over 1.4M unique skills.

For more information, visit **www.eightfold.ai**