

Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Addresses Skills Gaps with Enterprise Talent Intelligence



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Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP) is a leading beverage company that produces, distributes, and markets nonalcoholic, ready-to-drink beverages. Formed in 2016 through the combination of several Coca-Cola bottling companies in Western Europe, CCEP is headquartered in Uxbridge, England, and had approximately 35,200 employees as of 2023. The company operates in 29 countries and serves a consumer population of more than 600 million people. As a public company with shares traded on the London Stock Exchange, CCEP is one of the largest independent Coca-Cola bottlers in the world based on net revenues.

Surfacing Internal Talent and Growth Opportunities

Amid postpandemic supply chain and talent market disruptions, CCEP's internal engagement surveys suggested employees felt opportunities for growth within the company were limited. "We needed to improve the visibility of our talent and the opportunities in the company," said Nico Orié, Vice President of People and Culture for CCEP.

Facing a dual need to help business leaders find the right internal talent and surface employee pathways for growth, Orié and his team recognized that more and better employee data could address both challenges. "For years, we've been collecting a lot of transactional, process-driven data, and here you have to think bigger," Orié said. "It required a much more dynamic approach to talent intelligence, more to the moment of decision-making in the enterprise, providing the individual with information about how to develop themselves."

The same was true for succession planning, which was a manual exercise, taking HR weeks to prepare for reviews, collect talent data, and update pipelines. The HR team needed a dynamic, digital solution using real-time, rich talent data from across the company.

Summary

Challenge

- Addressing internal skill gaps.
- Reversing employee perceptions of limited growth opportunities.
- Revamping manual talent management and succession-planning processes that offer limited insights into skills data.

Solution

- Introduced a talent intelligence platform based on Eightfold AI as an "internal LinkedIn" and career guide to foster employee adoption, including functionality for succession planning.
- Narrowed down skills catalog to the 100 skills most critical to the business and identified a targeted subset of 3 to 5 skills to guide each employee's development.
- Aligned learning with targeted skills through four dedicated capability academies.

Results

- Employee engagement scores increased.
- Succession planning was digitized with real-time talent data, talent profiles, and access to talent across the organization; the percentage of employees with talent profiles jumped from 2% to 80%.
- Skills identification and development helped address talent gaps.
- A roadmap was created to leverage talent intelligence for deeper employee support, a new learning platform, talent acquisition, and workforce planning.

An Internal Focus on Enterprise Talent Intelligence

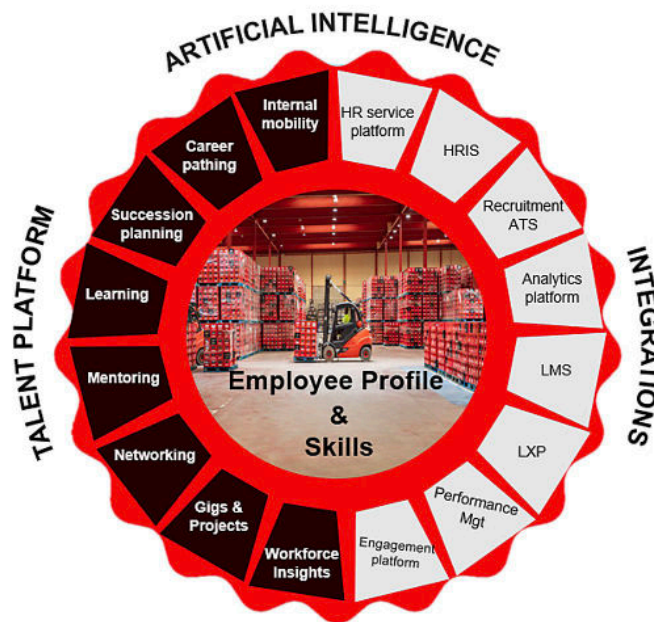
In 2022, HR leaders introduced a talent intelligence platform powered by Eightfold AI (a pioneer of talent intelligence platforms) as a voluntary career hub to encourage employees to participate and share data. The initiative was a collaboration between the talent center of excellence, which focuses on talent management, talent acquisition, and learning, and the workforce intelligence/people analytics

team. It aimed to support internal talent and integrated learning opportunities centered on a targeted range of skills aligned with business needs.

Creating an “Internal LinkedIn”

Orie and his team intentionally positioned the talent intelligence platform as the “internal LinkedIn,” calling it a “career hub” to encourage employees to participate and highlighting its integrated approach to development and progression within the company (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: CCEP’s Talent Intelligence Platform



Source: CCEP, 2024

“If you give us your data, we give you in return the opportunities—jobs, projects, learning, mentoring—it will all come to you,” Orie explained.

The platform asks employees to self-report their skills and includes the option of automatically importing their LinkedIn profile. Employees also receive regular nudges from the platform to update their information and review opportunities for growth.

“LinkedIn probably has better and deeper data on our talent than we do because there is not only employee core data but also employee networks—and what people like and don’t like.

Nico Orie, Vice President of People and Culture, CCEP

Narrowing Down and Personalizing Skills

HR leaders also pared down the company’s skills catalog to focus on the 100 most critical skills for its commercial operations—the ones most deeply connected to “going to market as Coca-Cola,” as Orie explained. The process began by examining the corporate business strategy and holding discussions with business leaders; HR leaders have since identified “capability champions” within the business to regularly assess the narrowed down set of skills to ensure it remains relevant.

“I really believe you have to make it manageable,” Orie said. “We’re going to focus on these 100 critical skills for now, and then we’re going to start the journey and see where we will end.”

The talent intelligence platform uses this focused set of skills to target each employee who provides information with three to five skills, offering suggestions for learning and other opportunities for growth. According to Orie, this approach is essential to providing employees with viable development options. “If you don’t have all of those skills and you have to learn them all at the same time, it would be intimidating,” he said.

Digitizing Succession Planning

Before launching the talent intelligence platform, succession pipelines for senior roles were stored manually in presentations and spreadsheets. This was time-consuming, and the talent data quickly became outdated. The data was also scarce, with only 2% of employees having a talent profile in the system.

The number of employees with a talent profile increased to 80% with the talent intelligence platform, so the majority of employees now have up-to-date talent data in the platform. This data includes work experience, skills, career aspirations, and development plans. All of this information is automatically

pulled into the employee's talent card, which is used in talent reviews and career-development conversations between employees and managers.

Moving development plans into the talent intelligence platform was another step toward the “one-stop shop” for employees, managers, and HR. It allows employees to state roles they aspire to, indicate skills they want to develop, and track their development actions. The platform also provides personalized AI recommendations for learning.

Allowing employees to provide this kind of information lowers the risk of talent being featured in succession pipelines for roles they don't aspire to; on the contrary, it includes them in succession pipelines for teams/countries for which they were not visible before.

Aligning Learning through Capability Academies

Data from the talent intelligence platform and business gaps identified through the process of narrowing down the skills catalog are used to identify learning opportunities for employees through Coca-Cola's capability academies. The academies are focused on four critical capability areas for commercial operations:

- Leadership academy: “The way we lead”
- Commercial capability academy: “The way we sell”
- Supply chain academy: “The way we serve”
- Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) academy

Each capability academy provides a combination of foundational courses, including training focused on areas such as data and analytics and new ways of working, followed by modules based on the targeted skills. This approach allows employees to self-assess their capabilities, connect with peers and experts, and learn in a collaborative way targeted at building required capabilities critical to Coca-Cola's business success. Orié maintains the approach has also amplified efforts to address skill gaps. “We've identified from the top down and the bottom up what we need and what is available,” he said.

Results: Rapid Adoption Outpacing Skills Needs

Platform adoption vastly surpassed expectations and addressed internal talent needs. “It immediately outpaced what skills were needed within the business,” Orié said. “The democratization of the information to the decision moment has been a key change.”

Employee engagement survey scores also increased significantly. Workers now “see opportunity for growth in the company,” Orié said. “It's all about adoption at the end of the day—adoption on the business side and employee side.”

Next Steps: Expanding to Enterprise Talent Intelligence

HR leaders are now focusing on new employee-facing functionality to create “new reasons for people to go to the platform,” Orié said. With CCEP's approach to starting talent intelligence not with recruiting but by focusing on internal mobility and careers (unlike most organizations), there is now ample opportunity to expand to different use cases, moving toward “enterprise talent intelligence.”

Ultimately, the talent intelligence platform could be positioned to employees as a “career copilot,” with its AI capabilities incorporating information from knowledge management systems to provide a one-stop resource for everything from skills and learning to benefits. “You wouldn't have to know if you have a benefits question or a career question or a financial question,” Orié said. “It could connect you to everything you need.”

Behind the scenes, the organization is creating deeper integrations between the talent intelligence platform and its existing learning systems. The company has also issued an RFP for a new learning platform focused more tightly on the skills identified through its talent intelligence efforts.

Lessons Learned

CCEP's proactive approach to operationalizing talent intelligence helped address employee engagement and skills gaps within the company. Following are some lessons learned that may inform efforts in other organizations:

- **Target internal needs—and a double bottom line.** The intentional decision to focus talent intelligence on existing employees instead of recruitment first was in response to internal skill gaps and perceptions of limited opportunities for growth within the company. HR leaders focused on addressing both needs with a comprehensive approach to collecting data and aligning skills and learning. "If we define talent intelligence in too much of a narrow sense, you actually are not truly coming to the true value of what this can be," Orie said.
- **Solicit new types of data to enable talent intelligence.** Orie and his team recognized the importance of moving beyond internal HR data to enable true talent intelligence. "You can do nothing in terms of your platform or AI engine if you don't have the data and the data structure right," Orie said.
- **Focus on employee engagement—and trust—to build data.** Branding the platform as a voluntary "internal LinkedIn" and focusing on career development contributed to high engagement, HR leaders say. "At the end of the day, if employees don't want to participate or share data, it all stops," Orie said. "This is how you change behavior and influence the culture." HR leaders also allowed employees to self-identify skills to jumpstart data collection. "Of course, sometimes they oversell themselves, but that's better than not having

data," Orie said. "First and foremost, we get people comfortable with sharing and talking about skills, and slowly we move into assessing them."

- **Emphasize the business problem instead of skills inventories.** Focusing on a subset of 100 mission-critical skills and then narrowing them further for individual employees considering their own career development was another double bottom-line strategy, reflecting both business needs and the employee journey. "We're not going to come to you with a skills catalog of 25,000 different skills—we're going to go with what makes the boat go faster," Orie said. "If you make this too big, people would just be paralyzed."
- **Collaborate for capability-building.** The talent center of excellence's collaboration with the workforce intelligence team brought expertise in people analytics and data science—both of which were essential to ensuring talent intelligence could be operationalized in meaningful ways—to the project. "If you want to do this right, it almost requires an integration of your governance into something new," Orie said.

Looking ahead, CCEP is considering using talent intelligence for external recruitment, followed by workforce planning. According to Orie, HR leaders envision the platform enabling AI-driven solutions that can help address a wide range of business problems, with the data collection and employee engagement to date serving as the foundation for a more agile and informed enterprise.

“ *The key challenge of talent intelligence is that it all starts with data, and to make it work, you need much bigger data sets.* ”
Nico Orie

About the Authors



Josh Bersin

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.

In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the “home for HR.” In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. He is frequently featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.



Kathi Enderes, PhD

Kathi is the senior vice president research and global industry analyst at The Josh Bersin Company, supporting clients and the market with evidence-based insights on all areas of HR, learning, talent, and HR technology. Kathi has more than 20 years of global experience from management consulting with IBM, PwC, and EY, and as a talent leader at McKesson and Kaiser Permanente. Most recently, Kathi led talent and workforce research at Deloitte. She is a frequent keynote speaker, author, and thought leader. Her passion is to make work better and more meaningful.

Originally from Austria, Kathi has worked in Vienna, London, San Francisco, and Spain and now lives in Palo Alto, California. Kathi holds a doctoral degree in mathematics and a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Vienna, Austria.

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