eightfold.ai

Continuity and Business Growth:
The New Role of Talent Intelligence

Ashutosh Garg
Eightfold AI, Founder and CEO

Employers face big challenges right now. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, About 10 percent of U.S. job openings are currently unfilled. Every month, nearly 4 million U.S. workers quit their jobs in search of better pay, better benefits, more flexible schedules, and greater fulfillment.

These challenges call for swift, efficient action. Yet that's precisely where HR teams struggle.

Employers sometimes lack the necessary conditions to attract applicants and candidates, such as hybrid work options, robust health and safety protocols, and the necessary pay and benefits. Meanwhile, supply chain issues and other macro-level challenges place further pressure on already harried HR teams.

These challenges aren't small. Rather, they pose an existential threat to businesses. Businesses that do not find solutions to these problems cannot grow. They are also far more likely to suffer business continuity issues. For businesses throughout the U.S., the future is at stake.

Common to all these issues is an understanding gap between what workers want, what employers offer, and how employers understand their own hiring needs. Talent intelligence technology can bridge that gap.

Talent intelligence is no longer a cutting-edge technology toy or a nice-to-have tool. It's essential to the continuity and sustainability of any growing business.

Talent Intelligence **Finds the Right Person For Every Role**

A company that cannot maintain and upskill its workers is a company that cannot grow.

Talent intelligence enables employers to build a culture of continuity, growth, and retention by fueling an integrated approach to talent management. Companies are using talent intelligence technology to map careers, improve learning programs, consumerize employees' HR experiences, hire more proactively, and manage talent lifecycles.

Taking a Lifecycle Approach to Career Management

Employers need to think ahead. Their workers certainly are.

Today's job-seekers aren't just focused on the role at hand. They're imagining how a given role connects to others they will occupy in their careers. And they want to know that an employer will offer them the learning and development they need to achieve their goals.

Candidates' expectations include:

> **Career mapping.** People want to know how the role they're offered fits with the rest of their career. What will they learn here? How will it help them grow into future roles?

> **On-the-job learning.** As our lives become more complex, so do the skills needed to keep up at work. Candidates now seek employers with clear, defined training programs that deliver important information without confusion.

> **Technological support for lifelong learning.** According to data from workspace software provider Citrix, 88 percent of employees consider a company's technological ability to support ongoing education when deciding whether to take a new job.

> **Values alignment.** According to a workplace study by Blue Beyond Consulting and Future Workplace, only one in four people would accept a job where the company values do not align with their personal values.

Talent intelligence tools can help HR teams meet all three candidate expectations. For example, AI-based talent intelligence tools allow HR to create employee profiles that allow workers to see:

> Which short-term projects in the company match their profiles.

> What jobs match their profiles.

> Their skills gaps for those jobs.

> Which courses they need to fill those gaps.

With talent intelligence tools, career mapping can be done before a candidate is hired so they can imagine their futures before they accept an offer. This will not only help entice people to join the company but also encourage them to stay. Analysis can even include information on which training courses will help employees improve their skills and move into future roles.

AI provides technological support by automating the learning process, explains Roman Zhidkov, cloud architect at software engineering company DDI Development. "With AI, you can build a learning platform where all data, programs, materials, schedules based on individual learner's experience, preferences, and objectives are stored, tracked, and delivered," he writes.

Understanding the Role of Data

Data is the essential ingredient that makes the integrated approach to career management possible. With AI-based talent intelligence tools, data is collected at every step of the talent lifecycle, which allows hiring managers and talent acquisition teams to take that holistic view of career management and make the best decisions possible.

For example, with the predictive analytics capabilities of AI tools, HR can:

> Anticipate attrition and retention rates.

> Spot when a top performer may be preparing to leave.

> Execute better workforce planning programs.

> Create better workforce training that focuses on the skills employees need in order to remain satisfied with their work.

AI also gives HR the ability to seek out talent that is future-ready to meet anticipated workforce needs. The data generates stories that help hiring teams identify the right person for the job based on how well their skills, experiences, and goals fit into the future needs of the company.

Mapping the Future

Organizations that intend to compete for top talent must be able to provide candidates and employees with comprehensive career maps that not only show a path forward but also how to follow that path. The data from AI-powered talent management tools make it possible for hiring and talent management teams to meet these expectations, which aids organizations in recruiting and retaining high-quality talent.

AI-powered talent intelligence can:

> **Use historical data to develop broader career maps as an aid to hiring.** By analyzing historical data, HR teams can abandon the traditional corporate ladder in favor of flexible, innovative approaches to cultivating talent and keeping people engaged throughout their careers.

> **Integrate all areas of talent management into career maps.** Using AI, employee profiles can include a person's skills, experiences, education, and capabilities. HR teams can then match profiles to other jobs within the organization, which builds the foundation of a career map.

> **Connect employees to the skills they need to grow.** HR teams can also show employees which skills are needed for each different role so employees can identify any gaps in skills or training. The software can then identify different courses the employees would need to take to close those gaps.

> **Align mapping with workforce planning.** Predictive analytics can help HR teams spot the most likely skills requirements for future roles and prepare their employees now.

Embracing a Skills and Capabilities Mindset

Growth requires change. To build a workforce that can weather the unexpected, many organizations are now turning away from traditional job-based hiring and career development. Instead, they're hiring for skills and capabilities.

Skill-based hiring requires a fresh perspective on candidates and hiring practices. Hiring for skills also offers a number of benefits, including increased resilience and adaptability in an uncertain future.

Here's why employers are turning to skills-based hiring:

> **Traditional methods of hiring for credentials no longer work.** For decades, credentials operated as shorthand for skills. Yet employers have found this shorthand unreliable. Focusing directly on skills provides the information employers need.

> **AI-based talent intelligence allows employers to collect data — and actually use it.** Shorthand features like credentials were necessary when we evaluated candidates manually. AI-based talent intelligence, however, can make comparisons and spot patterns in vast datasets, allowing employers to focus on skills directly.

> **Skills-based hiring allows HR teams and tech to work in tandem.** The human expertise of HR staff is valuable. So are the analytical capabilities of AI-based talent intelligence. By combining the two, employers benefit from the best of both while allowing each to temper the weaknesses of the other.

Technology can help human resources professionals identify skills overlaps that might otherwise go unnoticed. Some of these overlaps can even come as a surprise.

Food service, for example, calls upon many of the same skills employed by customer-service specialists. The two roles share as many as 71 percent of the same skills, writes Tomer Cohen, chief product officer at LinkedIn. Customer-service specialists have been in high demand in recent years. By learning two new skills, as many as 26 million people working in food service could transition to a customer service role, he explains.

While technology can identify areas where skills overlap, it's up to human resources professionals and workers to implement this knowledge in a way that helps employees develop and apply new skills. The time to do so is now.

Getting Businesses **Future-Ready**

Talent intelligence supports hiring by connecting employers to candidates' top concerns about their jobs and their futures. It also helps businesses future-proof themselves by building a strong continuity plan and addressing sustainability issues in workforce growth.

Talent Intelligence for Lifelong Learning

Widespread talent shortages, broadening skills gaps, and worker restlessness have made lifelong learning a business imperative. When companies cannot hire all the new talent they need, their only choice for long-term success is to develop the talent they already have.

To do this effectively, organizations must create a culture that encourages and supports a lifetime of learning and career growth for their employees by:

> **Prioritizing professional development.** Employees drive innovation. People are a competitive advantage — so long as they continue to develop the skills they need to tackle today's problems. AI-based talent intelligence can provide a roadmap for career-long professional development.

> **Cultivating a growth mindset.** Creating a culture of learning starts with showing employees that they have a future with the company. AI allows HR to present employees with a vision of their futures and how to attain it, and it also gives them control over their learning.

> **Instilling a vision of the future.** Talent intelligence helps HR teams see the future and share it with employees, allowing both to visualize what roles workers can play in the company's own journey.

> **Personalizing skills development.** People learn best when the learning is relevant to them. Talent intelligence helps HR teams tailor learning to each employee, allowing for better information retention and stronger skill-building.

> **Placing control in the employee's hands.** Talent intelligence allows companies to put the power of learning directly into the hands of employees. That ownership and power motivates employees to embrace growth and take advantage of the opportunities before them.

To grab candidates' attention, employers will need to rethink their approaches to job descriptions. Clear, unbiased language that focuses on core skills can help employers build an applicant pool full of people with the traits and drive needed to succeed.

Helping Employees Move Forward

"Should I stay or should I go?"

It's a question on the minds of millions of U.S. workers. For employers who prefer that their workers stay, AI-powered talent intelligence tools can help by showing workers their career possibilities going forward.

For example, AI can help workers see their future prospects with the company. To zero in on a career path, employees need to be able to envision themselves in different roles. And they are increasingly relying on AI-based technology to compare their skills against emerging career paths that suit their abilities.

One critical asset to workers provided by talent intelligence is skills identification. When thinking about their careers, people often pigeonhole themselves because they underestimate their own skills. According to Accenture's Future Skills Pilot Report, most people can self-report an average of 11 skills. AI can identify an average of 34.

Talent intelligence technology can then use that expanded set of identified skills to match workers to other roles that would be a good fit for them. This opens doors to jobs workers wouldn't have previously considered feasible career choices.

"If we can move toward skills-based hiring, rather than defining an occupation by its job title, then we can help people identify the specific skills they have, or need to develop, in order to find productive and meaningful work," says Dr. Marian-Andrei Rizoiu, senior lecturer in behavioral data science with the Data Science Institute at the University of Technology Sydney.

With AI-powered tools, employers can help connect employees to those positions. In short, AI takes the guesswork out of changing careers by using data to help workers answer the question, "What's next?"

AI-Powered Talent Intelligence
in the Public Sector

Unbeatable offers from private sector employers, the retirement of older workers, and evolving employee expectations are fueling a talent crisis that has become one of the biggest challenges facing public sector employers.

AI-powered talent intelligence tools enable HR teams at public agencies to improve their ability to recruit and retain high-quality employees by:

> **Enabling career movement.** Workers don't want dead-end jobs, especially when they see their friends and colleagues moving along. By showing candidates a career map, public sector employers demonstrate that they're offering a career, not merely a job.

> **Building collaborative relationships.** In the past, managers felt themselves responsible for workers' career growth. Talent intelligence allows managers and workers to collaborate on workers' growth, creating a sense of ownership and making delegation easier.

Technology gives employers the ability to not only show employees where they can go within the organization, but also help them get there. Alyson Hudson, CIO of human resources at Prudential, explains that AI-based talent intelligence tools enable employers to:

> Identify skills over experience on resumes so they can job-match employees to roles.

> Identify opportunities in the organization that match those skills.

> Identify the skills gaps employees need to address to fill those future roles.

This data is used to build profiles and career maps so employees have autonomy over their careers within the organization. Through responsible-AI-backed talent management systems, employees are able to see what skills they need to develop to move further along their career paths.

The U.S. Department of Labor transitioned toward hiring for skills, not credentials. Wherever possible, the DOL began to make job postings that omitted mentions of college degrees or educational credentials in favor of discussing the actual skills required in the position.

The transition proved challenging. In an effort to make clear which skills were required in each job posting, it was necessary to explore a "system where multiple pathways could lead to each job," including assessment of necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities regardless of where these were learned, writes Michael Brickman, head of operations and compliance at Craft Education System and former senior advisor at the U.S. Department of Education.

The Department of Labor also put technology to work. Artificial intelligence can spot patterns and make predictions based on patterns identified in existing data. By using such tools to analyze skills directly, the DOL and other government agencies gain better insight into which skills are relevant to each position and which are used on a daily basis. This clarity leads to a better understanding of which candidates can best be paired with which jobs.

How Talent Intelligence
Supports a Global Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated existing trends toward an interconnected world in which geographic location matters less and less to employers. Today, many companies have the opportunity to access talent worldwide via technologies that support remote work.

Searching for talent worldwide poses challenges for traditional methods of recruitment, however. Deploying a global workforce, optimizing the use of workers' skill sets, and building career paths for each employee are likewise daunting at scale without the use of artificial intelligence and other technologies.

Applied correctly, AI-based talent intelligence can support the creation of a global workforce by:

> **Helping employers find and keep talent with needed skill sets.** Talent intelligence examines data about individual workers and worker groups, then generates insights that can help people approach work and hiring in new ways.

> **Identifying the skills your team has.** Research indicates most people are unconsciously biased to understate their own skills. AI-based talent intelligence can take a more realistic view of workers' skill sets.

> **Understanding where you need to hire.** A 2020 McKinsey study conducted in the UK found that "in about 75 percent of cases, it pays for an organization to reskill an employee," McKinsey's Tera Allas, Will Fairbairn, and Elizabeth Foote write. Talent intelligence can help employers know when to reskill and when to hire for skills — and, when hiring is needed, how to find exactly the right candidates for the role.

> **Improving flexibility to tackle unprecedented challenges.** HR can't predict every challenge an organization will face in the years ahead, but HR can help build a workforce with the skills necessary to tackle nearly any challenge. Grouping workers by skills improves organizational flexibility, particularly in the face of unusual challenges or immediate crises.

An Era of Unexpected, Urgent Challenges

Among other sudden changes, the pandemic triggered a mass shift toward remote work. The shift caused disruption at first, but remote work arrangements are quickly becoming familiar and even preferred by many workers and companies.

One result of the shift is renewed attention to the work being done, rather than to limitations of geography. Human resources professionals can now focus on building a workforce with a globally informed collection of diverse viewpoints, life paths, and experiences.

A global workforce provides a number of benefits, including a more diverse range of approaches to work and culture, which provide support for workers to deploy their skills effectively, and more viewpoints, which fuel innovation as well as the ability to spot more potential problems before they hinder performance.

Global hiring has long promised improved diversity, resilience, and access to talent. Today, artificial intelligence makes it easier to hire for the skills a company needs without limiting the candidate pool to a certain geographic range.

Here's why now is the time to hire global talent:

> **Remote work is our new normal.** Two years into the global pandemic, remote work is both normal and expected in many industries and roles. Workers are already comfortable working away from the office, so they're ready and able to embrace work anywhere in the world.

> **Improved AI-based talent intelligence means fewer biased shortcuts.** Hiring no longer has to bend to unconscious biases on the part of the hiring team. AI-enabled insights can pinpoint workers' skills and illuminate viable career paths for them within the company. "Humans working with, and enhanced by, AI, almost always produce better results than humans without AI, or AI without humans," Becky Frankiewicz and Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic at ManpowerGroup write.

> **A global candidate pool provides the support for reaching diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.** Candidates now expect employers to show real results in meeting DEI goals. A global talent pool, by definition, covers a multitude of human cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

> **Make skills-based hiring a reality.** Can the candidate do the job and grow into related roles in the future? AI-based talent intelligence makes it possible to answer this question, even when your hiring pool spans continents. By offering insights into promising future options, predictive analytics revitalize career mapping. They allow human resources teams to learn more about their own companies, improve mentorship of employees, and rethink how skills drive retention.

Using AI to Scale Hiring Internationally

Our remote-work world, combined with the refinement of artificial intelligence, offers the opportunity for companies to hire at a truly global scale. Managing a planet's worth of applications hasn't been achievable for humans working alone. Humans working with AI, on the other hand, can seek top talent worldwide.

AI is essential to global hiring. In the wake of the pandemic, 84 percent of employers are focused on using technology to revamp work processes, anticipating that up to 44 percent of the workforce could be moved to remote positions, Klaus Schwab and Saadia Zahidi at the World Economic Forum write.

Being able to work from anywhere in the world gives workers greater flexibility in the roles, employers, and career paths available to them. It also gives employers more options when recruiting. Companies are no longer limited to people willing to relocate to or already residing in the geographic locale of a particular office. Now, employers can look for talent worldwide.

Remote work tools, however, are only one piece of the technological puzzle when it comes to global hiring. Artificial intelligence is an essential part of the process, as well.

AI offers the following indispensable capabilities to companies seeking to hire globally:

> AI can analyze massive datasets, including an applicant pool that spans the globe.

> AI can focus on skills and capabilities rather than ineffective proxies like educational credentials.

> AI can provide insights into existing applicants and, via predictive analytics, suggest how a particular candidate might perform in various career paths.

A Human-AI Partnership in Hiring

Perhaps the most important factor in using AI to scale hiring internationally is to treat it as a partner to human efforts in the hiring process.

To scale hiring to a global level, AI is essential, but it works best when it is used to inform and support the work of human resources professionals and hiring managers. Understanding how well AI is working requires an ability to assess its impact on human endeavors and relationships.

AI's role in a global hiring process is to analyze data, report on patterns in that data, and make predictions. Identifying the best new hire for any given role, however, will always remain the role of the human beings participating in the hiring process.

The best way to incorporate AI into a global hiring process is to do so thoughtfully. For example, consider questions like:

> What needs to change to scale our hiring globally? What problems may arise?

> What tools can be used to solve those problems? Where is AI the right option?

> How will we implement AI and other tools to scale hiring?

> How will we oversee, measure, and adjust the use of AI in our hiring process?

Artificial intelligence makes a once-impossible task doable for many companies: Finding top talent in a global talent search. When incorporated with human expertise and other tools, AI can do its best work.

Recruitment in a Global Organization

Recruiting on a global scale poses challenges for human resources executives and their departments. To recruit, retain, and cultivate talent within a global organization, CHROs and their teams will need to integrate the right technologies into their hiring and communication practices.

First, human resources teams will need to support their own human decision making with the right technologies.

While human resources professionals are often highly skilled at what they do, they are limited to the amount of data humans can parse — and they are subject to using common shortcuts, like unconscious bias, as a way of managing that data.

Supporting human decision-making with tools like artificial intelligence and predictive analytics can help HR professionals become more aware of their own unconscious biases. By evaluating the patterns and suggestions highlighted by AI, human staff can see potential areas of bias revealed to them, and they can respond to AI's recommendations with a new understanding of the information presented.

Next, AI can be used to address the challenge of meeting legal and regulatory requirements.

Technology makes it possible for companies to hire globally, but it doesn't erase national boundaries or the laws enacted within those boundaries. Each country has its own labor regulations. The right hiring software can help companies keep track of applicable laws and regulations as they hire global talent.

Within the U.S., hiring laws include laws that prohibit discrimination on a wide range of protected characteristics. The right technology can help companies not only avoid running afoul of discrimination laws but also boost companies' abilities to reach their own DEI goals in hiring and retention.

Finally, recruiting best practices in a global organization must include a focus on communication.

Communication between HR staff and employees is essential, especially when that communication focuses on career growth. Applying predictive analytics helps HR staff and employees understand how a worker's individual skill set can develop into various career paths within the organization.

Companies can also use these tools to track promotions, lateral moves, and other career changes within the company. Tracking this information enriches the ability of predictive analytics to chart career paths for existing employees. It also helps HR teams spot and address obstacles to career growth.

"HR executives are positioned to drive this conversation because they should have an understanding of long-term talent gaps at the organizational level," says Dion Love, vice president of research and advisory in Gartner's HR practice.

Using up-to-date talent intelligence software can help human resources executives deepen their understanding of skills gaps and career pathing within the organization. The human resources department can thus better connect with workers, while executives can make more informed decisions about hiring and business objectives.

Global hiring opens up exciting new avenues for company growth, innovation, agility, and diversity. Yet it also poses challenges for CHROs and their teams. Choosing the right technology and prioritizing its use as a tool for communication and understanding can help guide HR teams in building a strong global organization.

Talent Intelligence for **Continuity and Business Growth**

Continuity and sustainable business growth are top-of-mind concerns for business leaders, as well they should be.

In a world of increasing uncertainty, building a dedicated team of skilled workers engaged in constant learning is a must in order to weather future storms and preserve an organization's key values and methods.

AI-based talent intelligence allows companies to address an era of high worker turnover and looming skills shortages. HR teams that partner with talent intelligence can:

> Leverage talent intelligence for better talent management and career mapping.

> Understand the skills that drive success in each role and find the candidates who have those skills.

> Build a culture of lifelong learning among staff in order to reskill and upskill existing talent as needed to tackle new challenges.

> Offer career mapping and guidance to workers who might otherwise leave the organization.

> Hire at scale — even a global one.

These goals have long been aspirations of companies worldwide. AI-based talent intelligence lets human resources teams turn these aspirations into realities.

Most people can self-report an average of 11 skills. AI can identify an average of 34.

About Eightfold AI

Eightfold AI's market-leading Talent Intelligence Platform™ helps organizations retain top performers, upskill and reskill their workforce, recruit talent efficiently, and reach diversity goals. Eightfold's patented deep learning artificial intelligence platform is available in more than 100 countries and 20 languages, enabling cutting-edge enterprises to transform their talent into a competitive advantage. For more information, visit www.eightfold.ai.

eightfold.ai