

Optimizing Your Talent Supply Chain

Using Talent Intelligence to Close Skills Gaps and Strengthen Your Business





The pandemic triggered a tectonic shift and accelerated the pace of change in the employment landscape that few, if any, could have anticipated. As a result, longstanding HR processes are being challenged as companies are focusing more on sustainable talent strategies for growth, including hiring for potential and creating an effective, adaptable, and diverse workforce. In fact, in a recent survey, HR leaders cited finding talent and building diverse teams as two of their top three challenges.¹

HR professionals are primed to be key change agents for their organizations, but the current systems alone are not equipped to support a high-tech, informed talent strategy. Valuable talent data is siloed and static, and it does not provide the insights needed for an informed internal-mobility and reskilling program.

The Intelligent Way Forward

This paper highlights the opportunity for companies to find, hire, develop, upskill, and retain a skilled workforce with a Talent Supply Chain strategy powered by artificial intelligence (AI).

The approach helps organizations match talent demands with appropriate candidates across the entire talent pool, guided by real-time intelligence on talent, emerging skills, and jobs. It enables companies to rethink their HR processes with scalable, data-driven strategies for reskilling and upskilling employees, increasing retention, and expanding the available talent pool.

An AI-powered talent supply chain is also the foundation for building a workforce for the future. Armed with new tools and intelligence, companies have an unprecedented ability to identify resilient skills, close gaps, improve business responsiveness, and unlock talent potential to fuel sustained success.

¹ [2022 Talent Survey - Eightfold](#)

The Current Talent Crisis

Tighter Talent Supply

Businesses are finding it harder than ever to attract and retain talent. Data from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) shows that job openings and quit rates remain historically high. In 2022, there was less than one available worker for every job opening (0.76 workers per opening), the lowest in history.²

As companies prepare for post-pandemic realities, they are wrestling with multiple talent challenges:



People are re-evaluating their professional priorities. Employees are seeking work that offers more flexibility, deeper personal fulfillment, better career opportunities, and more transparent career paths.



Digital transformation is increasing the demand for tech-savvy people. As every business and function increasingly becomes digital, employers are recruiting from the same finite supply of talent to support new business strategies, products, and services.



Talent networks are often siloed. Leaders and hiring managers have a lack of visibility to existing skill sets and career desires within their own organization. This puts a strain on internal mobility and reskilling within the organization.



Adopting and adapting to a hybrid workforce poses a challenge to many organizations. Managers and leaders must ensure they are upholding a desirable company culture and optimizing business processes for hybrid employees.



The rise in remote work and the gig economy has intensified the war for talent. Job seekers have an abundance of options while employers now face competition from around the world.



Shifting demographics are worsening the labor shortage. Baby Boomers retired in droves during the pandemic and fewer younger workers are participating in the job market.

² 2022 Talent Survey - Eightfold

Skills: The Linchpin in the Talent Crunch

The talent crunch is reliant on people, but at its core, it's about skills. Skills are the fundamental building block of talent management. It's the skills employees have—or can learn—that determine which jobs they can take on successfully. For employers, it's the combined skills of their workforce—and the ability to harness those capabilities effectively—that propels the business forward. Every organization needs the right talent with the right set of skills to deliver, compete, and grow.

"If we don't start thinking about upskilling and reskilling our own people and giving them the opportunity, not only to learn the skills, but then apply them through gigs, stretch assignments, and eventually into roles full time, you're actually not going to be able to meet your talent needs over a period of time."

Vicki Walia, Chief Talent and Capability Officer,
Prudential

As competition stiffens, identification of existing skills and the ability to upskill or reskill will become as important as ever. One in five skills (22%) requested for the average U.S. job, for example, is an entirely new requirement in that occupation.³ Therefore, businesses must identify existing skills, identify opportunities to upskill or reskill, and identify upcoming skill gaps. During the pandemic alone, companies accelerated their adoption of digital technologies and business models, which radically reshaped the skills required in nearly all industries.

A Look Inside the Banking Industry

Take this idea of upskilling or reskilling as a way to stay competitive and apply it to the banking industry. Research from Eightfold⁴ shows that the top skills in banking recruiting are related to a variety of other skills. By making data-

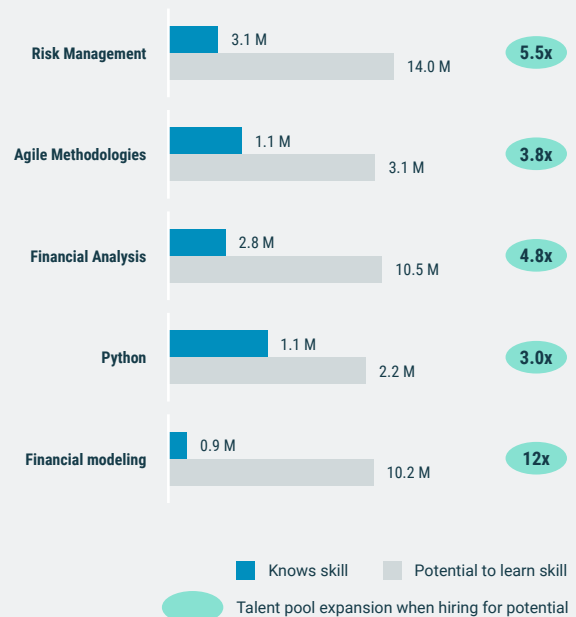
informed predictions about individuals' likelihood of learning a skill based on these adjacencies you can expand your talent pool substantially and unlock additional opportunities to identify the right person for a role.

Banking Workforce

	Adjacent Skills				
Risk Management	Financial Analysis	Portfolio Management	Risk Assessment	Corporate Finance	Due Diligence
Agile Methodologies	Scrum	SDLC	Requirement Analysis	User-centered design	Continuous Integration
Financial Analysis	Financial Reporting	Corporate Finance	Financial Accounting	Internal Controls	Risk Management
Python	C++	Algorithms	Java	R	Data Structures
Financial Modeling	Corporate Finance	Economic Analysis	Business Valuation	Financial Analysis	Business modeling

Source: Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform

Potential to Learn Based on Skill Adjacencies—U.S. Workforce



³ The Burning Glass Institute (BCG) Press Release, May 2022

⁴ How Banks Can Become Future Ready, Eightfold AI

Building a Supply Chain for Talent

The Talent Supply Chain

Organizations must address their talent and skills needs holistically—from talent supply through business demand—if they are to overcome current shortages. Organizations should constantly and consistently identify and review talent and skills trends to stay on top of the skills market, and existing talent and skill availability within their business should be collected and assessed. Managers and leaders should easily redeploy talent where it's most beneficial to the business and upskill and reskill talent to meet emerging requirements. Underlying all this, employers need a quantifiable skills framework to identify and close skills gaps.

TCS' Human Capital (HC) practice works with customers across industries to change the dynamics around talent using the principles of supply chain management.

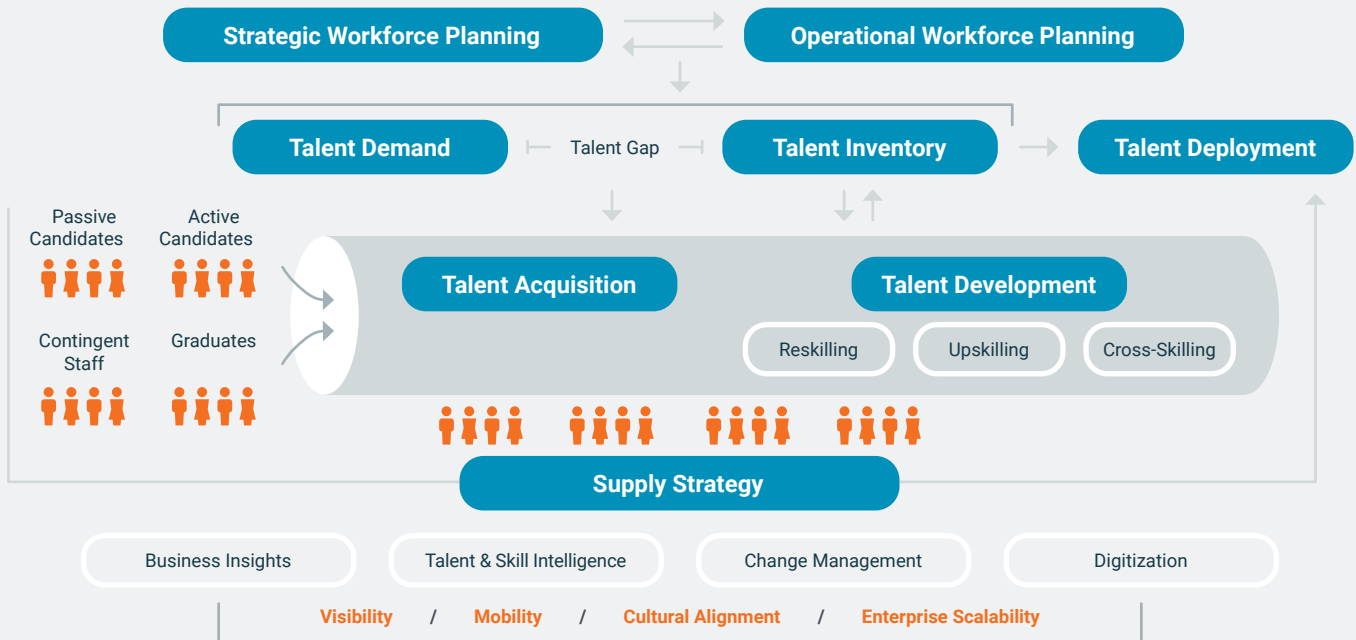
A well-functioning talent supply chain allows companies to place the right people in the right role at the right time, and the concept of Talent Marketplace brings the supply to the demand. Employers can align employees' skills and career aspirations with business priorities. This creates an agile, resilient workforce that can help organizations succeed in an increasingly unpredictable world.

7 Talent Supply Chain Pillars

TCS' Human Capital practice has identified the core pillars required to manage a talent supply chain efficiently and effectively. These pillars, which are enabled with a combination of process, technology, and culture, include:

- Workforce Planning** Develop a workforce blueprint to enable, align, and execute business strategies and people operations. Workforce planning should be both strategic and operational. Strategic workforce planning targets forecasting and a top-to-bottom approach to support business growth and priorities. Operational workforce planning is bottoms-up to focus on the intricacies such as skill requirements at each role and experience levels.
- Talent Demand** An understanding of talent demands with qualitative and quantitative requirements, such as number of requirements and depth of the core skills, should be reflected in operational workforce planning and any other operational tool where this demand is being registered.
- Talent Inventory** Analyze the skills and potential of the workforce relative to business demands and identifying capability gaps. This is possible with an understanding of current skill sets, skills adjacencies, and experience levels.
- Talent Development** Create upskilling/reskilling opportunities and delivering personalized development plans to every employee.
- Talent Deployment** Match and move employees into new roles and projects based on skills and skill adjacencies.
- Talent Acquisition** Identify and hire talent with the right skills and potential while drawing from a broader supply base.
- Supply Strategy** Develop strategies to close skills gaps from an optimized mix of internal and external channels. The supply strategy can be mobility through inventory, development, talent acquisition, or a combination of all.

Talent Supply Chain



The Resilient Talent Supply Chain

Businesses that build talent supply chain capabilities can transform how they manage their talent supply (including employees, candidates, and contractors) to meet business demands. In the experience of TCS' HC practice, a resilient supply chain includes cross-functional visibility, talent mobility, cultural alignment, adaptability, and enterprise scalability and strength.

Visibility

- Visibility exists at every point and for every player in the talent supply chain.
- Business and talent leaders have a complete view of the skills inside and outside their organizations.
- Recruiters and hiring managers can see who has the skills or potential to excel in a given role.
- Employees have a clear picture of their skills and possible career paths.
- Candidates know where and why they fit into an organization.

Mobility

- Talent and skills flow easily through the supply chain—from role to role and department to department.
- Teams can eliminate bottlenecks like finding skilled candidates and mitigating unconscious biases to diversify and expand the talent pipeline.
- Internal mobility is promoted and supported by the right policies, talent hoarding is discouraged, and employees have opportunities to learn and advance in both traditional and non-traditional career paths.
- To continuously improve and remain future ready, career trends should be analyzed regularly, especially following any internal-mobility actions.

Cultural Alignment

- Organizations should create a culture that is fluid, integrated, and rewards reinvention and reskilling.
- Cross-functional teams should come together to create workforce and internal fluidity plans.
- Business units should make it easy for their resources and leaders to mobilize teams. Thus, efforts requiring hybrid profiles across multiple units and projects are integrated to the success of the business.

Enterprise Scale

- Talent supply chain capabilities are built and used across the business.
- The organization has a clear skills charter, a unified talent function, and an integrated talent management system.
- Talent decisions don't depend on the specialized knowledge of individual recruiters and managers. Instead, technology is used to find patterns of success in massive volumes of talent data, and the resulting talent intelligence is available at all levels of the organization.

A well-functioning talent supply chain allows companies to place the right people in the right role at the right time.

Adding Talent Intelligence

Record-Keeping Systems Aren't Enough

Human Capital Management (HCM) systems are an essential foundation for HR operations. But alone these systems of record don't provide the insights needed to optimize a talent supply chain.

These systems do house a vast amount of data about people, skills, and jobs, but the data is limited, static, and disconnected. Often the data is siloed in the HR applications supporting various functions like payroll, recruiting, and learning and development. What's more, skill taxonomies and job libraries often differ from one system to another.



Vodafone is a leading telecommunications company operating in 21 countries and two geographic regions. They are a purpose-driven company, with the aim to become a technology communications organization, and build a sustainable digital society that is inclusive for all. As such, they are embarking on a journey to hire 7,000 software engineers by 2025.

*By tightly integrating AI-powered talent intelligence from Eightfold to their existing SuccessFactors HXM Suite, Vodafone is creating a unique full experience platform, encompassing HR processes like career and success planning. **In the first three months of go-live, 50% of employees have updated their career profiles, and Vodafone has seen a 144% increase in female applicants.***

As a result, companies can't acquire and apply talent using a complete, up-to-date picture of an individual's skill set and potential. They might be able to identify the skills an employee had when they were hired for a specific position. But they lose track of the skills gained through job and development experiences and have little insight into an employee's capabilities beyond their functional role.

Plus, all this talent data is internally focused. This leaves a significant knowledge gap about their employees' skills and how they have evolved in the industry and the broader job market.

Talent Intelligence Systems Deliver Actionable Insights

Forward-looking organizations are turning to talent intelligence platforms to better manage their talent supply chain. These systems of intelligence "sit on top of" record-keeping applications from vendors like Oracle, SAP, and Workday. They deliver rich, real-time insights into people, skills, and jobs by using artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze data from internal and external sources. For example, the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Suite applies advanced, deep-learning AI to the world's largest set of talent data. The proprietary Eightfold data set encompasses 1.4 million skills, 800,000 job titles, and the profiles of more than 1.5 billion people—the equivalent of half the global workforce.

Talent intelligence systems improve business and talent outcomes at all points in the talent supply chain—from workforce planning through sourcing and talent acquisition, to ongoing talent development and deployment. These systems should support skill-centric, future-oriented strategies through the following capabilities: Identifying the skills required to succeed in a role; matching people to jobs based on skills and skill adjacencies; delivering personalized career-development pathways; mitigating unconscious bias during hiring and development; and providing enterprise and industry benchmarking for roles and skills.

Increasing Business Resiliency and Performance

3 Ways to Build an Agile Future Workforce

Every business must contend with the rapid pace of change in skills and jobs. Emerging technologies, new customer demands, and economic volatility only add to the challenge.

Sustaining success in such an unpredictable business environment requires a workforce that can take on today's priorities and adapt to those of tomorrow. A talent supply chain powered by AI builds an agile workforce by giving organizations the power to:

1

Tightly link talent and business strategies

It is now possible for organizations to translate business demands into skills and roles requirements in a scalable, data-driven way. Workforce planning becomes an ongoing activity supported by real-time talent intelligence, rather than a once-a-year effort with no visibility into workforce capabilities. Business and talent leaders can set a path for growth knowing the skills employees have and the skills required to remain relevant. Talent insights can be shared at all levels of the organization and across HR functions so that building a modern workforce becomes a responsibility—and opportunity—for everyone.

2

Fill skills gaps faster and more effectively

Enhancing talent decisions with AI is like applying oil to the talent supply chain—the entire process runs more smoothly and efficiently. On the talent acquisition side, companies can remove hiring bottlenecks by using skill adjacencies to expand the available talent supply and accelerate time to fill. On the talent management side, organizations can facilitate the transition of employees to future-critical roles by identifying where existing skills can be applied and what reskilling or upskilling is required. Connecting employees to internal openings and on-the-job experiences also helps solve the talent shortage.

3

Unlock human potential to fuel success

Talent intelligence allows companies to make winning bets on human potential and offer more opportunities for everyone. With a clear roadmap for career advancement, employees are encouraged to master new skills and assume new roles. Personal and business purposes are aligned, and employees feel empowered and energized to continue their learning and growth at the company. Loyalty increases, attrition falls, and businesses earn a reputation as a great place to work. Companies transform their workforce into a strategic advantage that propels the business into the future.

Looking Forward

Organizations need to take a holistic and enduring approach to solve for talent shortages and create an agile workforce.

The first step should be centered on robust forecasting and workforce planning with a focus on upskilling and reskilling current talent before exploring external options. Intelligent technology systems and agile structures should support these initiatives. With a proactive approach, demand cycles should reflect the informed supply and strategic movement of employees instead of the more traditional and reactive backfilling of talent.

The organizations that will get this right will rely on intelligent systems, agile processes, and cultural readiness.

Partners in Talent Transformation

The TCS Human Capital practice and Eightfold AI understand the core challenges facing HR and business leaders, including the talent and skills gaps that jeopardize company performance.

Together, the TCS Human Capital practice and Eightfold AI can help translate your business objectives into a talent and skills strategy that drives long-term growth with an AI-enabled talent supply chain.

Contact Michael Koenig (mkoenig@eightfold.ai) to learn more.

Contributors

Ram Subramanian - Global Head, Human Capital Practice, Tata Consultancy Services

Sarah Houghton King - HR Transformation Director, Tata Consultancy Services

Subir Das - Head, Talent Intelligence Solutions, Tata Consultancy Services

Kevin Schultz - Director, Human Capital Practice, Tata Consultancy Services

Muniza Aftab, Ph.D. - Talent Supply Chain Consultant, Tata Consultancy Services

Ratika Garg - Consultant, Human Capital Practice, Tata Consultancy Services

Jason Cerrato - Senior Director, Product Marketing, Eightfold AI

Andrea Shiah - Head of Talent Strategy and Transformation

Hicham Zahr - Head of Insights and Analytics, Eightfold AI

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 155 countries and 24 languages, enabling cutting-edge enterprises to transform their talent into a competitive advantage. For more information, visit www.eightfold.ai.

About TCS

Tata Consultancy Services is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organization that has been partnering with many of the world's largest businesses in their transformation journeys for over 50 years. TCS offers a consulting-led, cognitive powered, integrated portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions. This is delivered through its unique Location Independent Agile™ delivery model, recognized as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

A part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, TCS has over 592,000 of the world's best-trained consultants in 46 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US \$25.7 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022, and is listed on the BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) and the NSE (National Stock Exchange) in India. TCS' proactive stance on climate change and award-winning work with communities across the world have earned it a place in leading sustainability indices such as the MSCI Global Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Emerging Index. For more information, visit www.tcs.com.



The Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform™ is 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.