

# The ultimate buyer's guide for a talent intelligence platform



# Now is the time to start using AI across all your talent programs, including acquisition, management — especially upskilling — and contingent workforce planning.

After reading this guide, you will have a better understanding of:

- How organizations use talent intelligence to retain top performers, upskill and reskill their workforces, efficiently recruit talent, and reach diversity goals
- What deep-learning AI is and how talent intelligence platforms benefit from data
- How talent intelligence integrates data about talent, skills, and roles from legacy HRIS systems, external labor market trends, candidate and contingent worker talent pools, and the existing workforce to inform a total view of talent
- The depth and breadth of a deep-learning AI talent intelligence platform, spanning the entire employee life cycle
- Why skills and potential are the best indicators of candidate and employee success, and how AI unlocks access to these indicators
- How every person in an organization benefits from talent intelligence, including talent teams, business leaders, and employees
- Key questions to ask vendors about AI, its authenticity, ethics, and compliance

# The ultimate buyer's guide for a talent intelligence platform

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# The business challenge

The complexities of any talent system are many and made even more complicated by uncertainty in today's labor market. **These include:**

**Remote and hybrid work arrangements.** Our new world of work is creating unique challenges for talent teams to keep workers engaged and aware of opportunities to work on new projects and teams — or even apply for a new role within their organization.

**Disruption to your business.** Many organizations had to quickly move operations and services to the digital space during the pandemic. Today, many organizations face the challenges of entering entirely new industries — telehealth, fintech, and more — and need to find people with those skills to make those industry transformations successful.

**Skills are changing faster than ever.** Increased business transformation creates a greater need for finding talent with new and emerging skills — and the capabilities to learn them. In fact, the half-life of skills, once at five years, is shrinking even more. Many technical skills have a half-life of only two to three years.

**Using AI for good to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.**

Everyone is looking for ways to strengthen DEIB practices and policies, from building a more diverse workplace to supporting a pipeline of talent with the skills to do the work.

**Labor shortage projections.**

Talent leaders know they can't hire their way out of a labor shortage. There simply aren't enough workers to fill the gaps, so they need to look to more creative tactics, like hiring for skills, upskilling and reskilling current employees, and developing a strong contingent workforce.

**Market volatility.** External factors — including economic uncertainty and political tensions — make it difficult to predict market fluctuations. Organizations must be nimble and ready to change talent strategies at any time. This requires a deep understanding of the workforce, labor market, and competitive landscape.

1 in 3

HR leaders are struggling to attract diverse talent, but they're simultaneously demanding specific experiences, education, and skills

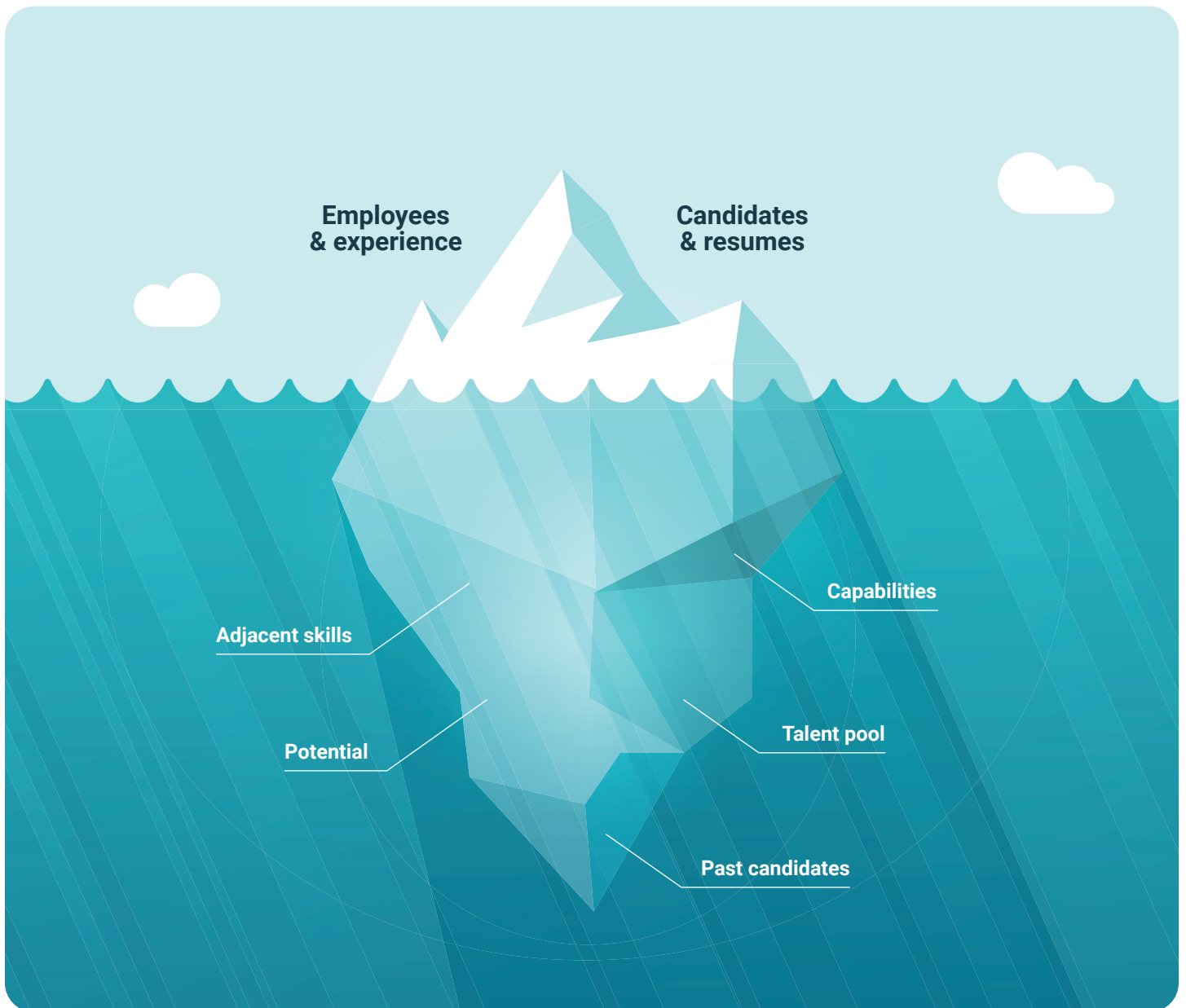
— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

1 in 2

HR leaders said having the right skills to perform a job was critical

— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

# Hidden—yet essential—aspects of the talent experience



# New approaches needed

Traditional ways of addressing these challenges won't work going forward. Talent and business leaders need better ways to manage and create workforce strategies that serve the organization's goals and their employees' professional growth and well-being while being highly flexible to adapt to whatever comes next.

The reliance on "who you know" for job opportunities, promotions, and mentoring is outdated and out of touch. It often excludes talented people with the potential to

do more, and doesn't help create a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Standard practices behind hiring and promoting talent are no longer the easiest or fastest way to find high-quality talent. A long-standing reliance on job descriptions, résumés, and even interview practices doesn't find the best people for the role.

Siloed HR functions haven't successfully prepared organizations for talent needs. For instance, once someone is hired, is there a developmental plan to keep that person engaged, learning, and growing? What are the best ways to fill skills gaps other than hiring? Could there be a more strategic connection between talent teams and procurement in hiring and managing a contingent workforce, keeping this vital group in the organization's talent pool?

Organizations often make decisions about talent without a complete understanding or full view of what is happening in their workforces and their industries at large. The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way any longer.

95%

of HR leaders struggle to recruit talent, with 1 in 5 reporting that their recruiters are overwhelmed

— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

## Here's why:



Job descriptions are often based on outdated skills taxonomies and don't include new skills needed for a role



Résumés are a superficial summary of what a person has done and don't show what they are capable of doing



Job interviews, while great to meet and greet candidates, are often also poor indicators of a person's potential and what skills they can learn

74%

of employees surveyed said they considered applying for a job in the past 12-18 months, but stopped short of applying due to confusion over their compatibility with the job

— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

# How true deep-learning AI works

Talent solutions can yield dramatically different results depending on the depth and scope of the artificial intelligence that powers them. Know the difference.

You've probably heard terms like machine learning and deep learning used interchangeably, but the differences are significant as your organization's success depends on the type of AI you use.

## Let's break it down:

### AI



**AI** is the broadest term for classifying programs that can sense, reason, act, and adapt.

### Machine learning



**Machine learning** is a subset of AI in which algorithms improve their performance as they are exposed to more data over time.

### Deep learning



**Deep learning** is a subset of machine learning in which multilayered neural networks learn from vast amounts of data.

As data has exploded, so has the demand for data analysis, but there simply isn't enough time in the day for organizations to clean, format, and analyze all their data.

Deep-learning AI analyzes massive amounts of data in any format at scale to identify critical information for the entire talent ecosystem. The more data analyzed over time, the more deep-learning AI evolves, improving its efficacy and accuracy.

As you pull data from larger, more inclusive sources, you help ensure the data set provides the most accurate recommendations about jobs, candidates, careers, and skills for any type of work in the world. Deep-learning AI helps unlock a person's potential, and ultimately transform how organizations hire, manage, and develop talent.

# AI and the talent intelligence platform

**Real talent intelligence platforms are powered by deep-learning AI.**

You may have heard of talent intelligence or talent intelligence platforms. These are not a tool, a feature, or a piece of technology used somewhere in the talent process or life cycle.

A true AI-powered talent intelligence platform is an advanced technology guided by deep-learning artificial intelligence to make better decisions throughout everything in the talent life cycle.



# Overview of an AI-powered talent intelligence platform

## Harness the power of talent intelligence

Enterprise HR systems

Public data sources

Global datasets



Understand your company

Understand your talent

Understand your market

A deep-learning AI talent intelligence platform helps you:

- Better understand the skills and capabilities of all talent, including candidates, employees, and contingent workers
- Provide personalized upskilling, reskilling, and succession planning to keep your organization up-to-date with modern skills
- Analyze your market, including what skills competitors have and which ones you lack

The best talent intelligence platforms expand the opportunity for choice, providing robust data and insights to help leaders make informed decisions throughout every stage of the talent life cycle. A true AI-driven talent intelligence platform will also automate the most time-consuming and tedious aspects of any HR or recruiter job. This way, talent teams can focus on the best part of their jobs – connecting with and helping people reach their true potential.

Deep-learning AI platforms should also abide by responsible AI, an approach to creating and implementing AI systems safely and ethically. This helps create a fair, inclusive, diverse workplace that welcomes people from all backgrounds based on their potential to succeed.

### Benefits of responsible AI:



Illuminates where great candidates might be dropping off in the funnel, encouraging best practices for DEIB and inviting more diverse candidates into the talent pipeline



Masks personal information like names, locations, and schools that traditionally trigger unconscious bias about individuals on the basis of their gender, race, age, sexual orientation, or disability status



Quickly finds and surfaces the best candidates based on skills, capabilities, and potential for the recruiter to engage, leveling the playing field for all candidates



Helps remove limitations and potential bias in résumé review, job description writing, and interviews



of HR leaders plan to increase use of AI in at least one area of HR  
– *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

# How AI focuses on **skills and potential**

Organizations face a scarcity of talent and often cite a skills shortage as a leading reason why. It's time to go beyond thinking about just finding people with the skills you need — it's time to look at what they are capable of learning.

When it comes time to fill a role, organizations often look to potential hires or employees to have certain skills. That mindset made a lot of sense before today's more advanced AI.

Powered by deep-learning AI, the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform constantly analyzes the careers of more than a billion people and more than a million skills. Eightfold's data sets are dynamically refreshed to show how skills and people's capabilities evolve. Skills adjacencies are indicative of someone's ability to quickly learn new things.

By integrating and analyzing employee skills, AI also has immediate impacts on workforce and succession planning. Organizations no longer have to rely on recruiting external talent to fill open positions. Instead, talent leaders can find internal employees who have the potential to succeed in those roles.

An AI-powered talent intelligence platform can analyze skills and quickly identify the best matching candidates.

When an organization understands the capabilities of every employee, it has a much wider talent pool available for any role. This also helps keep your talent from leaving.

## **3 top factors in workforce strategy to help achieve business objectives:**

- Retaining top performers
- Hiring and retaining talent with the right skills
- Understanding skills and capabilities across the workforce

— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*



In addition to considering capabilities, AI-driven talent intelligence enables a real-time, dynamic understanding of skills that was never possible before.

Competency models and skill taxonomies have been the go-to for quantifying skills for years, but they've always been too static and manual to inform a dynamic talent strategy. By the time a consulting firm finishes defining different roles and skill requirements, jobs have already evolved to the point where the competency models are no longer valid.

Today, organizations use deep-learning AI to gain real-time insights into the rising and declining skills in the marketplace to better prepare for the future. This insight best defines the required skills instead of traditional job descriptions that quickly become outdated. And because skills are the most granular aspect of a job, organizations can deconstruct roles to meet job requirements with any mix of existing or new talent.

This enables a proactive talent strategy where recruiters and managers better understand internal and external talent to find best-fit candidates based on the skills needed in their business.

### Benefits of an AI-driven skills approach:

- **Employees** see exactly which skills they need to advance their careers and then complete relevant training to gain those skills, creating role transparency, equity, and a talent strategy that aligns with the business
- **Managers** understand the skills of their teams at a glance, then address skill gaps with a combination of upskilling, reskilling, and hiring
- **Recruiters** become true partners of hiring managers, defining and finding ideal candidates by breaking down jobs into must-have skills
- **Candidates** see exactly how well they match job openings, greatly enhancing candidates' confidence and boosting application rates. Based on their skills, candidates can also match with jobs they may have never considered, which expands career opportunities, particularly for diverse candidates
- **Organizations** gain dynamic insights into the skills of their workforce, competitors' workforces, and the overall market, enabling a proactive talent strategy especially when it comes to succession planning
- **Talent** decisions become based on what someone is capable of doing instead of past experiences or connections



# How AI improves diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

A strong DEIB strategy boosts overall talent strategy. Here's how AI helps reduce bias and add more talent to your organization.

It starts with analytics. With AI-powered talent intelligence platforms, it's easier to pinpoint places in the hiring process where you might have a diversity issue. If certain groups are dropping off at stages in your talent process, there might be some unconscious bias preventing those candidates from progressing in your talent pipeline.

That's why AI must be built with Equal Opportunity Algorithms to prevent bias and increase trust. These algorithms use only relevant data, proactively excluding factors like age, race, gender, or disability status.

These platforms also translate the skills of candidates from different backgrounds, including military veterans returning to the civilian workforce or workers who don't have a four-year college degree. It's about who

can do the job, not just who has done this job before. With the ability to anonymize profiles and mask personal details that might contribute to bias, every candidate or employee can be evaluated based on their potential.

95%

of HR leaders said they're using AI for DEIB efforts, yet only 26% have implemented masking résumés

— *Eightfold AI 2022 Talent Survey*

144%

Vodafone saw 144% more women applying within the first three months of using the Eightfold Personalized Career Site

With a single AI platform for all talent, the emphasis on diversity does not end with hiring. DEIB best practices are a critical component of talent management and continue throughout the employee life cycle. Skills-driven decision-making around potential and capabilities takes precedence over more traditional paths to new opportunities and promotions.

Mentorship and training are centrally managed and personalized, allowing employees to find mentors based on their interests, capabilities, and career goals. With a skills-based hub for employees to pursue learning, connections, internal projects, and promotions, everyone is on a more level playing field, including remote employees.

# Embracing an elastic talent strategy

By focusing on skills, you can empower an “elastic” talent strategy — a total talent strategy engineered for flexibility and agility.

An elastic workforce is a real competitive advantage for organizations. Without a direct connection between contingent workers and the larger workforce strategy, it’s easy for organizations to lose great people once they’ve completed gigs, rather than redeploy them to new projects or even hire them for full-time roles.

A siloed view of this talent pool impacts the overall value of contract work. Procurement usually manages contingent workforce hiring and data, and talent acquisition departments don’t have full visibility into how their skills plug into the rest of the organization. Additionally, organizations that depend on multiple outside suppliers for contingent talent experience steep costs, outsourcing inefficiencies, and unpredictable candidate quality.

With deep-learning AI, procurement and talent acquisition leaders can quickly identify available contingent workers with the right skills. As a result, business and talent leaders can better assess the potential and capabilities of contingent talent and more effectively match the best candidates to assignments — all while accelerating time to fill and saving money.

Once that contingent worker is in the talent pool, AI also shows what they can do and what they’re capable of learning, making those people and skills visible to talent and procurement leaders. With an integrated elastic talent strategy that is skills-driven, organizations can quickly scale up or down as needed and confidently make critical talent decisions to improve their workforce agility.

## Benefits of an elastic talent strategy:

- **Instantly access your entire talent pool.** Accelerate time to hire by tapping into existing talent pools of previous candidates, employees, and contingent workers
- **Make better-informed decisions and find higher-quality hires.** With timely, intelligent, and explainable candidate matching, decision makers always find the best person for the gig
- **Minimize dependencies on outside staffing firms.** Reduce costs through direct sourcing, and streamline work that supports your organization’s overall objectives

*“Fifty percent of the workforce by 2030 will be freelancing or gig. You’re not going to be able to hire full-time employees at the right clip come a future date.”*

— Alan Kumar, Elastic Talent Program Manager, Dolby Laboratories

# Who benefits from talent intelligence

A system built on deep-learning AI has immense benefits for every person in the organization.

## Chief Talent Officers, Chief People Officers, and Chief Human Resource Officers

With a talent intelligence platform, heads of talent have the analytics they need to see how their workforce's capabilities compare to the competition. They can do more with less, lowering costs through higher internal mobility, lower turnover, and greater redeployment. With more insights, data, and options, leaders have a stronger foundation to inform workforce decisions and future planning.

By adopting a talent intelligence platform, CHROs and their talent teams can focus more on providing value as active business partners and strategic advisers to executive leadership. Heads of talent are seen as innovators, bringing leading technology to the forefront of talent strategies and better preparing their organizations for the future of work.



## Talent acquisition teams

A talent intelligence platform improves every aspect of the hiring process, including:

- **Sourcing and talent rediscovery.**

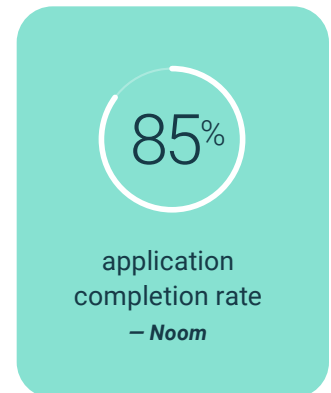
Organizations spend much of their sourcing budgets on external sources, including agencies, job boards, professional network licenses, and more.

These are the sources of candidates who know you the least and are least likely to result in a

hire. With talent intelligence, organizations focus on the people who know them the best — their talent network of past applicants, current employees, past employees, and employee referrals.

- **Career sites.** Organizations invest a lot of effort into these sites, but when someone searches for a job, finding the right match often ends up being guesswork. Personalized career sites invite candidates to upload their résumés to career sites, and AI helps match a candidate's skills to open roles. Candidates have more visibility into why they're a good match for positions, giving them greater confidence to apply for jobs. Platforms also build career sites with AI tailoring that site experience to prospective candidates, making the experience personalized and unique.

- **Recruitment operations.** Searching for the right candidates and guiding them through the interview process can take significant time and resources. To make this more efficient, recruiters need access to a full suite of talent tools to attract and engage with



candidates throughout the funnel — from creating and managing events, to communicating with candidates across channels, targeted campaigns, and more. A talent intelligence platform can infuse insights, recommendations, and automation throughout the process, helping recruiters be efficient with their time and make better decisions at scale.

- **Screening.** Rather than screen hundreds of résumés for every open role, organizations can use AI to match people based on their skills and capabilities. “Strong matches” are ranked highest, saving valuable time and freeing up recruiting teams to do what they do best — connect with and place people in the right roles.
- **Interviewing.** With a talent intelligence platform, interviews are less subjective and based on data about a person’s skills and capabilities. AI validates skills on a résumé and identifies new capabilities.
- **Visibility into the contingent workforce.** While contingent workforces often live in procurement’s world, talent acquisition leaders are finding real advantages to having more visibility into this talent pool. Contingent workers fill skills gaps and can even become potential candidates for full-time roles.

## Talent management teams

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Talent intelligence platforms address every aspect of talent management, including:

- **Internal mobility.** Employees are matched to roles based on their capabilities and potential, promoting equality. Every employee has access to career pathing to see what they need to learn, how to do it, and other areas or opportunities to help them take the next step in their career.
- **Talent mentoring.** AI helps match employees with mentors based on common areas of interest.
- **Search by skills.** With a talent intelligence platform, employers can search for internal employees interested in taking on other projects to learn new skills. Talent leaders can also work with procurement to source contingent workers based on the types of skills they need for each project or gig.

- **Reskilling and upskilling.** With the half-life of skills rapidly declining, the need to upskill and reskill existing talent has never been greater. AI provides the skills insights talent leaders need to see how their workforce’s skills stack up to the competition and where they need to shore up skills gaps.

- **Succession planning.** Organizations with a full view of their entire workforce can more easily identify replacements for departing employees based on their skills and capabilities.

- **Talent redeployment.** In times of great uncertainty, organizations often make the difficult decision to let talented people go. However, finding new workers is incredibly challenging in today’s tough labor market. Instead of jumping to job cuts, AI helps business and talent leaders see every employee’s skills and learning capabilities, and could potentially redeploy talent to other roles instead of losing them altogether.



## DEIB leaders

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While organizations have committed to creating more diverse and inclusive workforces, there is still progress to be made. Talent intelligence creates a clear picture of a person’s skills and potential, drawing connections across the organization to improve equal access to opportunities for all. AI matches employees with mentors, projects, and new jobs. Everyone has a chance at a promotion based on their skills and capabilities. Organizations that use talent intelligence platforms see greater numbers of underrepresented people apply. Built-in dashboards provide complete diversity information across the hiring funnel, creating true accountability at the corporate and individual levels.



## Learning and development leaders

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With talent intelligence, learning and development teams no longer have to operate in a silo. Employees take courses they need to grow and move into new roles informed by AI-supported skill development plans and skill-driven recommendations. The L&D department can work with employees and managers to build customized training programs for employees based on their interests and capabilities, and dynamically align and guide those plans to where the organization needs to head in the future.

## Hiring managers

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No longer will recruiters struggle to meet hiring managers' expectations in the recruiting process. Talent intelligence helps identify the right candidates based on skills and capabilities. With complete visibility, recruiters and hiring managers can work together to review several good candidates at the intake meeting and make adjustments to the job requirements as needed in the process. Managers can also have more fruitful and supportive discussions with employees once these hires are on board, based on increased visibility to skill development and potential opportunities in the organization.

## Talent operations professionals

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Talent-ops professionals find several benefits with a talent intelligence platform. Valuable analytics identify opportunities for improvements in the hiring process, including where diverse candidates may be dropping out. Talent Operations professionals also find that they can discard multiple tools in favor of using one platform for every function — including campaigns, workflow automation, events, interview feedback automation, and candidate messaging — to give them one place to manage and see a complete view of all talent.

## Chief Information Officers

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Many organizations have invested in multiple HR tools that each perform different functions. Talent intelligence simplifies, reduces, and does the work of many tools in one comprehensive platform that provides a complete view of all talent. With the ability to integrate with systems of record, like an ATS or HRIS, AI-powered talent intelligence platforms offer valuable insights that unlock hidden workforce potential, surfacing information when and where it's needed most in every talent process.

## Employees

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In organizations with a talent intelligence platform, employees have a career hub that begins with their employee profile, giving them insights into what they might need to add to their skill sets. They also see mentor recommendations and what courses they should take. AI also matches them to internal opportunities, including new jobs and projects. The career hub puts employees in charge of their development, moving organizations away from more informal connections to cultures built on equal opportunities for all.

## Candidates

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Candidates can see where their skills and capabilities fit in an organization rather than waste time applying for positions that aren't good fits. Additionally, candidates' profiles are kept alive in the talent network and considered for other roles and projects, including those who just missed out on an offer but would still make great employees.

# Questions to ask about a prospective platform

## How should an AI-driven platform work?

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It should use aggregated learning and draw complex patterns from global data sets that include thousands of job titles, millions of skills, and billions of career trajectories from around the world.

## Does the platform emphasize potential and capabilities?

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True deep-learning AI systems contain a complete history of people's careers and have so much data that they can show what people are capable of doing, even if they are currently in a different role.

## Is there a full life cycle approach?

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A true talent intelligence platform should eliminate the need for outdated CRMs, primitive or rudimentary interview-scheduling tools, employee-referral tools, and other point solutions. It should give a holistic view of the entire workforce — full-time and contingent — and allow talent leaders to analyze every talent pipeline and employee.

## How does the platform remove bias?

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A major benefit of an AI-powered talent intelligence platform is the ability to reduce unconscious bias, mainly through masking or anonymizing results about job candidates, including gender, ethnicity, race, age, and even where they attended college. Every AI should use Equal Opportunity Algorithms.



### What about compliance with privacy laws?

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Ongoing compliance with all privacy laws in every labor market on a global scale should be a priority for any platform.



### Does the platform integrate with existing technology?

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Any AI-powered talent intelligence platform should offer a bi-directional sync with all standard ATS and HRIS systems.



### Is it available in multiple languages and countries?

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It should be available in many languages and localized where you operate. Look for a system already available on multiple continents and used by large and complex global organizations.



### How does it affect the cost of achieving outcomes?

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A platform should increase efficiency, saving time and resources for your talent team so they can focus on more critical tasks. A platform should also show how to calculate ROI and roughly what ROI to expect.



### How do I know if the AI is authentic?

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An AI-powered talent intelligence platform should be built on deep-learning and neural networks, not keyword searches or older technologies. The system should also be built on a foundation of extensive data powered by hundreds of millions of profiles used to train the AI models. The company should be an AI-first company led by AI experts with extensive backgrounds in this field.



### Is it challenging to implement and use?

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A real talent intelligence platform should have AI ready to use immediately, with a bi-directional sync with most major applicant tracking and HR systems. It should be reasonably easy to implement and for talent teams to learn. Be sure to ask about ongoing support, too.



*For more questions about AI-powered talent intelligence platforms, download the complete [RFP](#).*



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.

