

# NTT DATA's skills-based path to strategic staffing and talent acquisition



**Industry:** Technology / Software  
**Headquarters:** Tokyo  
**Employees:** 190,000  
(50,000 implemented)

**ATS:** SAP SuccessFactors  
**HRIS:** SAP SuccessFactors  
**Eightfold Products:** Talent Acquisition,  
Talent Management



With Eightfold's AI-based Talent Intelligence platform, NTT DATA has more than doubled employee self-nominations and referral rates to fill roles with the most skilled candidates for better business outcomes.

NTT DATA recognized an opportunity to adopt a skills-based talent strategy to transform talent acquisition and gain insights into the skills and availability of its workforce. With the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform, NTT DATA was able to improve its external recruiting and internal placement processes by identifying the skills of its candidates and workforce and intelligently matching them with the positions that best matched their skills. As a result, the organization was able to find higher quality candidates, improve employee engagement and performance, better serve clients, and increase project revenues.



### **The challenge**

NTT DATA is a top-10, global IT service provider with a 150-year history helping clients transform their businesses through consulting, industry solutions, business process services, IT modernization, and managed services.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the organization was finding it more difficult to staff upcoming projects. Recruiters were spending a lot of time sourcing external candidates to find those with the right skills. Recruiting processes were manually intensive, and managers often sent slates of candidates back with several redlines, which led to slower hiring, longer projects, and delayed revenue.

“Because we didn’t have an understanding of all the resources we had in-house, when we had a job requisition we were always looking externally to fill it because it was easier and faster,” said Vicki Furnish, Vice President of Global People Solutions, Operations, and Analytics at NTT DATA. “As a professional services organization with employees cycling in and out of projects, employees were often sitting on the bench waiting for their next project assignment and not contributing to revenue.”

NTT DATA's talent and business leaders quickly realized that in addition to improving external recruiting processes, there was also an opportunity to engage its existing workforce more effectively which could lead to improved outcomes for the organization and employees. That's when the organization started rethinking its staffing strategy. "The technology and skills needed in our industry are changing very rapidly," Furnish said. "Keeping up with that meant finding ways to become more comprehensive and holistic around staffing engagements and developing careers."

Part of this strategy meant gaining better visibility into the skills that existed within its candidates and workforce, as the limited knowledge made it difficult for the team to understand who had the skills needed for projects and roles. They needed a solution to help identify those skills and allow them to search for them more efficiently across both their internal resources and external applicants. It also meant understanding the skills the organization needed now and in the future, and where the gaps existed.

## The solution

Furnish and her team discussed their challenges with their HRIS provider, SAP SuccessFactors. SAP recommended Eightfold AI as a preferred partner with the right skills solutions to meet these needs.

Once Eightfold was on board, Furnish and her team learned more about how Eightfold's AI-powered solutions could help them gain visibility and produce better results with less manual effort. Rather than painstakingly documenting each skill for each employee throughout the entire organization, Eightfold could create skill profiles for NTT DATA and help them understand how those skills mapped to roles and projects.

"We were going through a cultural evolution so we took our time in our due diligence, and Eightfold was patient and collaborative throughout," Furnish said. "They not only explained to our teams how bringing AI into our HR environment could work and be of value, they also helped us build the business case for our stakeholders. They cared about our success as much as theirs, which is critical to being a solid partner. The partnership we have with Eightfold is phenomenal and nothing else we looked at can come close to the product from a technology standpoint."

The NTT DATA team overcame a few hurdles in getting everyone on board with an AI solution. "A lot of people are afraid of AI, so you need to be patient to walk through this with them and understand their concerns," Furnish said. "But we need the technology to help us build the skills profiles. Skills are changing so fast, and as humans our brains can't operate that fast. To stay ahead in the market and industry we've got to be on top of that. That's where Eightfold's technology comes in."

"We now have a clear view of the skills we have in-house, and we're able to find roles for our bench resources much faster – which is much more efficient and cost-effective than bringing in new talent."

**Vicki Furnish,**  
VP Global People Solutions,  
Operations, and Analytics,  
NTT DATA



After Eightfold's Talent Intelligence Platform was selected, the team chose an implementation partner that was experienced in SAP Success Factors integrations. "They were easy to work with because they understood the API, the language, the concerns, and the requisition process we built," Furnish said. "I've been doing implementations for decades, and the Eightfold implementation was one of the best I've had."

NTT DATA deployed Eightfold company wide to realize the full value of the platform. The team launched a communications plan to all employees introducing the platform and explaining the importance of creating and updating their profiles. Each employee profile includes skills, experience, certifications, and more, which now serves as the basis for NTT DATA's internal database of talent.

### **The results**

With a database of up-to-date employee profiles available, the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform allowed NTT DATA to quickly match internal candidates with the right projects and roles for their skills. On the recruiting side, Eightfold helped supplement candidate resumes with skills and proficiencies with AI, streamlining the process of comparing the qualifications of both new and existing talent.

With Eightfold's explainable AI capabilities, recruiters were able to work with hiring managers to more clearly define the requirements or restrictions for a role and how those criteria impact the current talent pool. This helped them understand which candidates should rise to the top and why, while simultaneously reducing their manual sourcing efforts considerably.

With these new capabilities, NTT DATA also restructured its staffing and hiring processes. Before, they had separate teams —one responsible for reassigning available employees to new projects, and another focused on external candidates. Whereas the two teams previously worked in silos as they tried to staff the same projects from two separate talent pools, they now work collaboratively thanks to the increased visibility into the skills in their existing workforce and applicant pool. The team now looks internally first to fill any new requisition before looking externally.

"Our employees cycle through assignments, and we constantly have people on the bench," Furnish said. "With Eightfold, we have a clear view of the skills we have in-house, and we're able to find roles for those bench resources much faster, which is much more efficient and cost-effective than bringing in new talent."

"The TA team loves Eightfold because they are getting much better short lists, so they're not spending as much time sourcing candidates to fulfill roles," Furnish said. "Our managers are thrilled because they're getting

solid candidates the first time around. They're bringing in better quality candidates because Eightfold can calibrate each position based on skills and match with the best candidates. So managers are filling roles quicker and spending less time in the administrative back and forth, which is thrilling everybody."

Employees are also showing their appreciation for the new system. Eightfold not only recommends roles that may be a good fit for them, but the explainable AI also helps employees understand why and how it may help them reach their career goals. The transparency that Eightfold brought to employees led to some unexpected results, like an increase in self-nominations and referrals now that employees had better access to positions.

"We have seen a tremendous number of internal candidates coming up for an open project where they weren't before," Furnish said. "They didn't know about the roles before, but now they do and they are raising their hands."

In addition to streamlined processes, efficiencies, and career-growth opportunities that have been created since the launch of Eightfold's Talent Intelligence platform, NTT DATA has seen:



**128%**

increase in self-nominations of employees for open roles

**100%**

increase in employee referrals of other employees and applicants

**10%**

year-over-year increase in internal vs. external placement, engaging more existing talent and reducing cost and time to fill open roles

## The future

The results with Eightfold have made NTT DATA's leaders eager to expand their use of the platform. Now that the organization can identify the skills employees have and the gaps that exist, their next initiative is connecting employees with learning, training, and other opportunities for development—and Eightfold is there to support NTT DATA with this next chapter.

"There are a lot of vendors out there that just want to sell and be done," Furnish said. "But Eightfold is in it with us for the long haul, which is really exciting because there will be other changes that come as our industry continues to shift. We're working together to be more proactive and make sure we are set up for future success."