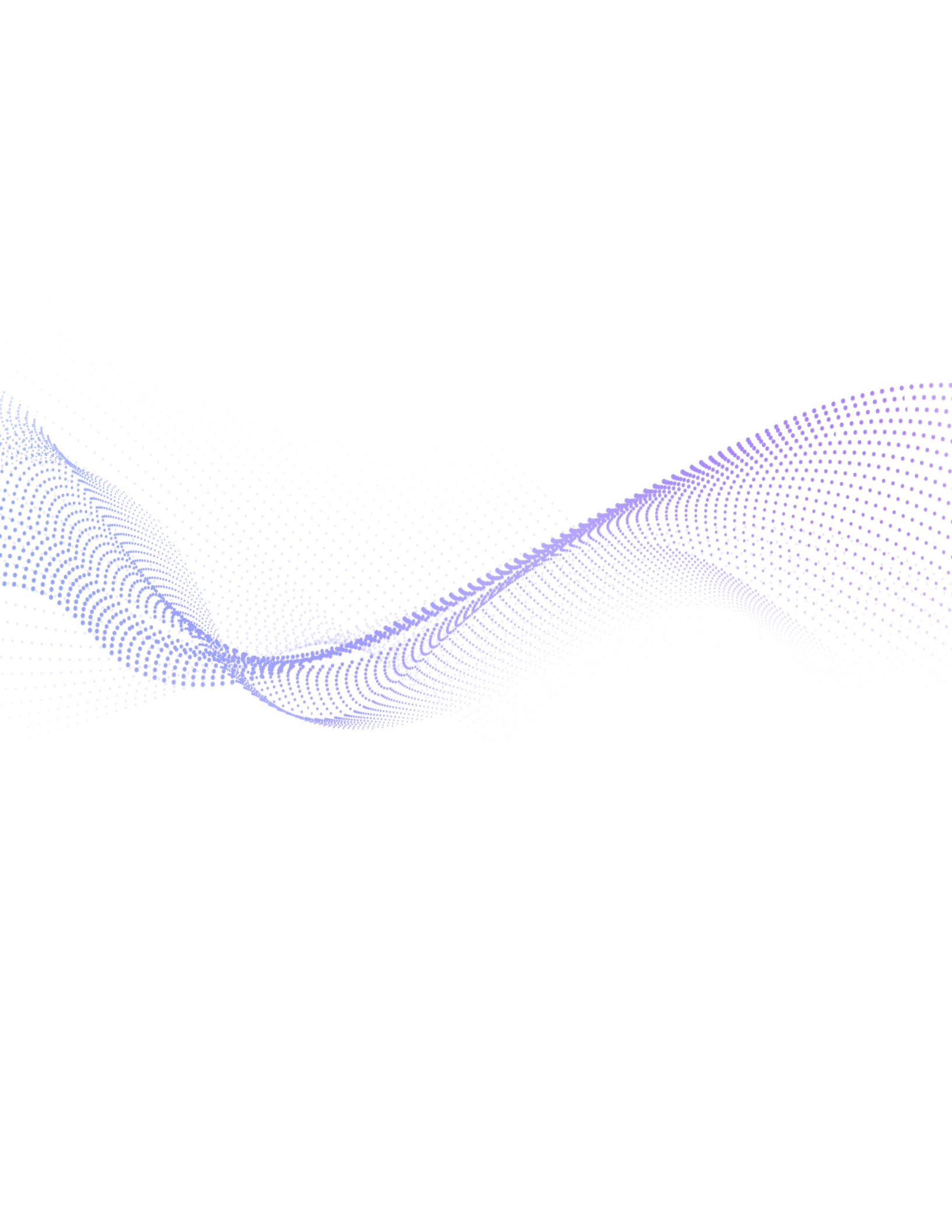


The CHRO-CIO alliance

A guide to powering critical change in
HR and business with AI.





Executive summary

The age of AI in our workforces demands a new visionary partnership — one in which people and technology leaders come together to create businesses ready for change.

As we race to adapt to change and uncertainty, the pressure to deliver workforce innovations has never been higher. CEOs cite talent management and technology enablement as their top organizational gaps, yet our C-suites are often not fully aligned to make this collaboration possible.

As CHRO, you are likely familiar with the perception that your role doesn't have the technical influence to drive enterprise change — not because you lack creativity or adaptability, but because of outdated assumptions about your technical prowess. As CIO, you can become overly focused on solutions and miss the talent-centered strategies needed to build agile, adaptable workforces ready for anything.

The truth is that both your roles need to focus on tech and talent if you want to guide and support lasting change and resiliency in your organizations.

This guide makes the case for a new kind of partnership, one in which you work together to lead enterprise transformation together. As co-leaders in this new era of AI adoption and integration, you have the opportunity to reinvent your organization's approach in every talent process. Together, you can lead the way to becoming an adaptive, analytics-driven organization fueled by AI, data, and emerging digital capabilities — but only if you work strategically together.

"The operating model of the agentic era will be anchored around reimagined AI-first workflows, with humans and IT systems selectively reintroduced in AI-native design."

"The agentic organization" — McKinsey

When you operate in lockstep, you can move faster, think more holistically, and build organizational capabilities that align with business outcomes and employee needs.

Central to your partnership is a shared commitment to:

- Breaking down data silos that limit visibility into skills and potential.
- Piloting AI-powered solutions that personalize the employee experience.
- Embracing agentic AI to augment decision-making and streamline talent processes.
- Co-creating workforce digital twins to model, predict, and plan for future talent needs.

The future of work demands more than siloed innovation. It requires a fusion of human and technological leadership — and it starts with you leading together.

In this guide, you will learn:

- Why collaboration between these two departments is no longer optional.
- What's broken in traditional talent models.
- How to build a talent blueprint with data and AI.
- Where to apply AI across the talent life cycle.
- What a modern CHRO-CIO partnership looks like.
- How to get started now.

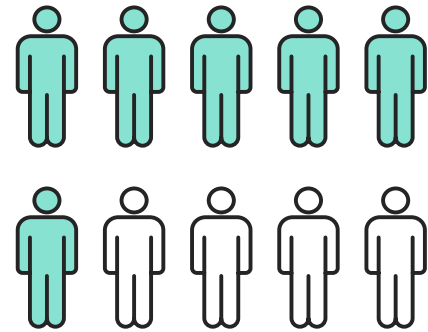
Your future is one of collaboration and change — and one critical to any business in this AI-driven era.

A moment of convergence

AI, automation, and agility are reshaping the workforce and work itself. [McKinsey estimates](#) that AI has the potential to unlock \$2.6 trillion to \$4.4 trillion in additional value for organizations. Yet in that same report, it is estimated that fewer than 10% of use cases deployed ever make it past the pilot stage.

Recent research by Rand.org states that more than [80% of AI projects fail](#) – twice the rate of failure for IT projects not involving AI – due to root causes including misunderstanding the problems being solved, focusing more on using new tech than solving problems, or trying to solve problems that are too complex for AI to address at this stage.

As emerging technologies continue to disrupt how our businesses operate, the boundaries between technology and talent are blurring. Ready-to-use solutions, like co-pilots or general-purpose tools, currently have the biggest impact, but usually on a superficial level and across one or two departments at a time.



6 out of 10
workers already think of
AI as a coworker.

["2025 Global Human Capital Trends report"](#)
– Deloitte

We're converging toward shared leadership of the transformation agenda. We need to combine infrastructure, data architecture, and AI capabilities with a deep human understanding of culture, capability, and employee experience. Together, these strengths can enable you to embrace change and make decisions with greater strategic clarity.

McKinsey [supports this idea of convergence](#): “In the agentic era, how organizations are built and operate will evolve as much as the products or services they deliver. Work and workflows will be reimaged as AI-first, and operating models will evolve to flat networks of empowered, outcome-aligned agentic teams.”

The article continues: “The operating model of the agentic era will be anchored around reimaged AI-first workflows, with humans and IT systems selectively reintroduced in AI-native design.”

To gain the most from AI investments, you can no longer afford to innovate in silos. And at a time when [6 out of 10 workers already think of AI as a coworker](#), according to Deloitte, the workplace landscape is primed for change.

Evolving beyond yesterday's talent models

Traditional talent management models were built for predictability, not agility. Long-term workforce planning, generic training programs, and rigid career ladders no longer align with how work evolves or how employees expect to grow.

And your employees feel the impact. A [SHRM study](#) on emerging professionals found that only a third of respondents expected to stay at their next role for four years or longer, but nearly two-thirds said they would commit to four or more years if they were given consistent upskilling to build in-demand competencies.

The opportunity ahead lies in integrating systems and departments, replacing rigidity with agility, and embracing human-centered strategies to personalize growth. This requires a new mindset — and the right technologies to enable it.

When you fail to work closely together, your organization faces significant risks that go beyond missed opportunities. Talent strategies may be disconnected from the technology needed to execute them, leading to fragmented systems, incomplete data, and inefficient processes. HR initiatives can stall when digital tools aren't integrated, while IT investments may fall short if you don't account for human-centered design and organizational culture.

You need to look out for:

Reliance on traditional talent mobility models

Rigid structures like linear career paths or one-size-fits-all learning programs can actually slow down how fast you respond to change. These may also demotivate employees who see no way to grow in ways aligned to evolving skills and roles.

Siloed HR and IT departments

When your departments are treated as separate silos, systems, data, and workflows tend to be disconnected. That means slower feedback, fragmented talent data, and gaps in digital skills infrastructure. Integrated talent management systems show strong benefits: better onboarding, more accurate skills visibility, greater internal mobility, and stronger alignment with business strategy.

Technology without human-centered design

Automating processes is good, but if those systems don't incorporate real employee feedback, adaptability, or personalization, these risks become just another rigid framework. Employees expect learning paths and feedback loops that are customized, frequent, and responsive.

Ignoring cross-departmental responsibility for talent

Talent management doesn't belong to HR. It touches everyone — managers, teams, technology, operations. When you delegate all talent responsibility to HR alone, you risk overloading HR and miss out on value that comes when your units work together.

The result is slower decision-making, poor visibility into skills and workforce capabilities, and missed opportunities for internal mobility or upskilling.

The impact extends to your employees and the business as a whole. Without a unified approach, learning programs may feel generic, career paths rigid, and feedback loops ineffective. Engagement drops, retention suffers, and top talent can migrate to competitors that offer a more cohesive, technology-enabled experience.

Beyond the workforce, your business risks making strategic decisions without reliable data or insight, reducing agility in the face of market change. Simply put, when you aren't aligned, both people and technology strategies underperform, and your organization as a whole loses its ability to adapt and thrive.

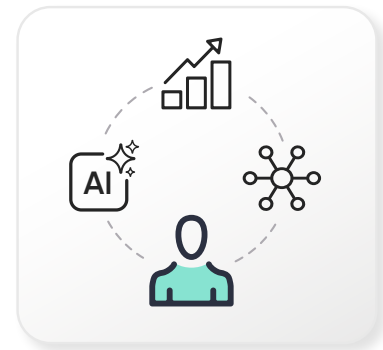
Why a new partnership is needed

Tackling these challenges requires more than collaboration. It requires a fusion partnership in which you commit to learning from and enabling one another.



The CHRO brings expertise in:

- Talent strategy
- Employee experience
- Culture and change management



The CIO brings:

- AI and automation tools
- Data governance and analytics
- Scalable systems and infrastructure



Collaboration brings:

Together, you can co-own outcomes and shift from reactive, support-oriented functions to proactive, strategic enablers. This mutual coaching unlocks shared learning: your HR teams gain fluency in agile and product-based thinking, while your IT teams gain perspective on talent-centered design and development.

Building a talent blueprint with data and AI

One of the first areas for collaboration is rethinking workforce planning, and that begins with building a reliable, scalable data foundation.

We aren't suffering from a lack of data — we're drowning in it. According to [a 2022 SHRM article](#), Deloitte reported that 91% of companies still rely on basic tools like spreadsheets to manage and track core workforce metrics like engagement, turnover, and cost per hire. And certain industries rely on manual data more than others. The Manufacturing Leadership Council reported in 2024 that [70% of manufacturers still enter data manually](#).

Without scalable, AI-driven tools to unify and interpret this data, you risk making decisions on fragmented or outdated information. For talent transformation to succeed, you must work together to move from data collection to data activation. That means asking the right questions: What are the critical roles to achieve corporate goals? What new skills must be developed? Where are the most urgent gaps, and how can these be closed?

The good news is that AI isn't picky. It doesn't need every record to be pristine or every spreadsheet to be perfectly aligned. Whether your data is structured, unstructured, or somewhere in between, whatever you feed in — résumés, job descriptions, internal notes, lists of competencies, interview feedback, attrition reports, performance reviews, even those "hidden" nuggets living in random systems — AI can figure out how to use it. It learns patterns, makes connections, and turns your messy mix into usable insights.

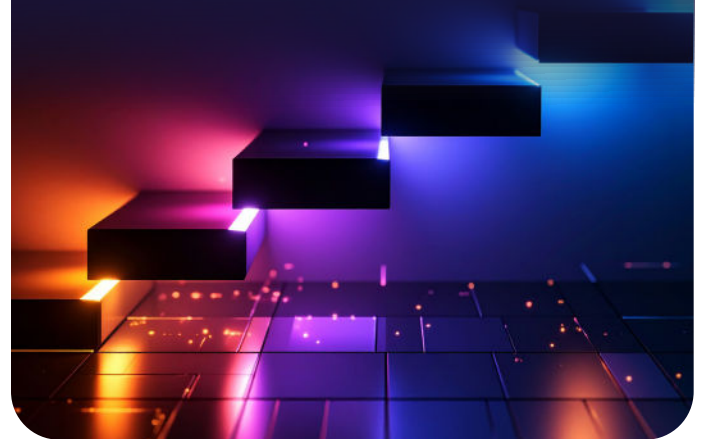
But — and this is a big but — remember the old truth: garbage in, garbage out. Just because AI can eat anything doesn't mean you should throw it scraps forever. The more thoughtful and consistent you are about what you feed it, the sharper and more valuable outputs become.

To be effective in a fast-changing environment, you must:

Align talent plans with business strategies by anchoring analytics to business outcomes, not just HR metrics.

Integrate HCM systems with operational, learning, and skills data to build a single source of truth.

Visualize workforce capability through digital twins: dynamic models of skills, experiences, and capacity that support predictive planning.



Together, you can turn disparate data into an adaptable, insights-driven blueprint to build the **workforce of the future**.

Making AI work for talent and tech

The talent life cycle is full of opportunities to use AI – especially agentic AI – to accelerate outcomes, personalize experiences, and increase efficiency.

According to [PwC's Global AI Jobs Barometer](#), revenue growth is three times higher in industries more exposed to AI. Workers are 66% faster at skill change in jobs that require AI use, and 56% see a wage premium for those skills related to AI.

Revenue growth is **3x**
higher in industries with
more exposure to AI.

**"The Fearless Future:
AI Jobs Barometer"** –PwC

4 high-impact areas to prioritize:

1

Talent acquisition

Use AI to target talent pools, rank candidates, and reduce time to fill. Predictive models and NLP can match candidates to roles based on potential, not just past experience.

2

Onboarding

Design onboarding journeys that adapt to employee needs. AI can deliver just-in-time resources, personalized learning, and contextual support.

3

Learning and development

Enable microlearning and embedded skill-building through AI-powered recommendations. Agentic AI can support self-directed development aligned to business goals.

4

Retention

Use analytics to identify flight risks and engagement gaps. AI-driven nudges can suggest manager check-ins, learning interventions, or growth opportunities in real time.

Pilot these use cases in IT or HR to generate quick wins and scalable models.

What is agentic AI?

Agentic AI refers to systems that can act autonomously to pursue defined goals. Unlike traditional automation, which simply executes predefined rules, agentic AI can:

- Interpret context and dynamically adjust behavior.
- Make decisions within defined parameters.
- Recommend or initiate actions to achieve outcomes.

In the context of talent, agentic AI can guide employees through learning journeys, recommend personalized growth paths, or prompt managers to act on engagement signals – all while aligning with organizational priorities.



What becoming strategic co-leaders looks like

This kind of deep partnership isn't simple — it's hard, ongoing work. [A recent study from MIT Technology Review](#) found that 82% of C-suite leaders see scaling AI use cases to create business value as a top organizational priority. Yet nearly half, 45%, also report challenges with data integration and pipelines.

These gaps highlight a critical point: even when AI is a priority at the executive level, success depends on more than intent. It requires close collaboration among leaders who manage people and those who manage technology.

That's why your partnership is essential. While you drive strategy for AI, talent, and workforce transformation, your entire C-suite and key stakeholders must align on vision, values, and goals.

Without transparency, shared input, and a plan that extends beyond a single project, you risk misalignment, frustration, and wasted time and resources. With collaboration, critical capabilities, like building a robust infrastructure, integrating systems, and securing data access, can more easily align with supporting your skills strategy and talent-centered design.

Additionally, [McKinsey research shows](#) that when you work cross-functionally, trust increases, making you five times more likely to produce results and three times more efficient. The consulting firm also stresses the need for organizational alignment around agentic AI. It should come as no surprise that your IT and HR functions are two of the most critical areas that need to embrace, adopt, scale, and support agentic AI across the entire organization to drive success.

[McKinsey reports](#) that this new hybrid agentic workforce needs a new talent system, citing five reasons why this is essential:

1. **People will shift from executing tasks to owning outcomes.** Workers will move away from doing activities and instead focus on defining goals, making strategic trade-offs, and steering end-to-end results.
2. **HR systems will need to evolve to manage hybrid workforces.** HR platforms will need to track both human employees and AI agents, shifting from measuring task completion to evaluating how well people orchestrate agents and deliver outcomes.

4 factors are critical:



Shared metrics and incentives. When you share KPIs tied to agility, learning, and retention, people act in alignment rather than in silos.



Pilot, iterate, scale. Transformation rarely succeeds overnight. Start with targeted pilots, learn what works (and what doesn't), then scale cross-functional approaches.



Communication and change management. Alignment at the top must cascade throughout the organization. Clear communication, consistent feedback loops, and structured change management make adoption possible.



Transparency builds trust. When decisions are openly made, assumptions surfaced, and trade-offs discussed, teams are more likely to engage constructively rather than resist.

3. **New skill demands are emerging.** While agents replace routine knowledge work, demand is growing for deep problem-solving, systems thinking, end-to-end perspective, and managing cases where agents fail.
4. **All leaders need technology fluency.** Technical understanding is no longer just for CIOs. CEOs, product officers, and compliance heads will need strong tech fluency, requiring massive upskilling and reskilling efforts.
5. **Non-technical employees can manage agentic workflows.** Early evidence shows people without technical backgrounds can learn to oversee AI agents as quickly as trained engineers, making talent systems more fluid and blending human-digital ecosystems.

Additionally, your IT department must also rethink how you work. Here are the top reasons why:

1. **Technology and data need to be democratized.** An “agentic AI mesh” with agent-to-agent protocols makes integration across systems, machines, and humans easier and more affordable.
2. **Strategic build-versus-buy decisions are critical.** Technology choices should be based on what provides competitive advantage and distinctiveness, while you should avoid vendor lock-in to stay adaptable in this rapidly evolving landscape.
3. **Productivity gains can be dramatic.** Early adopters have seen at least double productivity improvements, with employees from non-technical backgrounds proving as capable as software engineers in building agentic workflows.
4. **You need to evolve from centralized to distributed systems.** Technology is shifting from centralized monoliths requiring heavy engineering expertise to distributed, business-accessible tools powered by agentic AI.

Alignment across the C-suite – and buy-in across the enterprise – is now essential, but it will require significant and deliberate shared ownership, not just coordination.

Your partnership is the foundation for enterprise-wide alignment that turns strategy into real results. AI initiatives that succeed are those where your full C-suite shares ownership, the workforce understands the “why,” and collaboration becomes part of your organization’s operating rhythm.

The need to upskill and reskill the next generation of AI leaders

It’s no surprise that AI is dominating tech jobs – 7 of the 10 fastest-growing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) roles are AI-related.

It’s why we joined tech leaders Accenture, Cisco, Cornerstone, Google, IBM, Indeed, Intel, Microsoft, and SAP to form the AI Workforce Consortium, a group committed to upskilling and reskilling 95 million people over the next decade.

As part of our consortium, we commissioned a comprehensive market analysis across G7 countries examining 50 job roles in ICT. The report makes it clear that AI skills are now pervasive for tech jobs, with 78% of ICT roles analyzed including AI skills.

Other top findings from our consortium report include:

- **The fastest-growing roles are all AI-related:** AI/ML Engineer, AI Risk and Governance Specialist, and NLP Engineer.
- **AI ethics and governance skills are critical**, with demand for those skills in AI governance up +150% and AI ethics +125%.
- **There’s a rise in need for human skills**, like communication, collaboration, and leadership.

Read the new report to learn how you can excel in this new AI-driven world.



Case study: HR and IT teamwork in practice

How Softtek transformed its talent strategy through collaboration

Softtek, a global software engineering partner, set out to solve a critical challenge: how to help its people, known as Softtekians, thrive in their careers while keeping pace with the demands of a rapidly evolving business.

For Chief Talent Officer David Rafael Cervantes, the solution required both AI innovation and organizational collaboration.

"Coming out of IT, it was very important to give the right insights on data analytics and create the opportunity to make better decisions," Cervantes said. "Eightfold enabled us to integrate core processes like career pathways, mobility, and succession planning – all embraced by AI."

Historically, Softtek's talent functions worked in silos, limiting visibility and agility. Partnering with IT to implement the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform, HR leaders were able to interconnect talent areas globally. This unified approach enabled smoother collaboration across talent acquisition, learning and development, and workforce planning.

The results speak volumes:

- 25% faster time to candidate
- 30% reduction in time to fill
- 90% of the workforce integrated into the platform
- A defined global skills taxonomy for smarter workforce planning

Cervantes emphasized that this transformation was only possible because HR and IT worked in lockstep. "One of the most important things for us was how we can help Softtekians continue growing their careers," he said. "By integrating talent processes with the right AI platform, we're boosting mobility, productivity, and collaboration in ways we couldn't before."



David Rafael Cervantes
Chief Talent Officer, Softtek

Getting started: A playbook for your partnerships

5 steps to launch and sustain a CHRO-CIO partnership:



There's no doubt that the future of work will be powered by people + agentic AI.

We know the future is agentic — allowing us to do more, learn more, and innovate in ways we never thought possible.

In fact, use of agentic AI across your entire organization is tied to your future success. "We believe that companies that want to secure a competitive advantage in developing an agentic organization should think boldly, move fast, and go deep," [McKinsey states](#). "We are certain that the organizations that adapt and learn faster will be the early winners in this agentic era."

If you haven't started or are in early days, the time to align and act is now. The consulting firm reports that 89% of organizations are still living in the industrial age, with 9% operating in the digital age with agile or product and platform operating models, and only 1% acting as a decentralized network.

Embracing your leadership role in adopting and scaling agentic AI today will ensure that you are one of the organizations that comes out ahead.

Next steps

Questions to ask:

- What business challenges are we solving that talent can help drive?
- Where are our biggest skill gaps and how do we know?
- What data do we wish we had about our workforce?
- What could AI help us predict or personalize right now?

Checklist: Is your organization ready for IT and HR collaboration?

- ☐ We have shared strategic goals.
- ☐ We can access and share workforce data.
- ☐ We have support to pilot new tools or programs.
- ☐ We meet regularly and coach each other.



The future of work starts here.

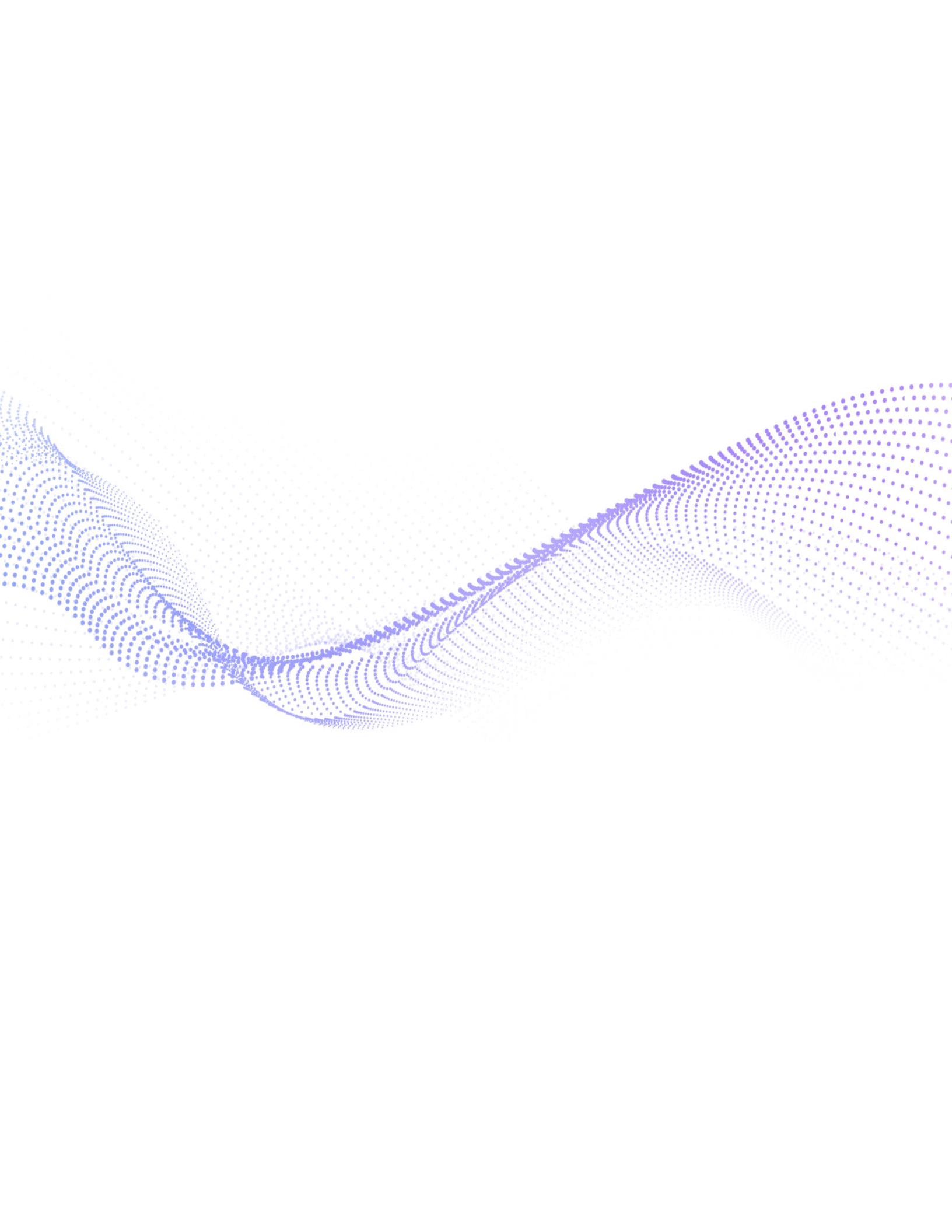
The CHRO–CIO alliance is no longer optional – it's the foundation to unlock the value of AI, reinvent workforce planning, and build resilient, agile teams.

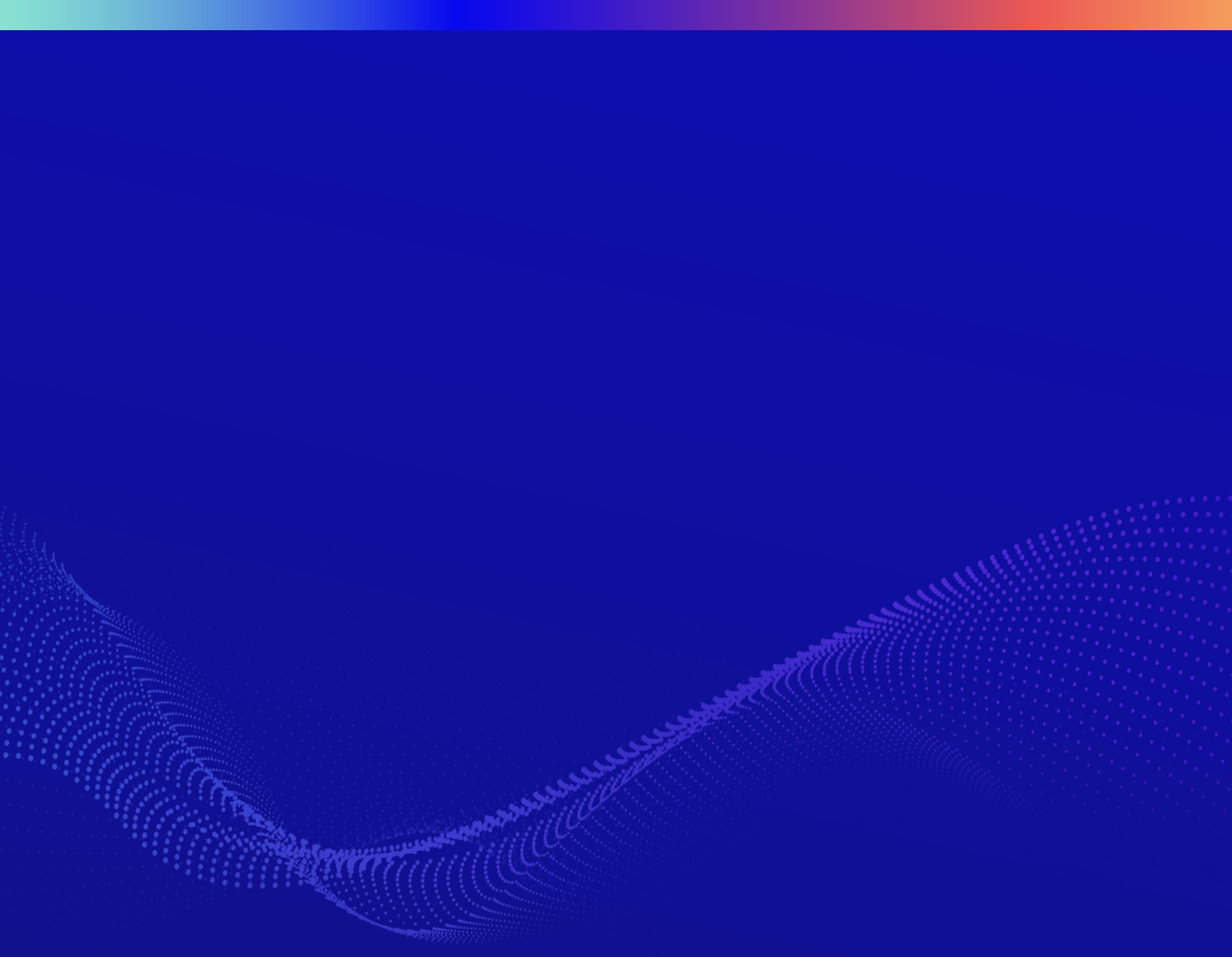
Begin the conversation today:

- Ask what shared business outcomes you could tackle together.
- Identify one talent challenge that could be accelerated with AI.
- Commit to piloting a small, scalable initiative to prove what's possible.

Want to go further? Connect with our team to explore proven frameworks, real-world case studies, and practical steps to jumpstart your CHRO–CIO partnership.

Together, we can help you shape the workforce of tomorrow.





About Eightfold AI

Eightfold AI doesn't just organize data — we understand people. As pioneers of the world's most innovative AI-native Talent Intelligence Platform, we combine enterprise data, market insights, and user interactions to create a complete picture of talent across the entire employment life cycle, providing an end-to-end experience that includes hiring, development, and retention. A third of our customers are from Fortune 500 companies and have relied on us to move faster and more strategically than the competition. Our platform is guiding our customers through the greatest work acceleration in history by unlocking the power of people and showing them how partnering with AI can unleash unlimited potential. Learn more at eightfold.ai