

Skills at Scale: 8 Ways to Unlock Employee Capabilities and Beat Your Competitors

A company can only do what its workers can do. In other words, the capabilities of a company are defined by the skills of its workforce

Nearly every company has an organizational chart. Nearly every job is defined, and targets are created for each person and department. Policies and procedures enable the company to operate as one unit. All of these factors, and many others, define what the company hopes to achieve and how to achieve its goals.

Yet they don't answer the fundamental question

Success requires the right skills, and these skills must be measurable. Skills can be gained, and used to learn yet more skills and to reach new achievements. They are the currency of any successful business strategy.

Competing and winning means getting a solid understanding of the skills held by a company's workforce and job candidates. When a company can understand the skills of every one of its workers—and each of the individuals can also understand their own skills and potential—the company gains significant new powers to stay competitive in their current and potential markets.

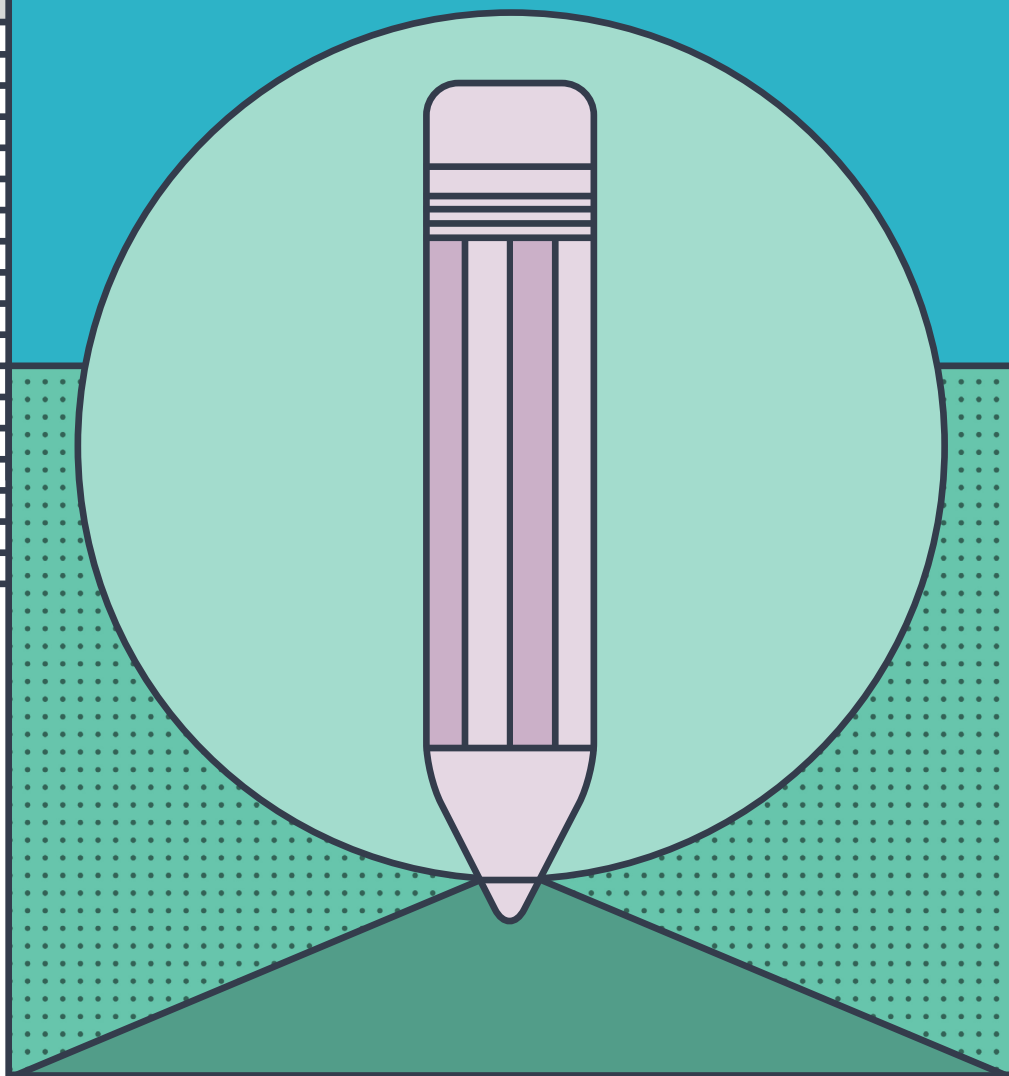
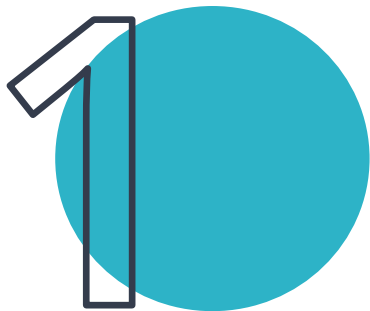
Here are eight things your company can do if it understands skills.



Does each individual working in the company have the capability to fulfill their part of the plan, and does the company as a whole contain enough capabilities to succeed?

Answering this question takes an understanding of the skills of each person across the company.





Reskill your workforce

It's a cliché, yet it's also true that business is changing faster than ever

Companies need to reskill their workforces for digital business models, new markets, new technologies, new consumer expectations, and more. This reskilling is very challenging for companies that don't know what skills their employees already have, or what skills they will need to gain.

As it now stands, many companies offer courses through a learning management system. But these programs tend to focus on large groups of employees all taking the same classes.

With an AI-driven skills platform, companies can offer individualized skills training that requires each person to take just those courses that they need to reach a required level of skills competency.

Companies can also benchmark themselves against the skill levels of competitors in order to achieve market parity or market superiority in skills development.



Finally, improve internal mobility

Companies aim to improve retention through employee career growth, but often face challenges achieving meaningful results

Sure, in some companies employees are told they can move internally and perhaps get a first look at jobs before they go external. And some managers support their employees moving to new jobs. Many view internal mobility as a threat to their own team performance, however.

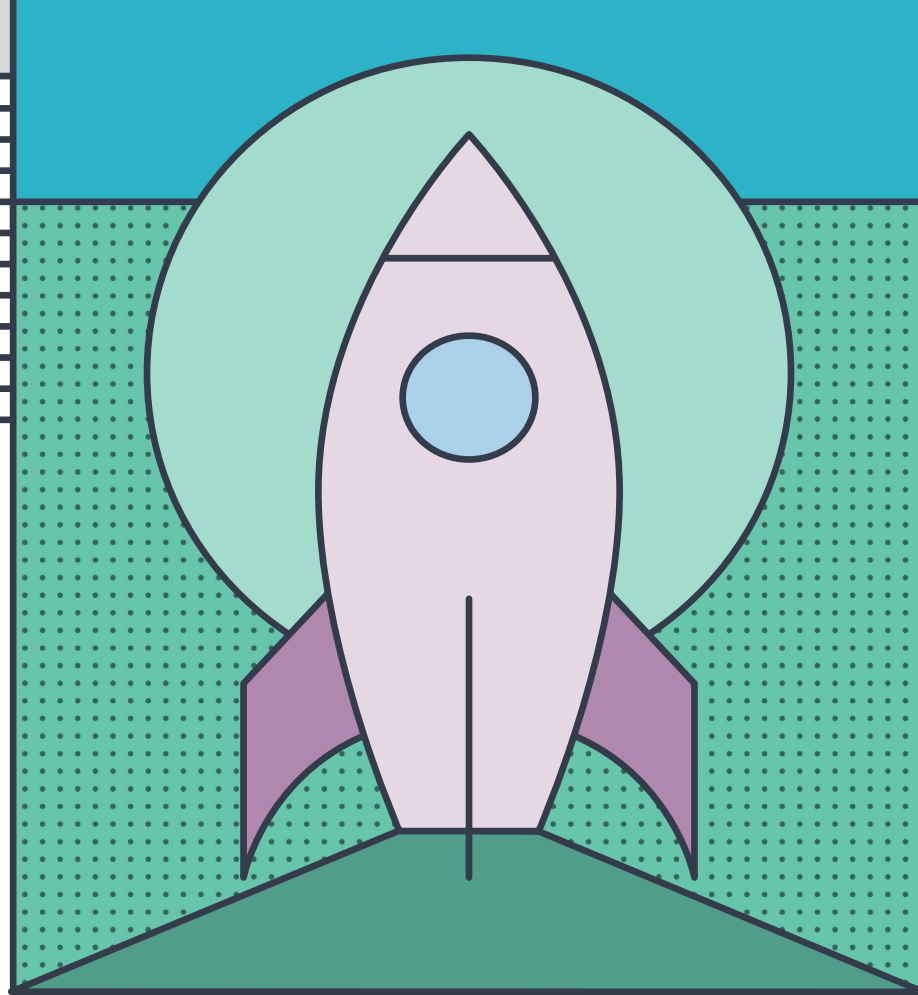
The problem is that each individual has little idea of how their skills can be put to work in another job, especially if it's in a different department, function, or even in a different country. Compounding the problem, the company has little ability to find a current employee with the skills or potential to succeed in a different role.

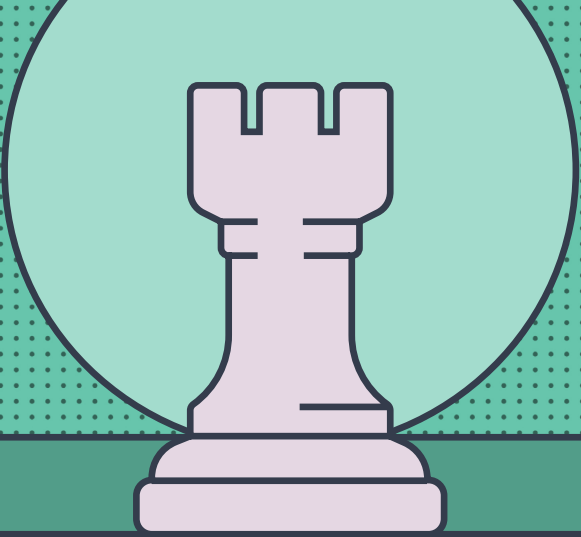
The game changes when a talent department and a company's leadership know what skills each individual has. Instead of top employees leaving for new challenges, they can find their next jobs internally.

Artificial intelligence is used to show employees what skills they have and what skills are needed for open jobs. This AI allows employees to see jobs they would have not realized they're a great fit for, enabling true internal mobility.

And, employees can truly engage in career planning. With the power of understanding their skills and the skills needed for a different job, they can see the job they want to move into next, and see what skills, if any, they need to add to get there.

Internal mobility powered by personalized, skills-based, AI-driven recommendations can motivate employees and improve employee retention, changing internal mobility from an aspiration to a reality for the company.





Succession plan for every role

Succession planning has typically been done for top executives in a company

And, it has used a mostly unscientific approach, with technology no more sophisticated than sticky notes on a whiteboard. Companies need succession plans for as many roles as possible, both to provide internal mobility options for employees and to deal with rising uncertainty in their economies.

A highly automated skills-based capability gives companies the power to find appropriate slates of successors for more than just executives—potentially, for every role in the company. This skills-based capability simply matches the skills needed for the job against every individual, finding and ranking the individuals with the skills to step into the job or the ability to learn those skills quickly.



Avoid layoffs with talent redeployment

Companies sometimes must reduce their workforce

When this happens, companies typically want to keep as many people employed as possible but lack any way to consider each person individually.

An understanding of skills enables the company to redeploy workers to available roles where they can be successful, reducing the number of layoffs. The skills of each individual who might be affected by a workforce reduction can be evaluated against the skills needed for an open role. Where there is a skills match, the individual can be offered a chance to change jobs as an alternative to a layoff.

In practice, Eightfold has found that AI-powered matching of individuals against open roles prevented about half of planned workforce reductions of professional employees. This outcome is only possible with a detailed understanding of the skills of each individual and the skills needed for each role, and an AI-powered engine to identify matches between individuals and roles.



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Attract more qualified candidates

Career sites have come a long way, but they still often provide a poor candidate experience

Companies have done surveys and focus groups developed “employee value propositions,” and launched beautiful career sites with all sorts of bells and whistles. But they often fail to attract highly qualified candidates to apply to the right jobs, because outdated keyword searches don’t give them a list of openings that match their skills.

Drop-off rates are very high on career sites, especially for the most qualified candidates. When they do apply, often candidates apply to the wrong job.



Instead, if a company uses AI to deconstruct a job requirement, it can break the job down to its **essence: skills.**

And, it can offer the same power as a benefit to candidates.

A candidate can upload a resume to the career site, and the AI will match their skills with the skills needed for each role. The career site ranks available jobs in order of which best fit the candidate’s skills. It shows why each job is a fit.

This skills-based candidate experience is fundamentally more effective than keyword-based approaches, encouraging more candidates to apply to the right jobs.



Hire at lower cost

Many companies are hiring less and are seeing far more applications

At the same time, companies are interested in reducing their cost to hire as much as possible.

Understanding skills enables companies to achieve these hiring goals. If the company can define the skills needed for a role and detect whether every applicant has these skills or is easily able to learn them, the company can effectively screen for people who can do the job. Critically, keyword-matching technology is not sufficient because it is inflexible and easily fooled.



The understanding of skills enables companies to scale effective screening, even as application volume rises.



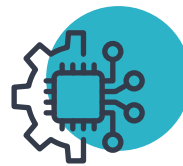
Hire only people who can do the job

Despite their best efforts, companies struggle to hire people who can succeed, especially in professional roles

Often resumes, job descriptions, interviews, and references are only partially effective in determining that a specific individual is right for the job.

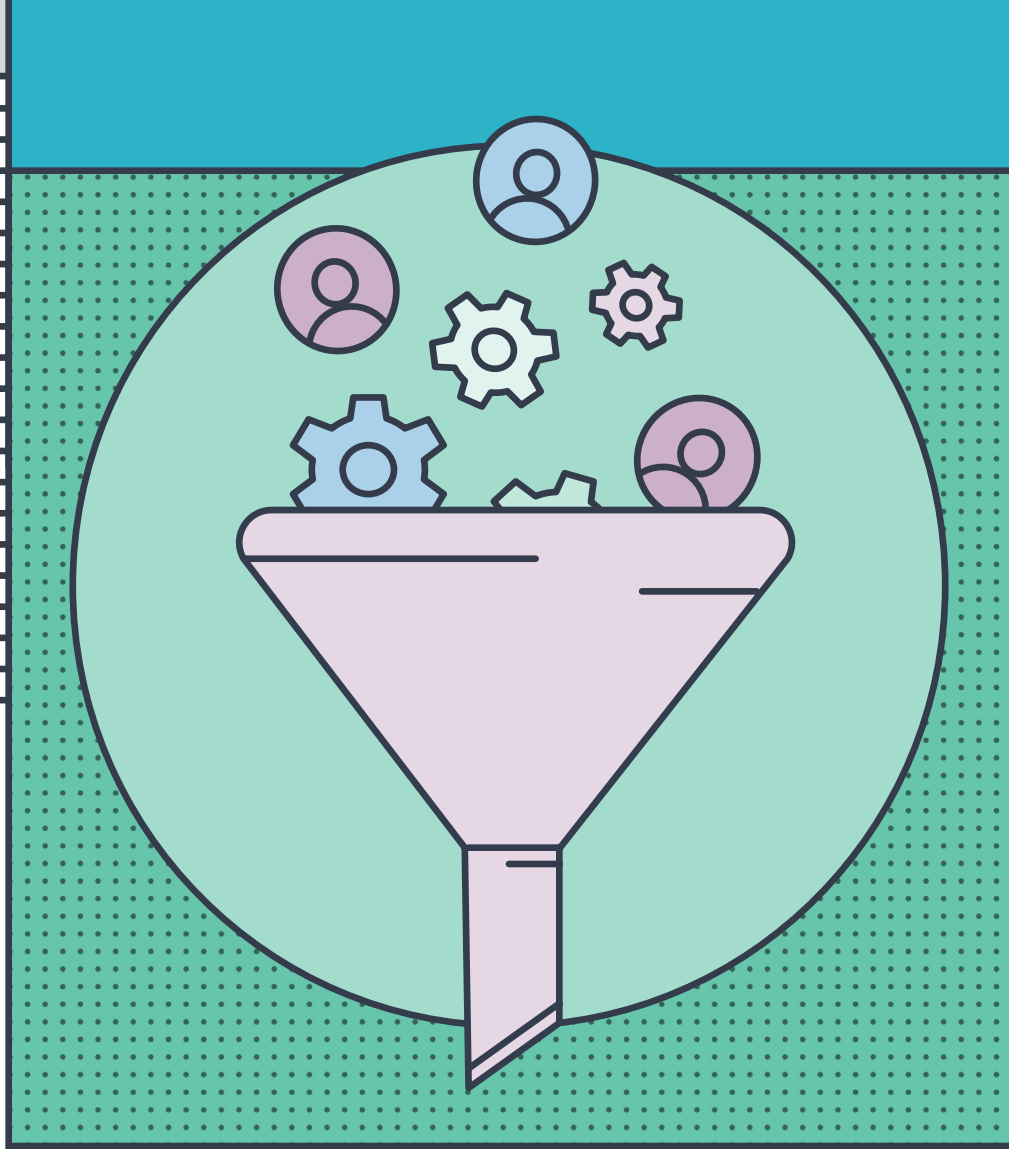
By understanding each person's skills and each job's skill requirements, a company can make better hiring decisions. An automated way to determine and match skills and skill requirements is necessary. This capability also benefits individuals by helping them into roles where they can succeed and grow.

When considering an individual for a role, companies that want to hire for success should be able to understand skills across four dimensions.



Only a highly sophisticated AI platform can provide this understanding:

- ✓ **Validated Skills:** These are skills that the individual claims to have, and that AI can confirm the individual has with a high degree of certainty.
- ✓ **Likely Skills:** These are skills that the individual has not specifically claimed to have, and that the AI can predict the individual does have, with a high degree of certainty.
- ✓ **Skills to Validate:** These are skills required for a role and claimed by the individual. The AI cannot determine that the individual has the skills, however. An interviewer should ask questions to determine if the individual possesses the skills.
- ✓ **Missing Skills:** These are skills required for a role, but the individual does not claim to have them, and the AI cannot determine that the individual has the skills. These skills should also be the subject of interviewer questions.



Make career fairs more effective

Career fairs have long been plagued by inefficiencies, with employers meeting a lot of candidates who don't match up to open jobs

If companies can understand the skills they need for the jobs they're hiring for, and the skills of the individuals they are meeting, they can direct these individuals to the right jobs in real-time and have more meaningful conversations.

This skills-based coordination matters even if the career fair is a virtual event. Candidates can send a resume in advance, and see which jobs they have the skills to succeed in.

Companies can even invite people to the event based on their skills so that both the company and the candidates have a more relevant event. The candidates will be interested in the conversations and the available jobs, and the company will be interested in interviewing many of the candidates.



The Platform You Need

The way to truly gain this understanding of your workforce's skills is to employ a Talent Intelligence Platform. A Talent Intelligence Platform involves advanced neural networks, used to analyze more than a billion profiles of people in every profession and job.

A Talent Intelligence Platform enables a company to know what skills someone has based on their work history. A Talent Intelligence Platform also gives you knowledge of “adjacent skills”: if someone knows one thing such as public speaking, leadership, Python, or project management, the Talent Intelligence Platform can tell you what skills they're likely to quickly pick up based on a taxonomy of **1.4 million unique skills** and their relationships.

With these capabilities, a Talent Intelligence Platform understands all the nuance of skills and jobs. This AI knows, for example, that a product manager at one company for the last 10 years used a different set of

skills than a product manager at a different company. Their titles were the same, but their jobs were not. The same goes for customer service managers or customer success managers, silver miners or Bitcoin miners, delivery drivers, cattle drivers, interns, or international negotiators—across more than **500,000 job titles** and virtually every employer in the world, this AI understands the skills that make an individual successful in a job, and predicts what someone is likely to succeed doing next in their career.

This AI is far superior to the reliance on keyword searches of the past. By using it, you'll truly unlock skills, and gain the “HR powers” talked about above.

To see how Eightfold can help you better understand the skills of your workforce and candidates, contact us at eightfold.ai/contact-us/