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Measuring 'Distance Traveled' for Talent

Define skills from learning and work experiences for a holistic view of an individual.

The Challenge

Using traditional thinking backed by rigid, manual, and outdated processes, we have inadvertently created a set of talent acquisition practices that introduce bias, is not equipped to efficiently explore and identify individuals that are rich in skills that match critical roles.

We must make changes to these practices, first by taking a holistic view to understand how education and work experiences build on top of one another. These experiences must be measured to allow for an understanding of existing skills and the identification of likely skill gaps to critical roles. Once identified, these gaps can guide identified individuals through the talent pipeline promoting robust external talent acquisition and internal talent mobility.

While this approach can support changing trends in the talent marketplace, it also come with challenges. Today this is a labor intensive process of looking at each individual and manually assessing how their background matches to the organizations needs. Performing these activities are time and resource intensive and introduce the potential for bias to appear in hiring practices, causing recent attempts to associate skills with experience to be extremely challenging.

However, by leveraging artificial intelligence to measure skills learned and experience gained from a rich and wide talent pool, C-suite leadership can overcome these key barriers to success for the underrepresented and underserved talent within their organizations and those they look to hire in the future. This process will also support external talent acquisition. The result is 6 key takeaways to propel individual lifelong learners while also supporting organizational goals toward achieving a future ready workforce.

PART

02

Takeaways

1. Skillmapping to Upskilling

Current skills mapping only helps your organization but does nothing to help understand talent outside your walls for recruitment and expansion purposes. To make this a standardized and repeatable process, we need to make this a national learning initiative.

A national learning agenda will help all employers — all employees — all organizations. We can start by leveraging AI to support not only the HR side — better understanding of the skills, capabilities, and proficiencies an organization possesses — but the overall readiness and ability to prepare and address technical, policy, and challenges that lie ahead. This will allow organizations to strategically plan for the future.

> 'The way we've always done it' isn't working anymore. AI can help agencies to address skills gaps and build a diverse talent pipeline. In turn, we'll see Workforce development that is scalable, sustainable, and adaptable to changing trends in the Public Sector Workforce."
>
> —— **Reese Madsen**
> MEMY&I

2. Closing The Gap

The skills requirements of all industries will continue to evolve, and so will the skills of the workforce. The only way to ensure that the skills requirements of both will overlap is to assess employees' current skills, map the required skills, and build a training and development program that closes the gaps.

> According to a recent US Federal Recruitment Report by Qualtrics TM nearly half (46%) of students enrolled in certificate programs and vocational colleges (42%) said they would not consider a job in the federal government.
>
> Given the demographic profile of students in technical, certificate and associates programs is more diverse than those in four-year degree or graduate schools. Top reasons cited as the reason was years of experience (35%) and lack of required skills (25%) with (10%) citing Opportunities for career progression.

> **The President's Management Agenda, specifically Goal 1.2 states:**
>
> Agencies will build equitable pathways into the Federal Government for early career positions, particularly from underrepresented and underserved communities.

3. Lead through Talent

True 'business leaders' take the time to learn and understand their peers and the corresponding business lines they support. Similar to the role of a CAO, the organization's CHCO's, CIO's and CFO's need to focus on business outcomes directly supporting the organization's mission, vision and strategy centered on the talent required to meet these goals. Without this, organizations end up with an isolated, inefficient, and ineffective transfer of information on critical talent development.

Looking beyond their own organization, talent management professionals working with the c-suite can advance a National Learning Agenda within government, academia, and non-profits. Working in a common cause approach towards evidence based policy making can achieve greater equity in the years to come.

> "During this biennium, in addition to learning critical elements of HR, many core leadership and business management skills were applicable -regardless of organization."
>
> —— **Heath Anderson**
> ROAM FEDERAL

4. Technology in HR

Historically the federal government HRIT has not been prioritized, resulting in a technology gap that has encouraged fragmented and manual processes. This is not sustainable as it makes the federal government an unattractive option to potential employees and piles on an administrative burden.

Renewed focus needs to be applied to reimagining federal HR; what it means, how it's done, and who it affects. A strategic plan to effectively leverage technology must exist in order to empower the HR workforce to meet these ambitious goals.

> According to the recent Market Connections Workday Study. More than half (57%) of respondents say their system environment is fragmented, and 20% say their HCM strategy is not yet defined. Only a third have a formal, well-defined strategy in place. Meeting the President's Management Agenda is also proving difficult: 57% are unprepared to deliver a high level of employee engagement, and half are unprepared to position themselves as a model employer or enrich jobs with the latest tools.
>
> Part of the issue is the technology, where many components are rated as below average or poor:
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> + 70% rate their flexibility to address changes as below average or poor.
> + 56% rate their job/career planning and ease of data access as below average or poor.
> + 54% rate their functionality as below average or poor.
> + 50% say their dashboard development and their analytic capabilities are below average or poor. These are very strong and widespread negative ratings.

5. People Data & AI

Customer data helps companies make advertising decisions; economic data helps banks make investment decisions. In the talent space, people data helps enterprises make decisions on how they reach their goals by identifying high potential talent, assessing new talent, and building pathways to upskill internally.

Recruiters and Hiring Managers today are being asked to make decisions on talent and must be empowered with the right information at the right time. Without this, the same talent decisions will lead to the same results which can be biased and ill-informed. Leveraging AI and other technology ensures the right people have the right data at the right time.

> "This causality analysis could be a way of opening non-traditional pathways for candidates who don't have the experience doing the exact job needed but have every ounce of capability required."
>
> —— **Anderson, of BNY Mellon**

6. The Candidate Experience

We have an issue much earlier in the candidate lifecycle that needs to be addressed: the post-secondary school system in the US.

> Despite all the potential benefits inherent in diversifying the workforce and ensuring that people of all races are equally represented in good-paying jobs, racial disparities in postsecondary educational attainment and job training outcomes continue to hold workers, businesses, and the economy back from reaching this full potential.
>
> —— **"The Roadmap For Racial Equity: An imperative for workforce — 2019"**

We have to start the career lifecycle earlier to meet the challenges and needs where they reside:

+ Through meaningful partnerships between the federal government and post-secondary schools.
+ Through public outreach; highlighting, in plain terms and in accessible means, effective and efficient pathways to enter into federal government careers.
+ Starting at high-schools without tunnel vision on universities and junior colleges. Instead, emphasizing trade schools, apprenticeships and vocational programs.

Conclusion

Fed Gov is the largest employer in the nation and as such must lead the effort to build diverse talent nationally through a thoughtful and strategic approach.

Through collaboration and by applying innovative and modern thinking, it is possible for organizations to overcome these challenges. Oftentimes, the distance to career success can be overwhelming for those in underrepresented and underserved communities. However, by mapping critical job roles to required skills, it is possible to augment education providers and hiring organizations alike by creating tailored learning pathways. In doing so, individuals can build the skills necessary to achieve success in long lasting careers.

Additional Resources

World Skills Clock - World Economic Forum shows 63% of the worlds youth without digital skills
https://skillsclock.io/

Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Fairness Initiative
https://www.eeoc.gov/ai

Explore the U.S. Strategic Portfolio
https://www.performance.gov/explore/goals/

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Passionate about building sustainable and replicable approaches for public-private sector partnerships that drive innovation and IT Modernization through evidence-based practices to address diversity, equity, and inclusion with 25 years of experience supporting agency missions across the Federal, Defense & Intel communities.

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He is a senior learning executive that consults on program design, development, and improvement for the federal government sector. Using his 40 years of federal service and the last 15 as a Chief Learning Officer at the Department of Defense to support national and federal learning programs. His experience included leading a learning enterprise of 52 schoolhouses and programs for the U.S.'s largest government department - including overseeing a $2 billion budget supporting 2.5 million professionals. He developed policies, plans, programs, and training for civilian, military, government, academic, and industry workforces. This included maintaining a Learning Enterprise comprising of 5,000+ courses and providing more than 21 million hours of instruction per year.

Heath Anderson
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Mr. Heath Anderson is the Chief Executive Officer of ROAM FEDERAL, a technology and advisory firm based in Carlsbad, CA and the former Chairperson of the Legislative Branch CIO Council and has over twenty years of federal Information Technology (IT), Finance, Human Resources, Law Enforcement and Litigation/Legal experience having served in executive-level roles in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), and United States Capitol Police (USCP). Additionally, Mr. Anderson has served as a police officer in both the local and federal levels and proudly served in the United States Coast Guard. Prior to founding ROAM FEDERAL he held the positions of Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Privacy Officer (CPO) for the United States Capitol Police (USCP). Mr. Anderson also served as the Director, Office of Human Resources and as the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) for USCP providing leadership over all aspects of Human Resources for a Police Department of over 1800 sworn officers and 500 civilian support staff.

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