

EBOOK

**How skills  
intelligence can help  
your organisation  
effectively address  
three strategic HR  
challenges?**



## **In a world where workplace competencies are changing faster than ever, HR professionals often struggle to deliver solutions that support the organisation's objectives while meeting employees' needs.**

Human Resources departments are caught between conflicting demands. **Organisational imperatives require comprehensive, real-time talent assessments.** So, it should come as no surprise that many of the solutions out there are centred on collecting and analysing data in a way that is relevant to the organisation's business objectives.

The needs of employees tend to change much more rapidly than those of the organisation. In this context, the HR function must address the organisation's broader needs while constantly coming up with solutions that align with employees' rapidly-changing levels of experience, skills and affinities. And alignment is a key success factor in any solution.

As HR processes go digital and new organisational aspirations emerge, HR is at the centre of decision-making – at least in theory. In practice, HR managers struggle to assert this level of strategic leadership within their organisations. HR professionals' main challenge is how to balance the organisation's business objectives with employees' individual objectives. To achieve a balance that works, HR professionals need to make sure they are considering **three key success factors**:

- **Make employees the focus of the process at all times.**  
Whenever you implement a new solution, the 'reason why' has to be your people.
- **Keep the organisation's objectives in mind.**  
This is vital to ensuring that HR remains a key stakeholder in strategic decisions within the organisation.
- **Stay agile with your processes and chosen solutions**  
For your initiatives to be successful, they must be adaptable.

These are 'golden rules' we feel are both relevant and applicable to a wide range of scenarios. And, to show you how universal they are, the following section describes how you can use these rules to respond to three major challenges for tomorrow's HR professionals:

- 1. Identifying the key competencies required to successfully implement the organisation's business strategy**
- 2. Creating an agile internal mobility policy with an Internal Talent Marketplace (ITM)**
- 3. Understanding and using Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP)**



**1/ Identifying the key competencies required to successfully implement the organisation's business strategy**

# 1/Identifying the key competencies required to successfully implement the organisation's business strategy

## Ascertain which types of competencies are needed

There are three types of competencies an HR professional will be interested in: individual competencies, collective competencies and key competencies.

**Individual competencies** are the sum of knowledge that is acquired through training and experience and that can be utilised to complete a given job task.

**Collective competencies** are the sum of a group's individual competencies; the cohesiveness of the group enables tasks to be completed efficiently.

**Key competencies** constitute the organisation's competitive advantage and ensure sustainable, long-term growth. HR professionals develop a [competency management strategy](#) to continue to develop these three types of competencies effectively.

One particularly interesting thing to note about these three types of competencies is **how they work together**. Individual competencies must first be transformed into collective competencies before they can become key organisational competencies.



[A strategic competency management solution model](#)

Rouby and Thomas (2009)

When considering individual competencies, development and acquisition are particularly important to HR professionals. This is because training and experience can both be leveraged to develop all employees' competencies. Collective competencies can be identified within groups like departments or project teams. These competencies can then serve as a basis for identifying the key competencies at the organisation level.

So, you can see why competencies have become such strategic indicators of a company's competitive advantage. Mergers and acquisitions founded on bringing certain competencies in house or leveraging these competencies to achieve specific business objectives have better long-term outcomes. So, clearly, the goal is to **invest in areas where the organisation needs key competencies** in order to meet its business objectives.

The Walt Disney Company is well-known for its acquisitions. Marvel, Pixar and 21st Century Fox have all been brought into the fold of this media and entertainment giant. Disney's effective acquisitions strategy positioned the company to obtain competencies it did not originally have and to diversify its business.

For companies, competencies are valuable. For HR professionals, the first step towards maintaining and developing these strategic and constantly-shifting assets is to measure them.

## Identifying key competencies

Self-reporting is a major problem in identifying competencies within an organisation. Employees talk about their competencies in different ways. Take project management. One employee might talk about his or her project management competencies. Another might talk about project coordination. Are these the same competencies or different ones? **This is about more than just naming competencies. The real objective is to be able to look at an employee's experience to assess their potential.** Here's an example:

You need to set up an in-house team for your upcoming Japan product launch. You are looking for product marketing experts and other employees with product launch experience. You also need someone with knowledge of the Japanese market. It is virtually impossible to set up this team without broad, deep knowledge of your company's constantly-shifting competencies.

## Find the solution that works for you

There are three ways to do this over the short, medium and long terms:

- 1/Short term:** A competency framework for your industry
- 2/Medium term:** A consulting firm to deliver more personalised solutions
- 3/Long-term:** A personalised competency framework for your organisation

Choose the approach that best meets your needs. Industry-specific competency frameworks are usually built on cross-functional data and offer the advantage of being very comprehensive. If you are seeking a long-term solution, a personalised competency framework will reflect the moving parts within your organisation and bring you the best in Skills Intelligence.

### Discover 100% Skills:

- ✔ Your competency framework kick-started
- ✔ A dynamic link with your job descriptions
- ✔ A comparative analysis with the industry and/or market benchmarks
- ✔ Analytics and recommendations to boost your competency management

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Therefore, the ideal system will be a dynamic one that includes internal mobility. Horizontal and vertical mobility give employees **an enhanced cultural context and experience around their projects**. The ability to rapidly integrate mobility-related issues into the overall strategy has a direct positive impact on the employee experience.

## **An inflexible organisation will never be able to respond to unforeseen events**

In HR, a lack of agility stems mainly from inflexible processes that make it hard to adapt to change. This doesn't necessarily mean constantly challenging the status quo. The goal is to find a solution to a given problem, to observe implementation and investigate ways to improve upon the solution. But how can you be sure that your solution won't keep the organisation from adapting to an unforeseen event?

Some companies have already figured out that you have to prepare for change with tools and methods that are well-integrated into employees' lives and that meet the needs of the organisation.

In the United States, the NBA resumed its season with no spectators. The league partnered with Zoom to create a virtual arena where fans could buy tickets and choose seats that they would normally not have access to at live matches ([CNBC, 2020](#)).

## **Take advantage of supply and demand**

An Internal Talent Marketplace is like all marketplaces in that it has buyers and sellers. The HR and project managers in search of skills for their job opportunities and projects are the buyers; the employees are the sellers.

An ITM lets you create a project economy within your organisation and **assigns low-value-added tasks to artificial intelligence** to bring augmented career development support to all employees. With the right algorithms, predictive analysis and user feedback, employees can receive personalised offers.

## How Caisse des Dépôts is transforming its organisation thanks to skills

**Caisse des Dépôts** and its subsidiaries represent a major historical public financial institution in France. At the crossroads between the public and competitive private sectors, the Group is completely dedicated to serving the public interest in France.



Caisse des Dépôts Group chose to work with **365Talents in January 2019 to develop a 360° vision of its employees' journeys, to strengthen skills development and internal mobility.** 365Talents has mapped in-house skills to continuously personalize talent development through training and mobility. This simple, transparent and intuitive solution enables skills to be captured in real time (since every employee has an interface whereby their own data is reported, thanks to personalized suggestions). **HR managers can focus on data to act on today's skills and anticipate the needs of tomorrow.** "Our HR strategy is based on skills. Not perfectly knowing the strengths of our employees is also preventing us from sourcing the essential skills to transform our market and needs! But addressing this issue manually is impossible. We were convinced that an HR software powered by Artificial Intelligence was the solution!" Emilie Muelle, IS Mobility Project Manager.

### Key figures and successes

- 800 new skills dynamically detected
- Solution rolled out to 5,600 employees
- 65% internal mobility rate
- No more manual methods
- Fully dynamic skills set



## **2/Creating an agile internal mobility policy with an Internal Talent Marketplace (ITM)**

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As you are well aware, Human Resources are cross-functional – and ideally positioned to help employees adapt to a changing environment. Whether you are responding to clearly-identified shifts like digital transformation or coping with unforeseen events like the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the solution is the same: You have to be agile.

Companies across the board are changing the way they work and pivoting their business models to emerge stronger in the post-Covid world. The challenge is to act quickly and effectively. Being agile is the only way to do this.

Agile HR policies and, specifically, [an agile internal mobility policy](#) will position you to respond more effectively to unforeseen events.

### Your employees want more than yesterday's corporate ladder

On his [podcast](#), HR expert, author and podcaster Josh Bersin addressed the case of a corporate sales department employee **we'll call Max**. Max began as a junior sales rep a decade ago. He hit his targets, was promoted to senior sales rep and then account manager. A few years later, he became VP Sales – the perfect career trajectory according to the functional model.

It is precisely this kind of career trajectory – one based on vertical competency development – that helped structure Max's company. But Max also became a better sales rep and gained a deeper understanding of his company and the issues around the products it sells by working horizontally with the marketing, customer service, product and other departments. Finally, Max was geographically mobile, which gave him a broader vision that contributed to his moves up the corporate ladder.

To effectively capitalise on all the experience Max has accrued since he started out as a junior sales rep, **the company needs software that can manage horizontal and vertical movement.**

And the value of the ITM lies in the opportunities it can create for your employees. Personalised opportunities boost employee engagement, and higher engagement ensures a better employee experience. This creates a virtuous circle that will help you keep your employees engaged with your HR tools.

## Structure your competency data to gain deeper insights into your business

Skills Intelligence is a great way to gather information about the competencies within your organisation and thus to identify the best experts in any given area. Skills Intelligence is best applied at all stages of value creation for your employees.

- ☑ It should be applied to the implementation of your frameworks in the form of real-time competency mapping and analytics.
- ☑ Agile solutions like Internal Talent Marketplaces leverage all existing data (annual interviews, training, projects and communities, feedback) across all platforms.
- ☑ Analytics give you the data-driven insights you need to plan ahead (Strategic Workforce Planning).

## Your key success factors

### 1. Make employees the focus of the process at all times.

The idea is to strike the right balance between responding to the needs of the business and market and those of your employees. And you can't do this without good employee engagement.

An Internal Talent Marketplace helps you get maximum leverage out of Skills Intelligence data, positioning your organisation to source a specific and perhaps underutilised competency in house, for example.

Share all information: Employees of companies with successful ITMs have access to all the data they need to do their jobs. Don't let security concerns stop you from sharing information. It is possible to have the best of both worlds.

### 2. Keep the organisation's objectives in mind.

**Strategic Workforce Planning is your top priority.** Your organisation's ability to plan ahead for major market shifts depends heavily on how well you understand which competencies your organisation will need in the future. The data and experiences collected through your ITM will definitely feed your SWP with unprecedented value.

### 3. Choose agile processes and solutions.

Agile processes and solutions bring greater flexibility, of course. Agile organisations are better equipped to understand the implications of unforeseen events. The Covid-19 pandemic is the most recent example. Hiring from outside the organisation is tricky, and working from home, once a 'nice to have' is now a 'must have'.

Think agile : If you look at digital transformation success stories, they all have one thing in common: agile organisations! Thinking agile means implementing processes and structures built to adapt to the next big change. As stated in the section about yesterday's corporate ladder, streamlining the chain of command is a good place to start and also helps speed up decision making.

Plan again and again : Accept the fact that your strategy can and probably will change as you talk to project stakeholders. The closer you can get to the people on the front lines, the clearer your objectives will become. Project planning and execution go hand-in-hand. They are not two separate phases to be completed one after the other.

Real life examples

## Allianz and its innovative Talent Management

Allianz is one of the first groups who trusted 365Talents. As soon as 201-, the Head of HR of its French division launched **its talent platform EMove with the objectives of increasing internal mobility and creating personalised career paths**. After a first pilot on all employees actively seeking opportunities with internal mobility, Allianz opened the marketplace to all its employees to get each individual to project themselves on new opportunities and careers.

**In 2021, EMove at Allianz is a great success with:**

1. A platform loved by its users and seen as the one and only tool for internal mobility
2. More than 1000 interactions /month on internal offers suggested by the platform
3. Hundreds of new skills uncovered every month to map all employees skills in real time

## Eiffage and internal mobility

Eiffage Construction has launched its Talent Marketplace MyMobility with 365Talents. For the last two years, the platform identifies employees' skills and eases internal mobility.

**Eiffage MyMobility in a nutshell:**

1. A full deployment on 4000 employees launched in early 2021
2. More than 80% activation rate and thousands of skills detected
3. A demonstrated value with many interactions on suggested opportunities and internal mobilities.

## EY and its agile gigs and missions staffing

Launched in 2017, The staffing platform MEY for EY is used daily by Staffing planners to optimise and make the staffing more agile whilst taking into account all skills and wishes of consultants.

### Deployed for more than 2500 employees, MEY now represents:

- ✔ An activation rate higher than 85%
- ✔ More than 2 600 skills identified
- ✔ More than 1 700 profile searches per month

MEY has already proved this value thanks to its track record and it is why all financial consultants have just joined the platform.

## BearingPoint daring AI-based staffing

YourSkills, the 365Talents platform at BearingPoint makes staffing easier for all consultants. It easily matches employees' skills and aspirations with their clients' missions.

### Throughout our 2 years of collaboration, the platform is used daily by 1000 employees with:

- ✔ An activation rate of 87%
- ✔ More than 2 800 detected skills
- ✔ 10 000 searches for expertise over the last 6 months
- ✔ Platform used all over Europe



### **3/ Understanding and using Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP)**

# 3/ Understanding and using Strategic Workforce Planning

The ability to determine what competencies will be needed in the future and to manage uncertainty are key HR challenges. Strategic Workforce Planning responds to these challenges by helping you **ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time**. It is also a major argument in favour of bringing HR back in as a key stakeholder in the company's business strategy.

## Why your business can no longer afford not to do SWP

Strategic Workforce Planning ensures that your organisation will have appropriate solutions to HR management problems that don't yet exist. It is becoming more and more important for several reasons:

1. Controlling costs
2. Coping with changing demographics
3. Managing talent
4. Remaining agile

## What is SWP?

The objective of SWP is:

'To have **the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right place and at the right time** to meet **the organisation's strategic objectives**.'

SWP is built on four criteria:

- ☞ First is **demand** (the number and content of job descriptions): Too many will slow the entire organisation down. Too few is an indicator that the organisation is understaffed.
- ☞ Next is **supply** (of competencies): An organisation must know which skills will be needed, not only today, but also in the future.
- ☞ Then comes **cost** (total payroll and other employee-related costs): This means knowing what the "right price" is so that costs can be optimised..

- ☑ Finally, **agility**, as evidenced by a flexible, versatile workforce able to respond to changing market needs.

An effective, sustainable Strategic Workforce Planning system has to address all four criteria. At 365Talents, we take a different approach to SWP than most solutions providers. First, we know that your strategy cannot be built on assumptions. So, we use real competency, workforce and market data to feed your SWP processes.

## Your key success factors

### 1. Make employees the focus of the process at all times.

#### Survey your employees now

Your SWP system responds directly to your employees' needs. Therefore, you will need a comprehensive and up-to-date benchmark of where your organisation's constantly-shifting competencies stand today. There are a number of software packages and platforms – Competency Mapping, People Analytics and Job Skills & Competency Frameworks – you can use to do this successfully, leveraging your employees' demographic data, seniority and preferences to hone your plan.

#### Start by asking the right questions

- What does the company's current workforce look like in terms of quality?
- What competencies does the company already have?
- Who are the company's top-performing employees?
- What is these top performers' potential?

### 2. Keep the organisation's objectives in mind.

#### Align with your company's strategic business objectives

Making sure that your project supports your organisation's strategic objectives is obviously a key success factor. Close alignment will also help you obtain buy-in for your project, get stakeholders engaged from the beginning and keep the project moving forward in the future.

#### Identify the competencies that will be needed tomorrow

Once you have completed a [competency map](#) of your organisation's employees and their needs, you can shift your focus to the future and, specifically, to identifying the competencies your organisation will need looking ahead.

### Develop several alternative scenarios

Identifying the competencies that your organisation will need to achieve its business objectives in the future is not enough to guarantee that you will be well-prepared. The simple fact is that nobody can predict the future. Uncertainty can, however, be managed. And the way you do this is by developing several alternative scenarios. This involves identifying different potential impacts and determining how they will influence the organisation. Alternative scenarios generally also include unforeseen events like the recent Covid-19 pandemic. But these are not the only impacts. Internal factors like your company's finances and the degree to which you have digitalised your processes should also be factored in to different degrees.

### **3. Choose agile processes and solutions.**

#### Bring in outside experts

Strategic Workforce Planning requires input from a number of different experts, [in particular when you want to identify gaps in your organisation's competencies](#). It makes sense here to work with partners capable of adding value at every stage of your project. Here is an example:

- ☞ A dynamic competency framework with real-time people analytics will give up-to-the-minute insights on your organisation's talents and help you analyse your workforce effectively.
- ☞ A Strategic Workforce Planning expert uses proven methods to develop relevant scenarios.

For less-agile organisations or ones that have not yet fully embraced digital transformation, Strategic Workforce Planning can be particularly complex. **Bringing in an outside partner with a proven solution for your entire project or a portion of it can help you stay on time and achieve your objectives.**

#### Test, learn and test again

Once you get your project off the ground, you still have some work ahead of you. Strategic Workforce Planning leverages agile approaches, so 'test and learn' is the way to go. Rather than determining a fixed process before you start, here, you constantly assess progress and make adjustments to the process as you go.

Your environment is constantly changing. So, your solutions have to be easy to integrate into your existing software and other tools so that you can leverage all your data. The indicators in the next section will assist you in tailoring your Strategic Workforce Planning system to your organisation and its environment so you can stay ahead of the next big change.

Real life example

## Societe Generale uses skills intelligence to feed its Strategic Workforce Planning

Founded in 1864, Societe Generale now has more than 138 000 employees (136 nationalities in 62 countries). To serve its ambitions, **the challenge for Societe Generale is to attract and retain the right applicants, to help them develop their career and improve their employability**, among all entities of the group.



With the strong digitalisation of companies, **today's HR challenge is to deliver personalised employee experience while reinforcing engagement; which is even more crucial to meet clients' needs**. 365Talents delivers an approach that allows dynamic suggestions of development opportunities and makes each employee feel unique and recognised as such, within his/her own appetencies, skills and experiences; to dynamically build his/her professional project.

Today, **Societe Generale is able to suggest skills to their employees, as well as offer open positions and job descriptions in line with the employee's skills profile. It identifies skills to be developed for each employee based on the gap between the profile and the job evolution.**

### Key figures and successes

2/3 suggested skills considered as relevant by the employees

45 000 active employees on the platform

16 countries

17 000 opportunities since launch

# Lastwords

In the future, Human Resources will play an increasing role in shaping strategy. With excellent communication skills, the capacity to retain top talent and an ability to detect and deliver tomorrow's competencies, the HR manager is a unifying force within the organisation.

If HR professionals are to fully step in to their strategic role, they have to know where their HR policies currently stand. Are they relevant to employees? Do they position the organisation to reach its strategic objectives? Do they position the HR team as key stakeholders in the organisation?

As an HR professional, if you want to have a say in the boardroom, you simply must know the answers to these questions. But you are not building from the ground up. You already have your foundation – your organisation's data. With the right software, you can leverage your data and get the analytics you need to take action.

From Payroll and HR software to Strategic Workforce Planning, Skills Intelligence, Job Skills & Competency Frameworks and artificial intelligence, the array of tools available can seem overwhelming. We hope that this paper has helped you determine which tools are best for you.

If you embrace digitalisation and place your employees' needs at the centre of your strategy, you will come up with efficient and productive solutions.

## About 365Talents

365Talents is a leading Internal Talent Marketplace platform. With its unique Skills Intelligence engine, it makes skills mapping and development a child's play for HR teams in leading companies such as Societe Generale, EY, Allianz or BearingPoint. Our platform uses machine learning and powerful algorithms to detect employees' skills and expertises and match them with internal personalized opportunities such as jobs, projects, trainings...

[www.365talents.com](http://www.365talents.com)