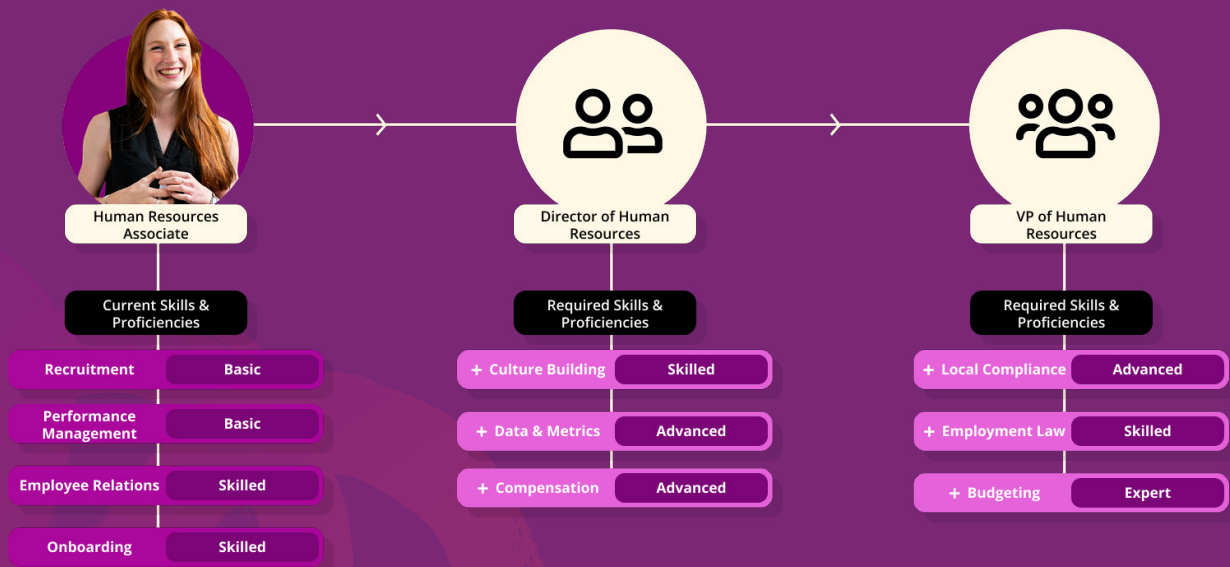




# A Buyer's Guide to Talent Marketplace Solutions

How Skills-First Organizations Are Leveraging Talent Marketplaces to Close the Skill Gaps



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## Introduction

The HR technology landscape has expanded dramatically in recent years, with numerous platforms now offering talent marketplace capabilities. This growth has created both opportunity and confusion for organizations trying to identify the right solution for their specific needs.

Many platforms offer partial talent marketplace functionality as part of broader HR suites, while others focus exclusively on internal mobility but diverge significantly in their approach and depth. That variety makes it challenging to compare solutions and understand which will fully address your organization's unique talent challenges.

With current talent shortages impacting organizations across industries and more significant skill gaps projected in the coming years, selecting the right talent marketplace solution has become a strategic priority. The platform you choose will directly influence your ability to retain key personnel, develop critical skills, and build organizational agility.

We've crafted this guide to help you navigate your options with clarity and confidence. Drawing on extensive research and experience, we'll examine which capabilities matter most for skills challenges, how different platforms approach these abilities, and how to evaluate solutions based on your specific organizational needs.

Our guide will provide practical frameworks for assessment, showcase examples of real-world implementation, and offer strategies for securing stakeholder buy-in for your talent marketplace decision. We'll help you find a solution that delivers measurable impact on your most pressing talent challenges while supporting your long-term workforce strategy.

## The Skills Crisis Explained

Talent shortages aren't new. [In the past](#), businesses closed skills gaps through external hiring campaigns or structured training programs. Organizations would identify missing capabilities, [recruit specialists](#), or develop formal learning curriculums, and the crisis would gradually subside.

Thanks to this historical pattern, when [Korn Ferry](#) and the [World Economic Forum](#) began to warn of a looming skills crisis—with predictions of 85 million unfilled jobs by 2030 and \$8.5 trillion in unrealized revenue—many leaders didn't take it seriously. The numbers seemed hyperbolic, especially given how past talent shortages eventually resolved.

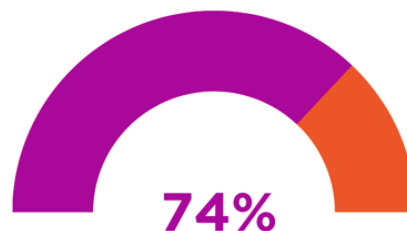
That model no longer works though, because the underlying dynamics have fundamentally changed. The speed of change has accelerated dramatically. The lifespan of skills is shrinking, with the half-life of professional abilities now less than five years in many fields. So, a competency that was valuable 18 months ago may already be obsolete.

The supply-demand equation is broken as well. Organizations need emerging skills (i.e., data analytics, AI fluency, digital transformation expertise), but these are in short supply, and external hiring can no longer close the gap.

Equally important, employees' expectations have changed. People look for more than just a paycheck; they want growth, mobility, and development. If they can't find it internally, they'll leave—and take their skills with them.

Overall, organizations face the following systemic challenges:

- **Skills fragmentation**, where departments maintain separate, inconsistent skill taxonomies without a universal language across the business;
- **Skills invisibility**, with companies having zero visibility into their workforce;
- **Operational inefficiencies**, with ineffective assessment methods and ad hoc skills management;
- **Market misalignment**, where reactive rather than proactive skills planning leaves companies perpetually behind; and
- **Strategic blind spots**, with skills disconnected from workforce and business planning.



Seventy-four percent of HR leaders admit that a lack of talent visibility is actively impeding their ability to achieve business objectives.

**Organizations already feel the impact:** Our research found 74% agree that a lack of visibility into skills and talents actively impedes their ability to achieve business objectives.

Projects stall, innovation slows, and competitive advantages erode while leaders struggle to identify and deploy the existing skills in their workforce.

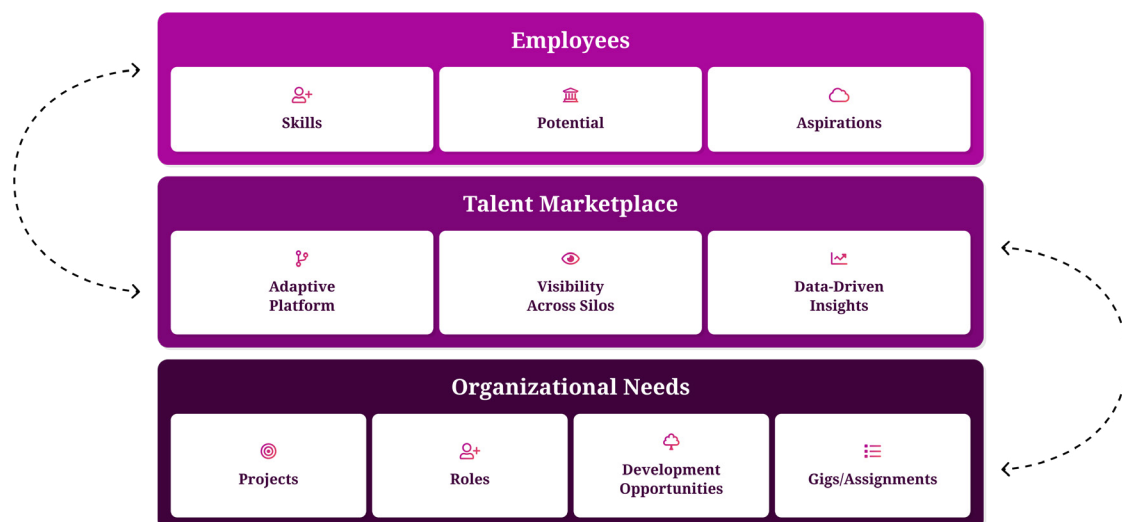
Forward-thinking organizations are addressing this through enhanced internal mobility and skills visibility. Companies with strong internal mobility see [41% longer employee tenure](#), and those providing clear skill development paths report [34% higher employee retention](#).

The solution to this complex challenge isn't another HR initiative—it's a comprehensive talent marketplace that creates transparency between organizational needs and employee capabilities, enabling both to adapt in real time to rapidly changing demands.

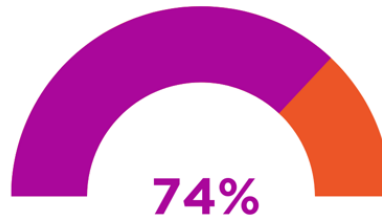
## What a Talent Marketplace Is (and What It's Not)

When exploring talent marketplace solutions, it's important to clarify what these platforms truly offer beyond conventional HR tools. A talent marketplace is not simply another HR software that posts internal jobs, nor a digitized version of internal jobs boards with basic search functionality. Rather, it's transformative technology that improves how talent and opportunities connect within your organization, as well as informs how talent decisions should be made.

A talent marketplace is a dynamic, skills-based platform that matches people to opportunities based on their existing abilities, potential, and aspirations. It creates connections between people with specific capabilities and projects that traditional organizational structures often obscure. Think of it as the bridge between your organization's skill needs and your employees' growth potential, constantly adapting as both evolve.



With [74% of organizations](#) struggling to fill internal roles, visibility into existing workforce capabilities isn't simply nice to have—it's critical to optimal business performance.



Seventy-four percent of HR leaders still struggle to fill internal roles.

A talent marketplace eliminates this disconnect by creating transparency around both current skills and future potential, allowing organizations to deploy and develop talent with unprecedented precision.

What distinguishes a talent marketplace from less effective solutions are six core components working in concert:

1. **Skills visibility and mapping:** A robust skills ontology that creates a common language across the organization, tracking skills at multiple proficiency levels
2. **Internal mobility:** Matching capabilities to vacant roles, providing visibility for both employees and hiring managers
3. **Career development pathways:** Personalized growth journeys based on skills, aspirations, and organizational needs



All components must work in concert for an effective talent marketplace

4. **Project/Gig opportunities:** Short-term growth assignments that develop skills while addressing immediate business needs
5. **Mentorship connections:** Relationships that facilitate knowledge transfer and accelerate development
6. **Leadership intelligence tools:** Insights that help managers understand team capabilities, potential flight risks, and developmental needs

Each component in isolation provides limited value. Skills visibility without mobility pathways creates frustration. Meanwhile, career development without project opportunities limits practical application, and mentorship without skills context lacks focus.

But when integrated through a skills-first approach, these elements build an ecosystem that drives both organizational agility and individual growth.

The business impact extends far beyond simply moving people between roles. A proper talent marketplace creates a more agile organization capable of rapidly deploying capabilities where needed.

When employees can easily find growth opportunities aligned with their aspirations, and leaders can quickly access hidden talent across traditional silos, the entire organization becomes more responsive to change. This agility translates to innovation, productivity, and competitive advantage.

Not every platform that calls itself a “talent marketplace” delivers on this promise though. Many solutions lack the full suite of capabilities needed to transform how talent flows through your organization. Understanding these core elements helps you recognize genuine talent marketplaces that drive organizational transformation.

## How Organizations Use Internal Talent Marketplaces to Address Skills Issues

Every organization faces unique challenges based on their business objectives, and while they all benefit from a comprehensive talent marketplace, they often leverage different capabilities to address their problems.

Let's examine how three leading companies used talent marketplaces to solve their distinct workforce challenges.



## Trane Technologies: Overcoming Siloed Talent and Limited Visibility

Trane Technologies, a global climate innovator, struggled with talent silos that prevented employees from seeing growth opportunities in different business units. With limited visibility into internal roles, valuable talent either remained underutilized or left the company. This siloed approach to talent management made it difficult for leaders to identify capable, internal candidates for critical positions, resulting in higher external hiring costs and longer time-to-fill metrics.

Trane Technologies needed a solution that could break down these organizational barriers and create transparency for both employees seeking career growth and managers looking for talent. So, they implemented Fuel50's Talent Marketplace solution with a focus on internal mobility and skill visibility features.

The platform allowed employees to explore potential career paths across the entire organization, rather than only within their immediate department. For hiring managers, it provided unprecedented visibility into internal talent pools so they could discover qualified candidates they wouldn't have considered previously.

The results were transformative: Trane Technologies achieved a 67% increase in internal talent mobility and a 35% increase in internal recruitment. Leadership engagement also improved significantly, with an 11% improvement in career conversations between managers and their teams. These improvements then contributed to a 5% increase in overall employee engagement.



## University of California, Irvine (UCI): Solving Critical Retention Challenges

For [UCI](#), the challenge was more focused on retention. In a competitive market for educational talent, they were experiencing concerning levels of turnover, particularly among high-potential employees. Exit interviews revealed a consistent pattern: Employees left because growth opportunities within the institution were invisible to them.

The disconnect wasn't due to a lack of opportunity, but rather, poor visibility and accessibility; their talented workforce was blind to relevant growth paths across the university's diverse departments and roles.

UCI implemented Fuel50's Talent Marketplace with a strong emphasis on career pathways. The solution allowed employees to explore potential career journeys based on their skills and aspirations, revealing opportunities they didn't know existed. It also empowered leaders to pinpoint and nurture internal talent more effectively.

As a result, UCI achieved a 50% reduction in attrition. Additionally, their turnover rate dropped to just 4% (for reference, the education industry's average is 13%-15%).

Tom Andriola, vice chancellor for IT and data and chief digital officer, noted, "We're running at about a third of our industry's typical turnover rate and we think that the Fuel50 platform has provided a tremendous input into keeping that number much lower than our peers."



## KeyBank: Preparing the Workforce for Digital Transformation

KeyBank faced a different challenge entirely: Rapid digital transformation was creating new skill requirements across the organization. They needed to prepare their workforce for this shift but realized external hiring alone would be too expensive and time-consuming. The critical question became how to identify and develop existing employees with the potential to grow into these new digital roles.

This challenge demanded a comprehensive approach to skills development and career transitions. KeyBank therefore implemented Fuel50's Talent Marketplace with a focus on assessing skills, integrating with their LMS, and introducing career pathing capabilities.

The bank then launched their "Future Ready" initiative, powered by Fuel50, which they branded internally as "Grow at Key." The solution enabled employees to assess their current skills, discover growth areas related to digital transformation, and access personalized learning resources. For leaders, it provided insights into workforce capabilities and potential, thus promoting more strategic talent development.

"We grounded Future Ready in the idea that each employee is the CEO of their own career," explained Dean Kontul, EVP and chief information officer at KeyBank.

This employee-driven, manager-supported approach yielded impressive results: a 60% increase in training participation, over 9,800 Future Ready skills assessed, and 2,774 specific upskilling actions taken to close skill gaps. The platform saw a 72% return rate from employees, which demonstrated strong engagement in their development journeys.

Each of these organizations leveraged different aspects of a comprehensive talent marketplace to address their specific workforce challenges. Whether breaking down silos, improving retention, or driving digital transformation, the core capabilities of skills visibility, internal mobility, and personalized development proved essential to creating more agile, future-ready organizations.

# How to Reach a Consensus With Other Business Leaders When Purchasing a Talent Marketplace Solution

A talent marketplace impacts every part of the business and so requires buy-in from multiple stakeholders with different priorities and concerns. Successfully navigating this complex buying process means understanding what matters to each decision-maker and aligning on shared objectives.

For instance, HR leaders manage the platform and ensure it supports talent strategy goals; finance leaders analyze the investment and ROI; IT leaders integrate it into existing systems and maintain security; and departmental heads use it to source talent and develop their teams. Each has unique concerns that must be addressed to gain their support.

## Understanding Stakeholder Priorities

Stakeholder	Primary Concerns	Key Value Propositions They Care About	Effective Approach
<b>HR Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR tech consolidation pressures</li> <li>• Demonstrable business impact</li> <li>• User adoption rates</li> <li>• Alignment with talent strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlined talent processes</li> </ul>	Emphasize how the platform complements core HR systems while providing capabilities that drive measurable outcomes like retention and internal mobility rates.
<b>Finance Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation and ongoing costs</li> <li>• ROI timeline</li> <li>• Resource efficiency</li> <li>• Business case validation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in external hiring costs</li> <li>• Decreased time-to-fill metrics</li> <li>• Productivity gains from skill alignment</li> </ul>	Present concrete cost-saving scenarios with specific numbers. For example: "Reducing external hiring by 20% could save \$X annually based on current

<p><b>IT Leaders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data security and privacy</li> <li>• Integration complexity</li> <li>• Resource requirements</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation roadmap with IT requirements</li> <li>• Security compliance documentation</li> <li>• API and integration specifications</li> </ul>	<p>Involve IT early and provide detailed technical documentation. Address GDPR/CCPA compliance, authentication methods, and data handling protocols up front.</p>
<p><b>Departmental Heads</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to quality talent</li> <li>• Retention of top performers</li> <li>• Team development</li> <li>• Project resource allocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation roadmap with IT requirements</li> <li>• Security compliance documentation</li> <li>• API and integration specifications</li> </ul>	<p>Demonstrate how the platform will help them build stronger teams while creating growth opportunities that improve retention. Show examples of cross-departmental talent sharing that benefited all parties.</p>

## Building Alignment Around Shared Challenges

Start by identifying the common pain points that affect all stakeholders. Everyone struggles with skills gaps and talent shortages, although they experience these challenges differently:

- HR sees increased turnover and faces difficulty filling positions.
- Finance sees rising recruitment costs and productivity losses.
- IT struggles to find specialized technical talent.
- Departmental heads contend with project delays due to capability gaps.

Use these shared challenges to construct a unified vision of what success looks like. For example, “Imagine if we could identify and deploy critical skills 50% faster while reducing turnover by 30% and external hiring costs by 25%.”

## Collaborative Decision Framework

### 1. Share compelling success metrics from similar organizations:

- UCI’s 50% reduction in attrition
- Trane Technologies’ 67% increase in internal mobility
- KeyBank’s 60% increase in targeted skills development

2. **Craft a structured requirements-gathering process where each stakeholder can contribute their critical needs:**
  - a. Conduct individual stakeholder interviews
  - b. Compile requirements into a master document
  - c. Prioritize requirements as “must-have,” “high value,” and “nice-to-have”
3. **Develop a shared evaluation framework with weighted criteria that reflect each stakeholder’s priorities:**
  - a. Technical requirements (20%)
  - b. Business impact metrics (25%)
  - c. Implementation timeline and resources (15%)
  - d. User experience and adoption factors (20%)
  - e. Cost structure and ROI (20%)

## Action Plan for Building Consensus

1. **Chart your buying committee:** Identify all decision-makers and influencers in the process, noting their roles, concerns, and decision-making authority.
2. **Prepare stakeholder-specific value propositions:** Develop tailored messaging for each stakeholder group that addresses their specific priorities and concerns.
3. **Create a shared success metrics framework:** Define what success looks like for each stakeholder and how it will be measured post-implementation.
4. **Build a comprehensive evaluation plan:** Develop a structured approach to vendor assessment that incorporates all stakeholder requirements and provides a clear map for decisions.
5. **Establish implementation milestones:** Form a detailed implementation timeline with check points that address stakeholder concerns.

## How to Choose the Talent Marketplace Solution That’s Right for You

Before comparing vendors, define what matters most to your organization. This entails identifying the problems you’re trying to solve and the specific skills challenges you face.

Below is a template evaluation framework you can use to make the most objective choice possible.

## Talent Marketplace Evaluation Framework

### Business Objectives Assessment

- What talent mobility challenges are you trying to solve? (e.g., retention, internal hiring, project staffing)
- Which metrics will define success for your talent marketplace? (e.g., internal mobility rate, employee engagement)
- How does a talent marketplace align with your broader talent strategy and career development initiatives?
- What organizational readiness factors need to be addressed before implementation?

### Core Marketplace Capabilities

- Does the platform provide visibility into both full-time roles and short-term opportunities like gigs and projects?
- How well does the platform match employees to opportunities based on their skills and interests?
- Does it support different types of mobility (i.e., lateral movement, promotions, project-based work)?
- What mechanisms exist for employees to express interest in opportunities?
- How are managers and project leaders able to find talent within the organization?
- Does the platform include mentoring capabilities that connect employees to relevant mentors?

### Skills Intelligence Foundation

- Is the talent marketplace built on a robust, proven skills ontology?
- How are skills validated and maintained on the platform?
- Can the platform map an employee's existing skills to new opportunities?
- How does the platform identify and track emerging skills within your organization?
- Does the platform provide personalized development recommendations to close skill gaps?
- How are skill proficiency levels assessed and verified?

### User Experience & Adoption

- Is the interface intuitive for employees of all technical abilities?
- How does the platform personalize the experience for individual employees?
- What features exist to drive sustained engagement and return visits?

- How transparent is the matching process for employees and managers?
- What feedback mechanisms exist for users to improve their experience?
- Does the platform offer mobile access for on-the-go personnel?

### Implementation & Integration

- What is the typical timeline from purchase to launch?
- How does the platform integrate into your existing HRIS, ATS, and LMS systems?
- What data is required to get started and how is it maintained?
- Can the platform scale as your organization grows?
- Does the system support single sign-on and secure authentication methods?
- How flexible is the platform in adapting to your organization's workflows?

### Analytics & Insights

- What talent mobility metrics and dashboards are available?
- How does the platform track and report on internal mobility outcomes?
- Can you identify skill gaps across departments or functions?
- Does the platform provide predictive insights for workforce planning?
- How can leaders use the provided analytics to inform strategic talent decisions?
- What ROI measurements are available to demonstrate platform value?

### Change Management & Support

- What implementation support and training resources are included?
- How does the vendor assist with change management and encouraging adoption?
- Is there a community for customers who use this solution?
- What ongoing support services are available after implementation?
- How frequently are new features released, and how are updates communicated?
- Does the vendor provide best practices and guidance based on their experience?

### Privacy, Security, & Governance


- How is employee data protected within the platform?
- What control do employees have over their visibility and information sharing?
- How are opportunities vetted before they're posted on the marketplace?
- What governance structures are recommended for marketplace management?

- ❑ Does the platform comply with relevant data protection regulations?
- ❑ How are biases minimized in the opportunity-matching process?

## Why You Should Leverage Fuel50's Talent Marketplace Solution

Fuel50 pioneered the talent marketplace space from a deep understanding of skills and organizational psychology. Our founders were recognized visionaries in skills-based talent mobility before building the platform, bringing decades of expertise in career development, organizational design, and employee engagement to create a solution rooted in both science and practical application.

That expertise has made meaningful differences in how our platform works. Our skills ontology is expertly crafted and validated by I/O psychologists and HR specialists, which means fewer irrelevant distractions for your business.



Specialist Skill

**Python Programming**

Uses Python to develop and maintain applications and systems to meet business goals

Basic

Skilled

Advanced

Expert

Talent Growth

Python Programming

We've lined up some actions that we think will help you achieve this goal.

Jan 25

View a Python beginner's tutorial online. Share four critical learnings with my manager for feedback. Cement my knowledge by practicing the programming language often.

Jan 28

Request participation in a project using python programming language to build a web application. Obtain feedback from the manager on my performance. Record three best practices for future use of Python.

The precision and relevance of our skills data ensures you make decisions based on validated information rather than algorithmic guesswork. We've built our foundation on meticulously curated data that faithfully reflects the skills landscape.

Unlike other talent marketplace vendors, Fuel50 goes beyond matching skills to roles; we understand how skills develop, connect, and evolve over time.

### Project Manage Launch of New Product

Deadline: Dec 21

- New York
- Marketing
- Remote Working

Looking for someone to drive the launch of our new product this quarter. Work closely with the launch team to run meetings and ensure alignment on the project plan. Hold cross functional leaders accountable to deadlines as needed.

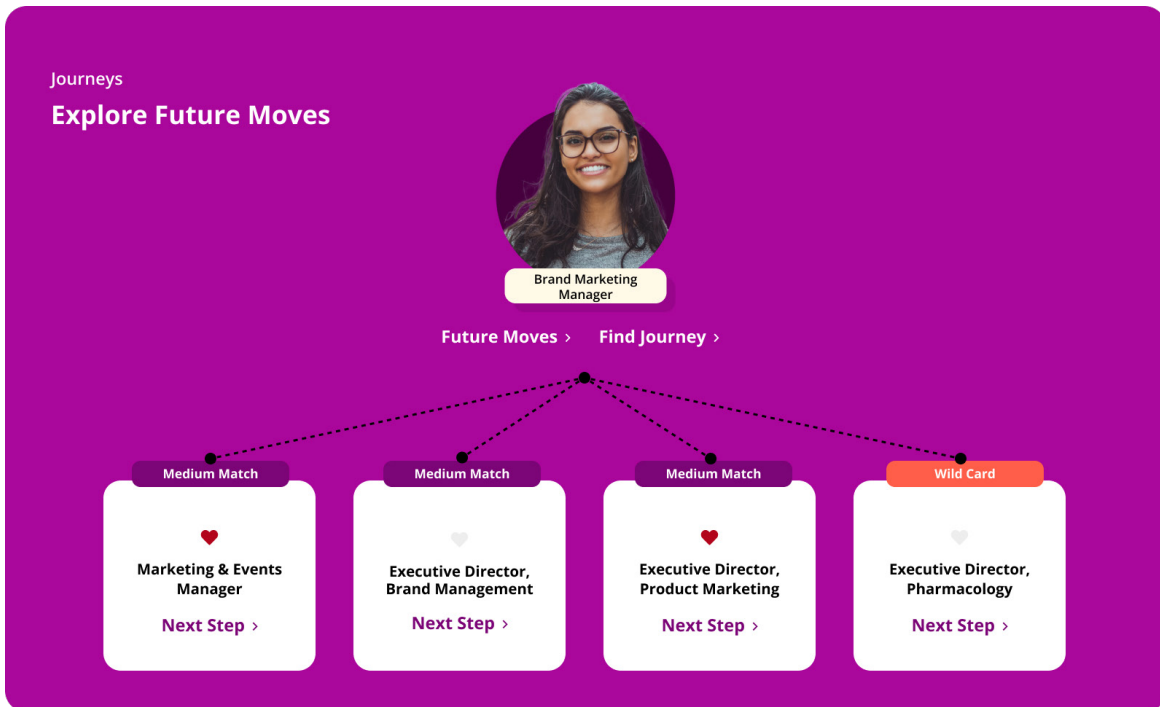
[Learn More >](#)

#### Required Skills & Proficiencies

Team Work	Basic	Communication	Basic	Project Management	Basic
Jira	Skilled	Office 365	Skilled	Negotiations	Skilled

Our platform recognizes the progression pathways between skills, which allows it to identify the capabilities that serve as foundations for others and how skills clusters relate to emerging roles.

That deep understanding enables us to construct highly personalized developmental journeys that reflect both organizational needs and individual aspirations.



Our platform is also built on proven organizational science, incorporating decades of research on career development, engagement, and performance. This scientific foundation ensures your talent marketplace is both technologically sound and psychologically effective in driving the behaviors and outcomes you need to remedy your skills crisis.

Most importantly, Fuel50 has consistently delivered proven business results for organizations across industries. Our clients see tangible business outcomes that directly impact their competitive positioning.

## Industry-Leading Customer Results

The University of California, Irvine reduced their attrition by an astounding 50% after implementing Fuel50, bringing their turnover rate down to just 4%, compared to an industry average of 13%-15%. This dramatic improvement saved millions in replacement costs while preserving institutional knowledge and continuity.

Texas Health Resources saw a 91% improvement in employees' ability to locate and utilize development opportunities, transforming their \$6 million annual tuition reimbursement investment from a passive benefit into a strategic skills development engine aligned with organizational priorities.

KeyBank experienced a 60% increase in skills development activities with over 2,700 specific upskilling actions taken to close critical skill gaps. This targeted approach to capability building enabled them to accelerate their digital transformation without relying on expensive external hiring.

Trane Technologies achieved a 67% increase in internal talent mobility after implementing Fuel50, dramatically improving their ability to deploy existing talent to critical roles and reducing time-to-productivity for key positions.