

# Ultimate Buyer's Guide to Integrated Talent Management

Everything you need to  
lead a successful search  
for integrated talent  
management solutions.



**SilkRoad**

# Ultimate Buyer's Guide to Integrated Talent Management

## START THE SUCCESS JOURNEY HERE

Navigating by looking in the rearview mirror will not be the way to drive HR technology decisions in the next few years. New solutions and technologies create greater challenges for talent management at every turn. They also create even more opportunities. When it comes to making a technology decision for your organization, you have a clear opportunity to lead and steer a successful outcome for your team and your organization. The process of evaluating and choosing integrated talent management technology offers a rare chance to gain a strategic appreciation of the entire employee lifecycle, from talent acquisition and onboarding through succession planning and employee offboarding. And to communicate that value to your executive team.

Today, most HR professionals recognize that talent management can impact business results significantly. Unfortunately, they find it difficult to communicate that value to upper management, who often express doubt about the strategic value of HR functions. To change the minds of skeptics, it's necessary to change the way you communicate and the approach you take to talent management functions. Convincing skeptics of the value of talent management is challenging, but possible. It just takes the right tactics and a lot of persistence.

### KEY TAKE AWAY

To be a talent management leader, you must have a cohesive, strategic view of technology and how it can cost-effectively support a holistic view of people as well as business objectives.

The *Ultimate Buyer's Guide to Integrated Talent Management* attempts to make sense of the buying journey. It provides the essential roadmap to guide you through the decision-making process. This handy reference takes you from "not sure where to start" to "ready to make a business case" to "final choice."

## MAKE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY CHOICE: GET STRATEGIC

Transforming the concept of "talent management" into reality, through technology decisions, poses a challenge for many organizations. They struggle with creating a strategy for integrated talent management and then understanding how to support that strategy with technology. Most importantly, they want access to, but are unsure how to use, all of the data produced by integrated technology.

Making the right choices when it comes to talent management technology will determine whether you and your team can emerge from the paper pushing and tactical processes that keep HR professionals from being seen as key players in the business.

In fact, implementing integrated HR technology continues to preoccupy HR professionals and emerged as a top three concern in a survey of more than 4,000 professionals. Implementing integrated human resource technology ranked first, while getting access to accurate data for a clear picture of the organization and converting that data into business insights ranked closely behind.

One thing is certain: HR professionals realize that without integrated technology, it's impossible to have the accessible data to drive business-level decisions. And without that ability, HR will find it very difficult to gain a place at the table in the C-suite. So making an HR technology decision plays a big part in how you as a professional - and leader - will be perceived in the organization.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR ORGANIZATION

Take a moment to assess which characteristics describe your HR organization. It will help you formulate a strategy for your integrated talent management technology project. After all, most successful business decisions evolve from an understanding of your starting point (where you stand today) versus a goal (what you want to accomplish in the future). This section gives you a quick guide to assessing where your talent management functions are today, including challenges, while providing some benchmarks on where you can take those functions in future.

### WHERE DO YOU RANK IN THE HR SUCCESS MODEL?



Every organization level can benefit from talent management automation. Talent management technology can become a catalyst to accelerate the growth of your HR functional maturity. So bear in mind that no matter where you start on the **HR Success Model**, talent management technology can raise your level of performance and contribution to the business.

### LEVEL 1: Compliance-Driven HR Explorer

Typically this type of organization focuses on the demands of being in compliance – the mandatory laws that must be followed to avoid penalties and fines. HR functions will report to C-level titles such as operations and finance and sometimes be a sole practitioner at a manager or lower level. The function looks at meeting legal requirements around hiring and employment and safety. Written guidelines tend to be few, processes manual and inconsistent, and business managers tend to handle their own recruitment, onboarding and performance management, and engagement at varying levels of success. An HR leader in this category may rely on outsourcers, consultants, or contractors to perform many of the roles of a larger HR department. *What automated processes or applications there are tend to be basic mixed with standard spreadsheet tools and manual operations.*

### LEVEL 2: Process-Centered HR Influencer

While probably still reporting to operations or finance, this type of organization has begun to build out HR processes and continues to enhance and perfect these with greater efficiency, while deepening engagement with the organization's employees and management. You may spend time building out and establishing new HR services that also may require more sophisticated tools. At this level, HR leaders may get more attention from the organization as a whole, while the expectation is that HR should have a "people strategy"

**“It's obvious that HR is on the front lines of change, balancing innovation against corporate culture, identifying ways to use technology to better engage people and providing the data to enable better decisions and strategic thinking.”**

that understands the employee lifecycle in the organization. Such an organization may now have professionals responsible for recruiting, training and development, and salary administration, benefits administration, and other areas. *The lack of technology has become apparent and is now seen as a constraint to adding further services or functions.*

### LEVEL 3: Strategic HR Leader

These organizations have begun to see a business role for HR. Many now report to the CEO. Consequently, the HR team is seen as more of a partner with other business managers and employees. Now the team wants to develop HR strategies and services, and orient existing services, to support business goals, whether those are core functions like recruiting and training or broader. HR leaders in this type of organization now play a role at the executive team level, providing guidance on people issues as well as use of social media and employee engagement. Meanwhile the team focuses on bringing

its processes into closer integration and using quantitative and qualitative data for decision making and executive team guidance. This type of organization is characterized by more strategic thinking, well-established core HR functions that serve the needs of the business while maintaining compliance. *Integration between automated systems is critical to this type of organization achieving its goals.*

#### LEVEL 4: HR Visionary

The most actualized type of HR organization, the visionary team truly helps drive the business. These types of teams are often headed by a chief human resources officer (CHRO) or people officer, report to the CEO, and often get involved in board-level discussions. The team has a finely honed instinct for using data to develop people strategies around business goals, adapt to changing business climates, and measure success. Data also becomes predictive to provide insight into trends and what “may be” rather than just “what was.”

HR teams at this level play important roles within the business and on a peer level with business unit executives. These teams have judiciously acquired, implemented, and fine-tuned the proper technologies to support and enable their strategic roles in the company, and they have ensured that those applications are tightly integrated, providing accessible data from the latest mobile technologies. In this type of organization executives understand the importance of employee engagement to their goals, the need for reliable people data to support planning and major decisions, and the data-centric guidance HR provides. *Integrated technology is pervasive and used extensively and is a key reason the team is able to play a strategic role.*

## UNDERSTAND INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT

Integrated talent management describes technology that connects typical HR functions associated with talent acquisition, performance management, learning and development, succession planning, and workforce planning. Integrating these functions through a software solution should provide a common user interface, shared data, and reporting and analytics capabilities. Without seriously integrated technologies to support HR functions, it will be difficult to provide the insight and quantitative information to support the C-Suite business strategies.

While talent management professionals want to move toward an integrated talent management solution, most organizations have a long way to go. The most frequent “integrated” functions among survey respondents are recruiting and onboarding. Recent surveys indicate that less than 15% have attained a high level of integration across the full range of HR functions (recruiting, onboarding, learning, performance, and workforce planning), indicating that most (67% of respondents) continue to cobbling together partially automated functions with spreadsheets and other manual processes.

### KEY TAKE AWAY

Integrated talent management solutions can help HR professionals hone their leadership skills by providing the data and analytics to help you focus on more than HR departmental issues, but on the challenge facing the corporation as a whole.

### Why Is Integration Important?

The lack of integration significantly decreases productivity, leads to inconsistency, and increases to duplication of effort, and fails to provide the data and insights needed to make sound business decisions. When activities and data are not shared, organizations are less transparent and actions are often repeated needlessly across an organization—increasing staff time and cost.

Conversely, organizations that have adopted integrated talent management view their workforce horizontally, sharing data and applications across departments, divisions, and geographical locations, rather than managing talent in vertical “silos.” Moreover, consistent, integrated HR processes create a more positive image of a company's brand for candidates and employees. Even if an organization has multiple offices, branches, or locations, the experiences of candidates or employees should be coherent, uniform, and pleasant, regardless of the location. In addition, regardless of how market forces treat the business, integrated technology and the data it produces enable the business to be more agile and responsive.

### How Much Automation Is Good for You?

Companies are moving toward integrated talent management, yet many studies show the majority of companies remain in early stages of adoption. For example in a late 2013 survey of HR professionals, more than three-quarters of organizations had some form of talent management integration, usually between recruiting and onboarding; yet integration of talent management rarely went beyond those core functions. The majority still used partially automated systems.

What this suggests is that many companies are not realizing the benefits of integration, such as shared data access, efficient communication, and greater transparency across their organizations. Based on the Success Model previously discussed, moving forward with technology integration means becoming more strategic and more visionary.

### How Much Data Do You Need?

While integrated talent management technology should be able to provide you with a data to support day to day management of your functions, it should also give you some strategic insights that you can communicate to your executives. Examples include having basic data, such as employee turnover information at your fingertips, you will also want access to data for complex decision making, such as integrated performance and learning data for succession planning. While not exhaustive, the list should give you some ideas about what data is important to you and your organization:

- Basic data, such as cost-per-hire, employee turnover, compliance on hiring and onboarding, employee safety, and other data.
- Data showing the cost or business impact HR processes have.
- Global data on what makes an exceptional and excellent workforce.

- Skills and abilities of all current employees—so that an open position could be “mapped” to internal candidates who are a close match, reducing the cost of external recruiting.
- A leadership profile for your organization, based on both Big Data and performance management results.
- Compensation analytics.
- Workforce planning and succession planning.
- Data for tracking employee engagement over time.
- Data on retention and turnover.
- Greater integration between recruitment, learning, and performance data.

Data fuels business strategy, so you will want to look for integrated talent management solutions that provide that fuel. Having access to reliable data becomes the building block of solid business strategies. While having access to some data (recruiting for example), offers insights, you need to be able to gain insight across the full range of talent management function to be viewed strategically and as a driver of business outcomes.

Workforce data is a strategic business asset. Talent management professionals recognize that they may be sitting on a “goldmine” of internal HR data for analysis. They want to be more data-driven in their decision making processes. Yet, fully integrated talent management systems are not common in most organizations. This means that most companies are missing the opportunity to “slice and dice” workforce data in more strategic ways, e.g. to discover relationships between leadership and performance, retention and learning, or onboarding practices and employee engagement. Only when talent management applications share data will professionals have the information they need to support workforce planning and better business decisions.

#### KEY TAKE AWAY

When HR functions are not integrated HR teams are challenged by lack of consistent workflow, processes, usable data, and inability to generate reports and other analytics challenges.

Look for integrated talent management solutions that provide the data and tools that are within reach of most HR professionals: workforce metrics displayed on a dashboard or social tools that measure employee participation and engagement, for example.

#### How Social Do You Need To Be?

Talent management leaders have a crucial role to play in how the organization transitions to and deploys social media. As workforce demographics change and Millennials enter your workforce in greater numbers, their tech-savvy communication skills will impact how you recruit, engage, and manage employees in the future. Your choice of technology should enable and support social media strategies as they evolve to meet these new recruiting and engagement challenges.

Typically recruiting and learning benefit most from incorporating social technologies. For example, adding mobile technology to the recruitment mix can enable candidates to search for jobs on a company Web site, receive alerts about new positions, or track application status—all while on the go. Also, the social-mobile technology combination has particular promise for collaborative Learning and Development. Employees can view short snippets of information or video, read blog posts, and share information with colleagues. With mobile capabilities, users aren't required to be tethered to a fixed, corporate computer to interact with peers, collaborate in teams, or learn new skills.

Social technology also gives HR professionals real-time feedback, as well as a wealth of employee data. Using this information strategically, HR professionals can demonstrate their great value to the executive suite and show a focus on “big picture” business concerns. Social media adoption, saw social media as most beneficial to recruiting, learning and development, and onboarding. Look for integrated talent management technology options that incorporate social media in their employee interfaces.

### **Should You Go Mobile?**

Though the use of mobile hardware and applications exponentially grows, HR appears to be lagging behind. Whether from security, compliance, or other concerns HR teams will have to adapt and adopt.

The benefits of mobile access to workplace data—whether from a smart phone, tablet device, or laptop—are obvious. Mobile computing can enable HR, employees, and managers to access information from anywhere at any time. Typically, the entry to HR applications for mobile devices is through a portal, which enables the employee to view and update information pertinent to his or her role in the company.

When users have mobile access to HR data, tasks such as approvals for time off (such as sick time) or performance reviews can be handled speedily. Employees can use self-service applications via smart phones to update their emergency contacts or view their benefit information. The ability to access an employee record, performance review, or travel request anywhere at any time—on the road, from the air, or at home—speeds workflow and aids productivity. A single point of entry, such as a Web portal, can enable users to view and update the information they need.

In contrast, when managers, employees, and HR are required to log on to company databases via corporate computers, workflow and productivity can be impeded and slowed. Obviously mobile technologies increase the use of social technologies, so looking at these together makes sense.

## Buyer's Checklists

### CHECKLIST: DEFINE KEY BUSINESS STRATEGY

#### Business Strategy Checklist

Use these questions to outline your company strategy and identify what business drivers need to be supported by integrated talent management technology choices. If you are unsure about the answers to these questions, you will want to discuss these questions with your executives.

- What is the CEO's business strategy?
- What is the vision for the business in the next 3-5 years?
- What is the vision for talent within this strategy? What is the goal for key positions? Skills? Development of existing workforce?
- What key skills does the strategy and the business depend upon to be successful?
- What are the external realities that impede or facilitate acquiring or maintaining those skills?
- Are your current HR functions and strategies aligned?
- How well are recruiting, onboarding, performance management, learning, and other functions aligned to meet those goals?
- What do you lack in terms of technology to make this alignment seamless?
- Do you have the data and information to support management when it wants to know how you are supporting the business strategies?

#### Adaptability and Scalability Checklist

You don't invest in technology solutions just for today. You invest in a solution that will support the business and scale and adapt to your needs. First you need to understand what those needs may prove to be; and how adaptable the technology choice will need to be to support the business.

- How frequently does the organization undergo changes in business direction?
- How would you rank your ability overall to plan effectively (anticipate growth spurts or retrenchment)?
- Does your organization operate in high pressure, heavily regulated industry?
- Does it require rapid changes in technology?
- How often does your C-suite change and which functions?
- What has been the recent history of achieving business goals, fulfilling a business plan, or meeting/exceeding expectations?

#### KEY TAKE AWAY

When HR adopts mobile technology as a way to access information more efficiently, it also enables employees to use mobile devices extensively at work, and there's a national trend toward them.

- At what speed must the HR organization adapt to business changes?
- What barriers to change impede smooth adaptation to business goals?
- What level of commitment and resources can you expect from executive leadership to help drive talent management initiatives?
- Have you benchmarked competitors in terms of their talent management practices and technology support?
- How quickly could your HR team react to the following:
  - Call for new skills requirements
  - Rapid ramp up of new division or R&D functions
  - Reduction in force

While not exhaustive, consider these and other questions like these as you think about integrated talent management technologies and how they will need to support the business today and in coming years in a variety of business or market environments.

## CHECKLIST: BEST PRACTICE INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT

Use this checklist to evaluate integrated talent management solutions against industry best practice functionality.

### Core Benefits Checklist:

- Look for a single platform of record, unifying the employee lifecycle, from recruitment to onboarding, to performance and learning, to off-boarding and succession planning.
- Look for ability to scale, allowing you to acquire key functionality as you need it - or the entire suite at once.
- Look for the ability to share data across functions (recruiting, onboarding, performance management, learning, etc.) and the ability to deliver data for decision-making.
- Look for **integration points to other applications**, such as payroll and benefits or other system.
- Look for technology that **produces cross-functional data** and provides meaningful reporting.

### Talent Management Vendor Evaluation Checklist

- Is the entire suite available in the cloud with 24/7 accessibility?
- Does it provide full functionality to manage the end-to-end employee lifecycle, from talent acquisition, onboarding, performance management, learning?
- Does it provide standardized and customized reporting for each individual component, as well as across the suite?

- Does it provide full integration between suite components, ensuring consistent flow of data and full workforce visibility.
- Is there single sign-on functionality across the suite?
- How easy is it to integrate the suite (as well as individual functionality) with other third-party applications?
- How well does it integrate social media technologies through each component of the suite?
- How often does the vendor upgrade each component of the suite to ensure that the technology adapts to market trends and competitive pressures?
- How well does it incorporate mobile technologies into the suite? What about data access via mobile technologies?

### Technology Suite Checklist

- Self-Service Engagement – Look for employee-centered design and personalization that is easy to use and maintain from the employee's perspective and from an administrator's perspective. Employees must think it's easy to use or the implementation will not be successful.
- Social Collaboration – Look for solutions that weave social networking and media innovations throughout its functionality, from recruitment to learning for example, to provide consistent employee connectivity and productivity.
- Information On Demand – Since data drives business decisions, you'll want to look for a solution that provides easy access to data, both through out-of-the box analytics and reports that meet a wide range of reporting needs for all levels and functions, but also the ability to customize reports.
- Agile Innovation – Since the advent of cloud technologies, it's no longer necessary to acquire, install and management on-premise software or endure a lengthy implementation process. Look for talent management solutions that use cloud-based architecture so functionality is continually updated without disruption.
- Employer of Choice Branding – Look for a solution where you can easily customize the entire suite, function by function, with your corporate brand. This strengthens employee engagement while enhancing internal brand loyalty. Look for a solution that allows you to adapt to regional or site-specific differences easily.
- One System of Record – Look for a solution that covers the complete employee lifecycle from pre-hire to offboarding and succession planning. How well-sized is the solution to your business?
- Connect the Dots – Look for a solution that makes it very easy to integrate with any on-premise or cloud application, such as ERP, payroll, time and attendance, and benefit systems.
- Proven and Trusted – Look for a solution that is backed with services should you need them to help you set up and implement your applications, but that also comes with a track-record of satisfied customers who form a user base.

## Solution Security Checklist

Cloud-based technology is only as good as the data security that goes with it. Only when your system is safe and breach-proof can your company soar to new heights. As you research integrated talent management cloud vendors, you will want to assess their security based on consistent criteria. You should look for four main security checkpoints:

- Physical Controls, such as how the physical components of the data center are protected, even such seemingly small things as locks and keypads, and 24/7 video monitoring matter when it comes to your data.
- Administrative Controls to ensure that access is trackable and verifiable, including Multi-factor Authentication for Physical Access (biometric fingerprint verification and facial tracking for example); controlled access points only to those people and areas where it is absolutely needed.
- Data Center Security and operations, including:
  - 100% Power Availability, covering servers, network, databases and applications; battery-powered back-up generators and dual servers to ensure uninterrupted service.
  - Application Stack Protection, look for highly redundant systems that eliminate single points of failure in the application stack to ensure that your data is available to authorized users with reasonable response times.
  - Firewalls, Internal and External to ensure that only legitimate traffic from authorized users gets routed to the appropriate server.
  - Intrusion Prevention –does the vendor use IPS to perform deep-packet inspection of all incoming traffic? If not, why not?
  - Network Lockdown to ensure that the production domain contains no wireless access point that can be exploited by hackers.
  - Privacy and integrity standards compliance should include SSAE-16 SOC 2, two of the most stringent audits.
  - Encryption for applications, Personally Identifiable Information, and back-ups should include multi-layer protection.
- Verification – look for a vendor who will provide you information and verification of the following:
  - Extensive ongoing testing plans.
  - Transparency to the customer. The vendor should have no problem showing you how it keeps HR data safe.
  - Data Storage should be entirely (100%) isolated from other companies' data.
  - Compliant. The vendor should meet the most rigorous industry standards for risk management, monitoring, and executive oversight, including passing SSAE-16 SOC 2 audits for at least 5 consecutive years, while and meeting every data privacy law and data integrity law in regions where it does business.

## MAKE THE BUSINESS CASE: INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT

In addition to your principles of persuasion, keep in mind the following five tactics that make the case for talent management and any major strategic business plan you may want to develop in the future.

Talk about the obvious savings

### Use these Seven Tips

1. Use business language: Instead of only pointing to HR issues like turnover and cost-per-hire, try making the case for recruitment software by also talking about business issues like customer loyalty, sales, and fewer errors.
2. Use data from high volume positions: It is often practical to gather data showing the value of improved recruitment when you are working on high volume positions. Proving that better recruiting software matters in those positions will support the business case for all of recruiting.
3. Ask your CFO to put a dollar value on it: HR can project the likely outcomes of better recruitment. That's a good start but take it one more step by asking your CFO to help you put a dollar figure on those outcomes. The CFO's analysis can demonstrate a solid ROI for recruitment software.
4. Find out what is bugging key leaders: If a key leader has a problem, and you know recruiting is part of the solution, then use that leader's issue as a driving force in the case for new recruitment software.
5. Emphasize how it unburdens managers: Your case gets a lot stronger if you articulate why recruiting software will make life easier for not only HR, but every manager in the company. Emphasize how it helps them, not how it helps just you. Your leadership teams will definitely see the value in that! Emphasize how it helps them not how it helps you.
6. Find out what peer organizations are doing: Prepare a diagram illustrating the degree of technological sophistication of peer organizations. The idea of catching up with or staying ahead of peers is often compelling to management.
7. Use real examples: It is more convincing to talk about specific examples than general principles. Saying "With this technology we'll have more people like Mr. X and fewer people like Mr. Y" helps managers viscerally feel the impact of good recruiting.

### Tell a Compelling Story

How much time, money, and opportunity cost is tied to manual tasks that can be automated, while being able to eliminate the printing, processing, and storage of paper documents? For the CEO and CFO, the waste associated with inefficient administration remains a sore point. Talent management systems can lead to obvious savings. Making the case for these savings with a vivid story and sound numbers is always a good tactic.

Remember, HR does not need to estimate the savings by themselves, but to eliminate these costs across the company. How often do managers print and reprint open hire requisitions, resumes, and feedback forms for each open position. Far better to ask finance to give you a hand in seeking evidence that there are obvious savings to be made.

### **Show Best Practices**

How are the smartest companies in your industry acquiring and developing talent, and what competitive advantage does that give them? No one likes to look across the street and see their competitors doing things better and pulling ahead as a result. HR can make a strong emotional appeal in showing how competitors benefit from best practices and back that up with estimates of how that affects results.

When you talk about best practices try to be as tangible and specific as possible. Saying that you lose a certain percentage of high performers is not nearly as compelling as pointing to one strong individual the company regrets losing who would still be here if the firm followed best talent management practices. Once your audience feels the pain of that one loss, back it up with the percentages and cost implications

### **Show How You'll Help Reach Business Goals**

How will acquiring and developing talent affect the odds of each executive delivering on their goals/their share of the company's strategic growth plans? This is my favorite of the five tactics. It takes aim at what interests stakeholders; it is business focused; and it is reliable. It is hard to find a part of the business where talent concerns do not rank high in the controllable factors that drive success.

Remember that each part of the business will have its own talent issues, customize the case you are making for strategic talent management to each individual leader in one-on-one sessions.

### **Quantify Savings of Motivating Better Performance**

What are the consequences of employees feeling detached from or uninformed about the company's mission, strategies, and plans? Any manager trying to run a high-involvement department will want to ensure employees understand how what they do connects to the business. Best practice performance management, backed with appropriate technology, helps by cascading goals so that employees understand why what they do matters.

We know that not every leader cares whether the employees understand the business mission, that's fine, use this tactic on the leaders who already recognize that this is important.

### **Quantify Savings of Engaging Employees**

What are the consequences of not providing your employees with 'easy to engage with' systems and processes? Poor systems lead to poor outcomes. One of Gallup's core questions about engagement is "Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work?" They ask this because employees forced to work with dated, sub-par HR systems feel frustrated and undervalued. The flip side is that if employees are treated to modern talent management software they feel good about the company.

## INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT BUYER'S TOOLKIT

**Next: Download the Buyer's Toolkit with 4 essential tools to create evaluate vendors and make a business case. [Visit the resources page on silkroad.com.](#)**

We know finding the right suite of HR software products for your unique organization isn't a piece of cake. Having the right tool in place can have a profound effect on your employees and, ultimately, the success of your company. That's precisely why we created a buyer's toolkit consisting of key questions you should ask when evaluating ANY HR software suite or solution.

1. A real Request for Proposal (RFP) template with all the questions you should ask when buying a HR software suite or solution - it's a sure fire way to avoid pitfalls and prevent choosing a bad solution.
2. A helpful demo checklist - use it for all your demos and the result will be a true apple to apple comparison of the solutions you're considering.
3. A critical reference questions list - there is no better way to gauge how successful your implementation will be, or what complications lay in the road ahead, than speaking with existing customers; make sure you ask questions that uncover everything possible before you get started.
4. Customizable PowerPoint slide deck (PPT) to achieve executive buy-in.
5. Standard Business Case Template (MicroSoftware Word compatible) to prepare your write up.

## APPENDIX A: CLOUD TECHNOLOGY BACKGROUNDER

Companies looking to automate talent management functions want to solve business problems – not manage software applications. That's why companies are adopting cloud technologies at a dramatically increasing rate. But is it right for your team and your organization? Your company may be new to cloud adoption. Perhaps your IT department remains skeptical of cloud advantages. We put together a cloud primer to help you understand the benefits and make the case.

### What is a “Cloud Platform?”

If you are not familiar with “cloud computing” the term refers to the use of technology resources that are located on a vendor's premises and that are made available to you on an on-demand basis via the internet. There are five common attributes that constitute a true cloud—as opposed to a piece of software that a vendor simply runs for the customer at some remote hosting facility:

1. Turnkey service. Your company is completely insulated from the operation of the application and its supporting infrastructure. You don't have to manage it, maintain it, or get involved with any of its technological complexity. You just use it.
2. Scalable. The vendor can flexibly scale capacity up or down as necessary to meet your company's changing needs.
3. Shared environment. The vendor runs the application in a pooled multi-tenant environment to achieve economies of scale and flexibly allocate available capacity to whichever users may need it at any given time.
4. Subscription. You only pay for what you use. Your company's utilization of the service is tracked—by the number of active users, total hours of use, CPU cycles consumed, or some other metric—so you pay for that utilization, rather than for some peak capacity requirement that you have to guess at and may never actually need.
5. Standardized. It uses standard internet protocols. This means that it requires minimal or no changes to your present computing environment. All users need to get started is a browser, an internet connection, and appropriate authorization to use the service.

### KEY TAKE AWAY

Analysts estimate that the cost of maintaining a typical on-premise software implementation peaks at 3-5 times the software license cost. At this cost, many departmental applications cannot be cost-justified. For example, 75% of the cost of an on-premise solution is spent up-front before it is known whether the project will be successful. Projects can take more time and internal resources than anticipated. ”

### Key Cloud Benefits

1. Pre-integrated applications – whether you acquire one HR application at a time or go with an entire suite, all applications will already be integrated within the talent management cloud platform. That means no additional cost to integrate applications within that suite.
2. Frequent updates and enhancements - cloud vendors frequently upgrade the talent management platform and make the latest functionality available seamlessly to all customers at the same time.
3. Solve the business problems you need quickly – an integrated talent management platform will have multiple applications within it, so it's practical to solve one or more business challenge at one time, while leveraging the efficiencies of a unified security model.
4. No hardware infrastructure to maintain - Because cloud solutions do not require hardware infrastructure investment for each deployment, they provide a cost-effective approach for implementations ranging from small departments to large organizations.
5. Cloud offers speedier deployment with much less on-site engagement required, speeding time-to-value. Low initial costs make the benefits of the solution readily available to virtually any organization and fit easily within modest departmental budgets.



## ABOUT SILKROAD

SilkRoad® is a leading global provider of cloud-based, end-to-end Talent Management that enable customers to find, attract, develop, and retain the best talent. The award-winning Life Suite® includes Talent Acquisition (recruiting and onboarding), Talent Development (performance and learning), HRMS, and Talent Portal solutions that are easy to deploy, easy to use, and affordable for all businesses.