



Why Unified Labor Market Data Is the Foundation of Modern HR Strategy

And how Lightcast + Rhetorik data connects talent insights with enterprise performance



We're entering a new era of work. Every company I talk to is trying to move faster, work smarter, and build a more adaptable workforce. Generative AI has only added urgency to that equation. And right now, the pressure is on HR to lead. But here's the challenge.

While HR teams have made massive strides in areas like people analytics, workforce planning, and talent intelligence, most of them are still operating in silos. Recruiting has its data. Financial planning and analysis has its headcount models. People analytics runs its dashboards. And somewhere in there, org design and L&D are trying to figure out what skills we actually need.

The problem isn't effort. It's architecture.

If your data is fragmented, your strategy will be, too. And that's where things start to break down. You can't run effective AI models, build skills-based systems, or advise the business with confidence if every function is using a different source of truth.

That's why I believe the most important investment HR can make right now is the foundation of your data.

When Lightcast acquired Rhetorik, it unlocked something powerful: a complete, constantly updated, and globally verified source of workforce data. You get skills. You get job histories. You get company structures, hiring signals, and verified contact info. Most importantly, you get consistency across functions, across platforms, and across time. That consistency is what turns workforce data into a key component for business intelligence—one that organizational leadership cannot overlook.

This ebook gives you a closer look at how all this comes together and how strategic HR functions can work from the same data foundation to make better decisions, align with the business, and move fast enough to keep up with change that is ever increasing in velocity.

Because in a world where every job is evolving, every skill has a shelf life, and AI is coming for your workflows, the last thing you can afford is confusion.

Let's build systems that reinforce HR as a leader—not a follower.



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INTRODUCTION

HR now has a generational opportunity to lead—not just hiring or headcount, but as a key driver of enterprise strategy in a time where work is changing at a pace we’ve never experienced before. To do that, it needs a workforce data foundation that connects the dots: across people, roles, skills, functions, markets, competitors, and systems.

While the core functions shaping workforce strategy—People Analytics, Talent Intelligence, Workforce Planning, and Organizational Design—may have different mandates, they’re all asking similar questions. Where does our workforce stand against the external market? What are our competitors doing? How do we keep up with skills that are constantly changing? Who is the right talent, where do we find them, and how do we acquire them?

This is precisely why these functions are converging—and why the data behind them must converge, too.

Without a shared source of truth, those questions lead to conflicting answers, resulting in missed opportunities, misaligned plans, and lost credibility in the boardroom. For HR to lead as a strategic partner to the business, its data architecture must be unified, consistent, and continuously refreshed. And for AI to add value and speed to critical decision-making, it can’t be vulnerable to contradicting—or mysterious—datasets that will only amplify inconsistencies.

Essentially, how do you know you can trust the information to successfully drive your business and speak the same language as your executive team?

**It starts with data that’s comprehensive, reliable, and moves with the speed of the market.
It starts with Lightcast.**

Why did Lightcast Acquire Rhetorik?



Lightcast acquired Rhetorik to accelerate our strategy of organizing the world's labor market data and to further solidify our position as the global leader in labor market intelligence. Rhetorik brings a globally curated and compliant profile and company dataset—complementing and extending our existing job postings, government data, and worker profiles. With this acquisition, Lightcast becomes the only company in the world that sources, curates, integrates, and delivers data at scale across job postings, profiles, company records, and government labor statistics. In addition, this data allows us to extend our use cases (staffing, alumni targeting, etc.) and support new use cases (lead enrichment, market analysis, etc). It's a strategic move that expands our global capabilities, strengthens our core mission, and delivers more value to our customers.



Benchmarking Internal Pipelines Against the External Market

A core function of HR is to look deep into its organization through internal data, but without looking wide as well, the full story can't take shape. External context is critical to robust workforce strategy, and internal data alone simply cannot meet the moment of increasingly complex labor market dynamics—especially for large, global enterprises.

Internal systems can show you who's in your pipeline, what roles are open, and what skills are logged. But they can't tell you how that pipeline stacks up against the market. They can't show you whether you're developing critical capabilities at the right pace, whether your talent is aligned with emerging demand, or whether competitors are hiring differently in the same markets, for the same roles, with a different mix of skills.

This is the delta between internal readiness and external reality. And for global organizations, that gap only grows wider with scale.

A Fortune 50 company might have rich internal data signals—millions of applications, robust internal mobility data, detailed role histories—but without external benchmarks, those insights exist in a vacuum. It would need to know, for example:

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- Are our skills keeping pace with competitors in cloud engineering in San Francisco?
 - Do we have enough product managers in London with AI experience to support regional growth?
 - Are our wages realistic based on labor demand in Munich?
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This is where Lightcast and Rhetorik data combine to deliver clarity.

With more than 850 million global profiles enriched with multilingual skill tags, verified job histories, DEI attributes, and contact data, Rhetorik brings real-world labor market visibility to every internal talent question. You can segment by skill, role, region, and demographic data—then compare that against your own internal pipelines to assess strengths, gaps, and growth opportunities.

For People Analytics and Workforce Planning teams, this means more than just better reporting. It means stronger alignment with finance, strategy, and talent acquisition. When you can validate headcount assumptions with external data, build realistic skills forecasts, and model supply across global markets, you move from measurement to strategy. For Talent Acquisition teams, these signals are invaluable. They enable better targeting, sharper competitive analysis, and more informed conversations with both candidates and business leaders.

In a world where the pace of change quickly exhausts static org charts, benchmarking isn't a nice-to-have. It's the only way to make sure your internal talent story is grounded in external truth.



Imagine your recruiters being able to have this conversation with a software engineer who is currently employed by a competitor and is concerned about leaving a prestigious company with higher compensation:

First, let's talk about scale. In the past year, we opened over 21,000 software engineering roles, while your current employer opened fewer than 3,000. That's nearly 10 times more internal opportunities for growth, team changes, and upskilling without resetting your tenure. There, you're locked into a narrow path. You can shape your skills trajectory here. Our volume means more exposure to different tech, broader business units, and different customers, whether you're in cloud architecture, e-commerce, AI/ML, or hardware innovation.

Now let's talk about compensation. Yes, your current company's average total comp is higher, around \$204k compared to our \$179k. But it's also concentrated in fewer areas. Their hiring strategy has become laser-focused; over 40% of roles are now AI/ML specific. You mentioned wanting broader exposure. With us, you can work on distributed systems, customer-facing platforms, infrastructure, or AI/ML, but you're not siloed to one track.

Ultimately, the question is: What technical areas are you most interested in growing into? With 10X more opportunities, multiple business lines, and a global footprint, I'm confident we can find a team that fits exactly where you want to go.

With consistent, comparative data on competitor skill demands, postings analytics, and compensation, HR teams don't just react to the market. They anticipate it. Bringing this intelligence to the table makes competitor positioning a core part of workforce and business strategy.



Understanding Competitor Capabilities and Market Position

It's an increasingly competitive and complex world out there. Knowing how your competitors are evolving is no longer optional. It's foundational—and workforce data is a critical aspect of business intelligence in an aggressive landscape.

For global enterprises, workforce strategy is deeply intertwined with market positioning. When a competitor expands into a new region, reorganizes a business unit, or pivots its hiring strategy, that movement sends signals. Not just about talent, but about business intent. Are they building a new capability? Better product line? Replacing legacy skills with next-gen roles? Or even narrowing their focus?

These are strategic cues, and talent intelligence teams are uniquely positioned to read them—if the right data is there.

Lightcast job posting analytics surface macro hiring trends: what roles are in demand, where they're being hired, what skills are prioritized, and how they're being compensated. But when that insight is layered with Rhetorik's company-level data—including org structures and size, technographics, and leadership changes—you get a sharper, multidimensional view into your competitors' playbook.

Imagine this scenario: A multinational logistics company notices a competitor rapidly hiring for automation specialists across its European distribution hubs, while also shifting its job postings to emphasize AI and robotics integration. Rhetorik data reveals an influx of talent from a recently acquired robotics startup, while technographic signals indicate adoption of a new warehouse management platform. Combined, these signals point to a transformative initiative—well before any press release.

For Talent Intelligence, Workforce Planning, and Org Design teams, this level of visibility makes it possible to anticipate where the market is moving—and respond proactively. You can reallocate sourcing resources, update hiring profiles, assess capability gaps, or evaluate new locations based on verified competitor moves.

This is no longer just competitive benchmarking. It's workforce-level market intelligence. And, it's what your operations, finance, and strategy teams care deeply about. When HR presents these insights, it builds confidence that they're operating with the same level of strategic foresight as any other function. The value isn't just in seeing what competitors are doing—it's in knowing how to respond faster and with more precision than ever before.

Remaining Agile with the Speed of Skills

The shelf life of skills is shrinking—and most systems weren't built to keep up.

Across industries, roles are evolving so rapidly that even within a single job title, the required skills can look entirely different in just a few years. [Lightcast data](#) shows that over the past three years, the average job has seen 32% of its skills change, while one in four jobs has experienced a 75% shift.

That's not gradual evolution. That's structural disruption.

The larger and more widespread the organization, the more enormous the implications. Workforce architecture—how jobs are defined, where roles sit, and how teams are built—were designed for stability. However, agility is what distinguishes organizations in today's market. And agility starts with the ability to detect skills change in real time.

Lightcast tracks skill demand and emergence through billions of job postings, giving you insight into how roles are changing across industries and regions. When paired with Rhetorik's global profile data—including verified role histories, skill transitions, and career trajectories you can see not just what employers are asking for, but how workers are responding.

That historical context matters. It lets you analyze the delta between what's posted and what's performed—and identify the inflection points where transformation begins.

For Org Design, Learning & Development, and Talent Intelligence teams, this insight unlocks faster, more informed action:

You can recalibrate job architectures based on what roles are becoming, not what they were.

You can design upskilling programs aligned with real-world transitions.

You can identify early signals of capability gaps, long before they impact operations.

In the age of AI, the question isn't whether skills will change—[it's how fast, and how impactfully](#). With unified labor market data from Lightcast and Rhetorik, that change becomes measurable, actionable, and predictable.

This is what skill agility looks like. And it's what will separate the organizations that adapt from the ones that fall behind.



USE CASE 4

Full Lifecycle Sourcing and Recruiting

Talent acquisition is no longer just about filling roles—it's about building pipelines that anticipate demand, reduce friction, and deliver the right skills at the right time. But no doubt that HR is feeling it—traditional sourcing methods are hitting their limits.

Search-based recruiting tools rely heavily on job titles, resumé keywords, or internal systems like ATS and CRM databases. The result? Missed opportunities, overlooked talent, and stale contact records that slow outreach and shrink your candidate pool. But what if that's no longer the case?

Lightcast has long helped organizations understand talent availability through postings data and labor supply analytics. With Rhetorik, sourcing and recruiting has a new layer of precision—expanding global profile data with verified contact information, skills enrichment, role history, job transitions, and DEI attributes.

This fundamentally changes what's possible across the full sourcing lifecycle.

Instead of searching for candidates by job title alone, recruiters can identify people with the right mix of inferred and adjacent skills—even if those candidates don't use the same language in their resúmes. Instead of sending cold emails into the void, recruiters can engage talent directly with up-to-date, verified contact information that adheres to global data privacy compliance. Additionally, recruiters can tailor their messaging based on actual career paths. Instead of relying on assumptions, they can validate where talent lives, what companies they're coming from, and what capabilities they've demonstrated.

This is especially valuable for high-growth or hard-to-fill roles, where traditional job boards and databases fall short. It's also essential for teams looking to diversify their pipelines or expand into new markets—where reliable, contact-enabled profile data can dramatically improve outreach efficiency and candidate quality, lowering costs.

For Talent Acquisition teams, this is about more than just finding people. It's about removing guesswork, increasing ROI, and embedding sourcing strategy directly into broader workforce planning efforts.

When you layer profile intelligence onto skills and job data, recruiting stops being reactive. It becomes a competitive advantage.

From Fragmented Data to Unified Action

As the HR function continues to converge and evolve, its ability to drive business value hinges on one thing: shared, reliable, and real-time data.

Whether you're modeling headcount needs, designing job architectures, sourcing emerging skills, or benchmarking workforce capabilities, the challenge is the same. You need to speak the same language across every team.

When People Analytics, Workforce Planning, Talent Intelligence, and Org Design operate from disconnected data sources, the cost is more than inefficiency. It's lost alignment, conflicting conclusions, and eroded trust with executives. And in an era of AI, that margin for error will only grow.


LIGHTCAST + RHETORIK DELIVERS THE UNIFIED FOUNDATION THAT HR NEEDS:

 Global, multilingual profile data

 Real-time job postings analytics

 Dynamic skills taxonomies

 Verified contact information

 Technographics, company structure, and market signals

Together, this robust, full lifecycle data allows you to connect the dots—across people, roles, regions, and strategies.

This isn't just better data. It's a new operating model for workforce strategy. It's how HR moves from reporting on the business to driving it forward.

Know the market. Reach the people.

Lightcast gives you more than workforce insights—be the strategic asset your organization needs with verified contacts, enriched profiles, and skill-level precision across the world's top industries and regions.

[UNLOCK EARLY ACCESS TO EXPLORE THE DATA](#)

