Whitepaper

FROM TALENT ACQUISITION TO TALENT ADVISORY

Mar 2023

TRAITS
COMPETENCIES
SKILLS

FOREWORD

TCS Insights spoke with over 50 Talent Acquisition Leaders and asked, "who cares about Talent Advisory?"

Any transformation requires justification. If we examine this question from the voice of the customer, we get some interesting insights:

- C-Suite Executives-want to reduce risk by ensuring the business have the talent at reasonable costs to achieve business objectives. Talent Advisory focus is purely on this objective with a significant lens on internal mobility. It has been proven that Internal Mobility does tend to cost less than hiring the equivalent external talent.

- Internal Staff and External Candidates – If an organisation has a focus on internal mobility and on automating repetitive work this tends to lead to lead to higher engagement and reduced turnover which reduces the cost external recruitment. This also significantly helps the internal and external employer brand and can benefit DE&I.

- The Business – Talent Advisory leads to mutual respect by demonstrating a knowledge of the internal and external market for talent, who does not want to be seen as an expert? Importantly if external recruitment is reduced the team can add other value and hence creates some sustainability.

- Talent Acquisition Team – Talent Advisory teaches new skills and tends to enable business partnering, which is much more fulfilling than simply undertaking external recruitment. For the Talent Acquisition Leader this person has the opportunity to brief the C-Suite on the internal and external market for talent and sustain the function.

This white paper has been developed based on six focus groups comprised of Talent Acquisition practitioners and vendors (Technology and RPOs) based in Australia, New Zealand, the US, and Singapore. Other information included is based on TCS undertaking assessments of internal Talent Acquisition professionals who are transforming their functions to include Talent Advisory.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Talent Advisory is a new approach to recruitment that focuses on providing knowledge services to enhance how an organisation gets work done. This includes a multi-channel approach, encompassing internal mobility, external recruitment, borrowing or loaning talent, and automation. Talent Advisory is gaining popularity due to skills shortages, organisations wishing to retain staff, and importantly the career path it provides to recruiters.

Talent Advisors use data and market intelligence to advise on sourcing current and future skills and capabilities required for the business. This approach differs from recruiters, who focus on filling positions as quickly as possible, and Sourcers, who focus on finding and identifying potential candidates. Talent Advisors provide guidance and support in workforce planning, talent acquisition, employee development, and retention to help organisations attract and retain top talent.

A Talent Advisor utilises data to find the best talent for critical skills and roles. They work closely with the business and advise on external market demand and supply of skills/talent, analyse and guide the organisation's value proposition in the external market, understand the internal talent capabilities, and contribute to developing a workforce plan. They may also undertake recruitment, report on the cost of alternative recruitment approaches, develop market maps for crucial talent segments, and provide reports to support budgeting on development, branding, remuneration, and value proposition.

They use technology such as learning and development, performance management, skills assessment, interview/assessment, applicant management, talent pooling, and market intelligence to extract insights and inform their advice to the business.

To sell Talent Advisory to the C-Suite, focus on the benefits it can bring to the organisation, such as ensuring business sustainability and growth, improving productivity, and providing internal mobility, which tends to increase staff engagement and reduce turnover. Demonstrate the value of Talent Advisory as a competitive differentiator in the market and its focus on external and internal talent. Provide data and insights to show the skills gap and how it can improve the recruitment experience by reducing its transactional nature. Emphasise the importance of understanding the skills and capabilities needed to deliver and provide mobility and use this to create a progression through skills development. Show the potential of Talent Advisory to match core competencies and reach out to third separation skills, if necessary, which can be a future-proofing step for the organisation.

WHAT IS TALENT ADVISORY?

Talent Advisory is an evolution of recruitment from providing candidates to providing knowledge services that enhance how an organisation gets work done.

These services demonstrate the best way to complete the required work to meet the organisation's goals and provide insight into sourcing the most effective solutions.

A Talent Advisor understands the skills required by the business to be successful now and in the future and uses a multi-channel approach of:

- Internal mobility – building and developing internal capability,
- External recruitment – buying, reviewing talent demand and supply, and advising on optimal tactics,
- Borrowing or loaning talent (contingent workforce) – looking at what skills can be hired on a short-term basis to supplement and train the existing workforce, and
- Bot – what position can be automated and how will the nature of the role be changed with automation?

This moves the traditional recruitment role from transactional and tactical to strategic business partners, adding additional incremental value to the business. Talent Advisors use data, market intelligence, and expertise to influence stakeholders to gain "optimal talent outcomes".

Talent Advisory moves beyond receiving instructions to think about the most effective approach (Build, Buy, Borrow and Bot). It provides advice on how and where to source requisition based on market data and analytics to make optimal talent decisions. It thinks proactively about the future skills and

capabilities required to future-proof the business.

Talent Advisory includes a mindset shift from reactive to proactive, spending more time in the pre-engagement phase to understanding the talent market space internally and externally to create a blended view and, most importantly, being able to articulate this to hiring managers and other stakeholders.

Talent Advisors look for new channels and options to build talent communities. These may include education from high school up, internal talent through skills identification, external communities and groups, minority groups to upskill, partnering with other companies to share people and develop skills, traditional recruitment channels, contractors, freelancers, and automation.

"Solutions can be sourced across: Build (Internal Mobility), Buy (External Recruitment), Borrow (Gain access to skills on a short-term basis) and Bot (automate parts of the job)."

RECRUITER

Key outcomes:
- Fill position as quickly as possible.
- Meet brief as closely as possible.
- Repeatable quality outcomes.
- Identify and engage customers in a way that protects the brand.

Focus:
Current position needs, reactive, typically 90% on the external market.

SOURCER

Key outcomes:
- Identify and screen potential candidates.
- Meet the hiring brief as closely as possible.
- Identify new channels to approach candidates.

Focus:
The current position's reactive needs are typically 90% on the external market.

Differences between Recruiters, Sourcers and Talent Advisors

TALENT ADVISOR

Key outcomes:
- Partner with the business using talent intelligence* to:
  - Provide advice on demand & supply external skills.
  - Understand internal skills
- Assist the business make optimal talent decisions (buy, build borrow & bot).
- Identify and engage customers in a way that protects the brand.

Focus:
Future & current skills, proactive & typically 50% on external market & 50% on internal.

INTERNAL FACTORS

Retention
Internal mobility
Engagement
Development
Workforce planning

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Talent shortage
Technology
Market competition
Shorter tenure
Development opportunities
Automation

* Talent intelligence is the insight from internal and external data sources analysis to achieve a competitive advantage.

A recruiter is responsible for the end-to-end recruitment process. They find, screen, and hire candidates for open positions within an organisation. This typically includes posting job listings, searching for and reaching out to potential candidates, conducting interviews, and working with hiring managers to make final decisions.

A Sourcer, on the other hand, focuses specifically on finding and identifying potential candidates for open positions. This can include using various sourcing tools and techniques, such as Boolean search strings, social media, and employee referrals, to locate and reach out to potential candidates. Sourcers often work closely with recruiters to provide them with a pool of pre-screened and qualified candidates for open positions.

Talent Advisors help organisations identify, attract, and retain top talent. They provide guidance and support in workforce planning, talent acquisition, employee development, and retention. Their remit may include the following:

- Assessing the current and future talent needs of an organisation
- Developing and implementing strategies to attract and retain top talent
- Identifying and leveraging external and internal sources of talent
- Working with hiring managers to define and fill open positions
- Guiding employee development, engagement, and retention
- Partnering with other HR and business leaders to align talent initiatives with overall business objectives.

	Recruiter	Sourcer	Talent Advisor	HR Business Partner
Workforce planning			X	X
Internal growth			X	X
Skills analysis			X	X
Role requirements	X		X	
Job brief	X	X	X	
Channel identification	X	X	X	
Job posting	X			
Applicant review	X			
Passive candidate identification		X		
Outreach	X	X		
Interviews	X			
Offer	X			X
Declination	X			
Process analysis			X	X
Reporting	X	X	X	X
Market intelligence	X		X	
Skills library			X	X
Automation opportunity identification			X	
Contract opportunity identification			X	
Outsource opportunity identification			X	
Branding	X	X	X	X

Table 1.

What do Talent Advisors do?

Talent Advisory involves utilising the available data to find optimal talent for critical skills and roles. Talent Advisors ask themselves questions such as:

- Do we have someone internally with the foundational skills we could develop?
- What combination of skills do we have internally?
- Who has the talent if we don't?
- What skills might we need in the future?
- How does our value proposition compare to our competitors for this skill?
- What skills do we need right here, right now?
- What developmental paths can we create to ensure our employees can continue to meet the future demands?

To be successful, Talent Advisory persuades hiring managers to think more broadly and be more accepting of information. This may be quite a significant change to the existing function of the recruitment team. Using data, a Talent Advisor may ask the hiring manager:

- What type of person do you need for this job after looking at the people available externally and internally?
- If we can provide the career trajectory for this position, would you consider a slightly different skill set?
- Can you provide me with the best person to do this position, and I will use this as a base to find similar people? If the people we find require a different value proposition, would you consider changing it?

Technology is critical to understanding internal and external skills. A talent advisor must be adept at extracting insight from talent data streams provided by the technology stack and translating this back into the business. In doing so, they provide a level of futureproofing for the business. It requires a close relationship with the customer, keeping them at the heart of all their considerations and adapting to the company's changing needs as it grows (or shrinks). Talent Advisors need to be well-versed in the architecture of the job family. They advise maintaining a strategic lens without being caught in the transactional nature of current recruiters.

Critical tasks a Talent Advisor does are as follows:

- Provide advice to the business on external market demand and supply of skills/talent related to their business and roles.
- Analyse and provide guidance on the organisation's value proposition in the external market. For example, where do the job families/position fit in comparison to other organisations' value propositions (weak, neutral, or strong and why)?
- Understand the existing internal talent capabilities relating to current and potential business needs. This includes all capabilities, both known and assumed.
- Provide advice to the business to assist with optimal talent decisions based on buy, build, borrow, or bot. Buy being external recruitment, make internal recruitment with development, borrow meaning to gain capabilities for a short period and bot sense to automate the work.

- Contribute to developing a cohesive organisational workforce plan
- Undertake ongoing recruitment to fill open positions
- Understand and report on the cost of alternative recruitment approaches, including internal and external sources; this includes the cost of not filling the position or filling the work with a different role.
- Develop market maps for crucial talent segments and create pools of talent/networks to fill critical positions where internal talent is unavailable.
- Develop reports to support budgeting on development, branding, remuneration, and value proposition.

Talent advisors may also be responsible for developing internal branding to encourage and inspire existing employees to apply for roles. As an organisation matures and develops internal skills databases this element will become more important to ensure that existing employees are willing to move into new roles and develop their skillsets.

As with all areas of recruitment, Talent Advisors must be acutely aware of the impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) on the organisation to ensure that they are attracting, retaining, and developing people from the broadest talent pool possible. Talent Advisors should be champions of diversity and the benefits within the organisation given their influence and impact on workforce planning and makeup. At a minimum, Talent Advisors should be able to demonstrate that their actions will:

- Promote inclusivity
- Reduce bias in hiring and development
- Increase the potential for innovation
- Meet local legal requirements.

Example technology stack of data sources

Goals

Learning & development

Performance management

Skills assessment

Interview/assessment

Applicant management

Talent pooling

Internal

Market Intelligence

Talent sources (e.g., LinkedIn)

Academic research
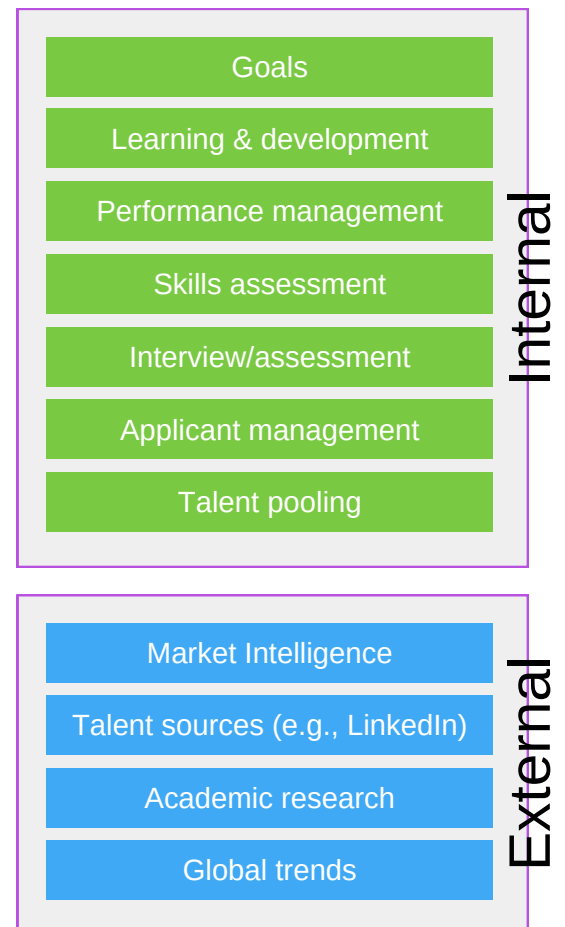
Global trends

External

Diagram 1.

WHY HAVE TALENT ADVISORY?

Talent Advisory increases the chance of gaining required talent to meet business needs while improving staff retention and engagement.

Talent Advisors partner with the business providing internal and external talent market information to make optimal talent decisions. By understanding internal skills, these decisions tend to improve internal mobility leading to enhanced retention and employee engagement.

To be seen as trusted advisors in times of sudden change such as COVID, the Talent Advisors need to provide alignment between existing and future skills required by the business. They require reliable data to help de-risk and make talent decisions faster. Internal matching and helping to save regretted leavers will enable them to be a hybrid between Human Resources and Talent Acquisition.

The degree of future scoping required for your organisation needs to be considered and will determine the scope of the Talent Advisory function.

Section 24 of this report considers how Talent Advisory is measured. The measurements include lead and lag metrics on business partnering to talent capability.

How do you sell to C-Suite?

Selling the idea of Talent Advisory to the C-Suite may be challenging, especially where recruitment has been very transactional.

The advice is to focus on the workforce's skills and influence the stakeholders through data. If you have workforce planning in place, this can be tied to strategy to understand the skills gap and use internal data to show what you can bring from the ground up.

Creating programs to source other skills should include where and when to ensure they provide helpful insight; this can form the basis of a workforce plan if you don't have one in place.

Furthermore, Talent Advisors can provide market insights or intelligence around employment policy changes, diversity and inclusion, and automation to assist with strategic planning.

When entering new markets or creating new product offerings, it's essential to demonstrate the required talent availability. If the skills are not readily available, understanding degrees of separation for transferable skills is vital to influence hiring managers to accept second-degree skills.

The elevator pitch for "Why have Talent Advisory" would depend on the type and nature of the business, but some reasons may be:

- Ensure business sustainability and growth by providing the right people at the right time
- Improve productivity in the medium and longer-term
- Internal mobility tends to improve staff engagement and reduce turnover
- Provide a career path and growth for the Internal Talent Team.

Talent Advisory can be the competitive differentiator in the market, bringing external or uncovering internal talent required by the business. Advisory has a dual focus of external and internal, which traditionally, for medium to large organisations, is too big a span. Typically, there is no central function where this sits, leading to a piecemeal and inconsistent approach.

Leading recruitment functions are developing well-versed recruitment experts who can provide high-touch services to their stakeholders. The hiring manager wants the knowledge that a Talent Advisor can provide but getting out of the machine of "rinse and repeat" is hard; they need the right technology, time, and space to get into the market and understand what is happening.

Providing the space to do this requires that businesses understand the commercial value and that the strategy helps retain and develop talent.

Moving to Talent Advisory would, for most organisations, mean a smaller number of roles actively being recruited, enabling greater focus on these. Many lessons learned during the lean COVID years revolved around improving data streams, with organisations having to use external tools to find internal people. Understanding the skills and capabilities to deliver them and provide mobility should lessen the transactional nature of recruitment and improve the experience simultaneously.

Many internal talent goals are retention based, but if few people leave, there is no upward mobility. In this case, we can create a progression through skills and use these for development. Headhunt internally for projects, understand what skills people want to develop and focus on these. Create a 3d view of the people for succession planning for the leadership team; come with data and insight to elevate the conversation.

If, due to limited sourcing pools, you need to reach out to third separation skills (i.e., two or more different industries, locations, etc.), being able to match core competencies is the key to demonstrating the potential to senior leaders. Most organisations can't make this leap now but may need to in the future, so having the skillset within the team to influence this is an excellent future-proofing step.

Talent Advisory elevator pitch

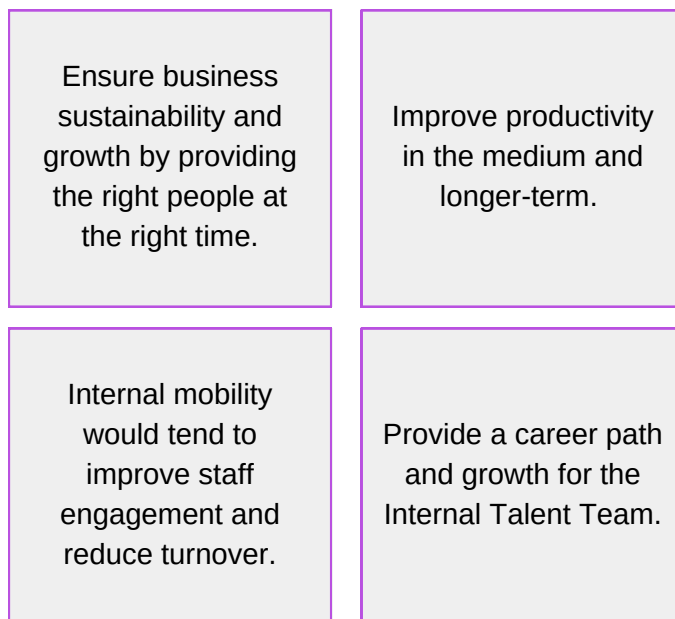|	
Ensure business sustainability and growth by providing the right people at the right time.	Improve productivity in the medium and longer-term.
Internal mobility would tend to improve staff engagement and reduce turnover.	Provide a career path and growth for the Internal Talent Team.

Diagram 2.

Persuading the C-Suite – steps to success

Highlight the importance of talent management
Make a case for the importance of talent management in achieving the organisation's overall goals and objectives. Demonstrate how talent advisory services can help the organisation attract, retain, and engage top talent.

Provide examples of the benefits of talent advisory services
Share examples of how other organisations have benefited from talent advisory services, such as improved employee retention and engagement, increased productivity, and cost savings.

Show how talent advisory services align with business objectives
Align talent advisory services with the organisation's specific business objectives and demonstrate how they can support its overall strategic goals.

Use data and analytics
Use data and analytics to demonstrate the need for talent advisory services and the potential ROI for the organisation.

Address any concerns
Address any concerns the C-suite may have about the cost or implementation of talent advisory services, and provide a clear plan for how the organisation will implement and measure the success of the services.

Propose a pilot
Offer to launch a pilot project to test the effectiveness of talent advisory services and gather data to support the case for a more significant investment.

Position talent advisory as a competitive advantage
Highlight how talent advisory services can give the organisation a competitive edge in attracting top talent and creating a positive and productive work environment.

Be prepared to answer questions
Be prepared to answer any questions the C-suite may have about talent advisory services and be able to provide detailed information about the services, the costs, and the potential benefits.
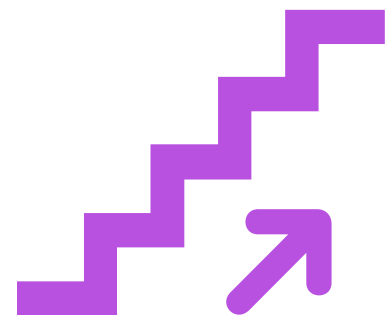
Ultimately, it's essential to articulate the value proposition of talent advisory services and how they will positively impact the organisation's bottom line, employee engagement and retention, and overall performance.

WHY DOES YOUR TA TEAM NEED TALENT ADVISORY?

Talent Advisory is a natural progression for Talent Acquisition. Every team must have Talent Advisory elements to retain staff and remain competitive.

If external recruitment reduces and the Talent Acquisition team cannot add additional business value, they are at risk of redundancy. By providing Talent Advisory services the team continue to add value while gaining valuable skills.

While only some recruiters will need to cover the entire scope of Talent Advisory, others may be coached by a more senior person and supplied with the required data and insights. They can then use this to build their credibility across the business, enabling them to challenge hiring managers where needed and bring new solutions and root cause analysis of approaches.

In essence, Talent Advisory helps the current team to:

- Demonstrate professionalism to the business and extend the business partnership
- Optimise external recruitment by using market information to recruit the right talent at the right time
- Play to their strengths
- Facilitate internal mobility by understanding existing skills and providing advice on who may be suitable
- Compete in an optimum way for talent and develop and grow professionally.

Current recruiters tend to perform well with repetition and building connections, but many need help with data analysis and market trends. Having the right people in the business to engage with them as they move along the path can be a great way of building capability.

Can a recruiter be all things to all people?

As Talent Advisory combines sourcing, analytics, influence, and delivery, do we have the right people to operate as this now? Do we need to focus on multiple roles within recruitment to provide Talent Advisory?

Having individuals upskill quickly can be challenging; where possible, make Talent Advisory part of the function to support recruiters while they develop adjacent skills. The goal for today should be to help recruiters now while helping them in 2030. Help them understand how they compare to their peers. Through the creation of both direct and aspirational comparisons, we can help to drive change.

The appetite of the organisation, particularly heads of department and hiring managers, plays a key role. Recruitment can be seen as very transactional, and we must encourage a more strategic view. Order-taking needs to become more collaborative, but this requires our recruiters to have more gravitas to influence the hiring manager effectively. Closeness to the client base helps to create an understanding of the requirements.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Where possible, have a group that is not focused on delivery and needs to be billable, feeding data and insights to enable the rest of the team to continue to meet the needs of the business.

These should focus on strategic insights for the roles (skills and development) and market trends.

While the transition to Talent Advisory is still in the early stages, there are lessons that we can learn from organisations that have started the journey.

How do you transition from Recruitment to Talent Advisory?

Talent Acquisition has been seen as a valuable resource but has yet to be perceived as the expert in resourcing. The reactionary, order-taking approach to hiring has continued to drive this. To alter this perception, we need to move to a more proactive stance, from a prevalence of anecdotes to actionable insights built on credible data from proven sources.

There is a need to operate differently, focusing on scenario planning and understanding which data and insights are most helpful to design the new processes. Greater access to relevant business intelligence dashboards and self-serve access to quickly utilise information is vital to success. We must also ensure we are not siloed or dependent on one group.

The Talent Advisor needs access to analytics from across the organisation, regardless of its breadth and depth, to draw talent insights to be effective. Only through holistic approaches can we ensure the industry's evolution and move from a linear to the more conceptual approaches required to succeed.
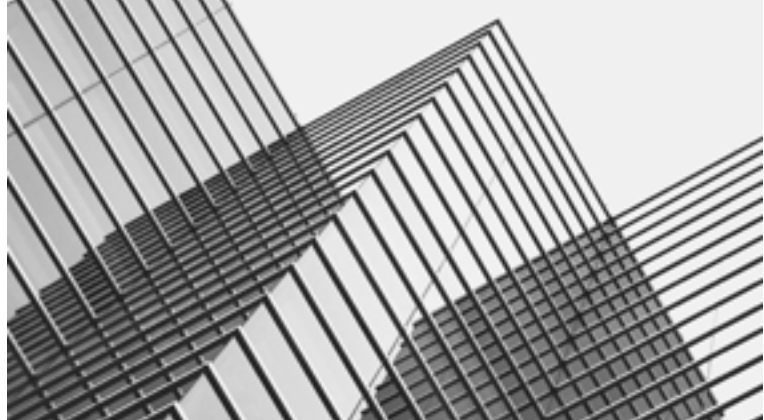
In the same way that a MASH unit or hospital has a triage unit as the first point of call to assess injuries and allocate resources accordingly, we implement a triage approach to any future work. Taking our understanding of how work gets done within the organisation from the previous steps enables us to look across the whole organisation and identify the best approach to completing any new workpieces.

The initial mix of resources can be allocated through a triage approach to workforce planning. These are based on output and can be made up of, among other things, Permanent, Contingent, Contract (SoW), Freelance, Crowd-sourced, Robotics, and Automation.

To begin the transition, more experienced recruiters will likely sit as advisors if they have access to data in a consumable fashion. Having access to data arms the talent advisors with the ability to inform, educate, influence, and manage opportunities for pushback from the hiring managers. Ensuring the team can access people capable of sifting through data to develop commercial analysis is critical. When questioned, it is essential to "show the working", not just the answer to the problem, to build expertise. Developing storytellers capable of taking quantitative analysis through to narrative creation will quickly build influence.

Critical steps in moving to Talent Advisory are:

1

Assess and benchmark the existing team to understand areas that need improvement and up-skilling.

2

Understand the structure and scope of above.

3

Understand what technology is required to enable Talent Advisory.

4

Prepare Talent Advisory processes and understand the impact on BAU and open roles.

5

Prepare an implementation plan and ROI to gain alignment and approval.

6

Start small with a business that is prepared to be a beta site and improve progressively.

7

Report on the metrics to the company and key stakeholders.

What skills and capabilities does a Talent Advisor need to be successful?

To encourage a Talent Acquisition team to drive to the higher business purpose of Talent Advisory, it is essential to have their buy-in to change. People want to understand their part of the production chain and how they provide value. If they can do this through the expertise of thought and operations, they are more likely to perform at this higher level and remain with the organisation.

Developing new processes that enable people to reduce transactional elements while improving capacity through data-driven waste reduction will increase efficiency and morale.

Talent Advisory requires multiple skills to be successful. Collaboration, influencing and using data insights are crucial to performing this role and working with the business. Developing a persona that reflects your business needs is essential as it provides greater insight into how the business wants to interact with Talent Advisory and how Talent Advisors will be successful.

Outlined in table 2 (next page) is a list of Traits, Competencies and Skills that can create success.

Traits, Competencies and Skills

Required	Definition
Creativity	The capacity to identify novel and useful ideas, solutions, and perspectives.
Collaboration	Two or more people working together towards shared goals.
Insightfulness	Conscious awareness and understanding one's own thinking processes and understanding of a complicated problems, people or situations that can be used on new problems.
Analytics	The capacity to distil patterns across diverse situations—often to identify the key and underlying causes of problems.
Customer orientation	The motivation and capacity to ascertain the needs and preferences of customers— and then to accommodate these customers but within the constraints and imperatives of the organisation.
Influencing	The ability to shape the attitudes, opinions, choices, and behaviours of other individuals, with honesty, respect, and sensitivity.
Leadership & mentoring	The ability and motivation to assume the role of a leader, to inspire other people, to mentor or to guide colleagues, to coordinate team activities, and to foster a collaborative environment.
Strategic thinking	The capacity to utilise opportunities, trends, and other changes in the field to develop plans that address existing problems and challenges.
Market intelligence	The ability to understand the market for a particular skill and position —and, therefore, to know how to position their brand and value proposition to attract suitable candidates.
Sourcing	The capability to develop and implement effective tactics that attract both passive and active candidates while proactively utilising recruitment tools and internet search engines to source candidates that match the mandatory and preferred position criteria.

Table 2.

How do you measure Talent Advisors?

Several factors should be in place to effectively measure Talent Advisors' impact. These include, but are not limited to:

- Real-time data should be used to generate insights to avoid time bias
- New hire attrition confirming that the right people are being brought into the business
- Customer Satisfaction from Talent Acquisition engagement and candidate and hiring manager surveys

While it may be hard to transition away from time and velocity measures, time to present is an excellent measure to demonstrate talent readiness.

Success in the role and longer-term promotability of hires is a substantial measure of success but requires a mind shift within the business. Demonstrating how well the Talent Advisors could predict the people's requirements is an excellent method to help build the necessary expertise to assist with this mind shift.

A dedicated analytics function provides the time to do this, but instilling data knowledge into Talent Advisors is vital regardless of the ability to have a proper position.

Conducting "listening sessions", gathering data insights, and performing trend analysis are required to build a robust Talent Advisory capability. Including a skills ontology and using tech to identify up-skilling potential will assist the prediction and education of the hiring manager, so there are no surprises.

More extended-term performance tracking against company values can be completed using machine learning-powered platforms, which provide speed to insight and can be used to uncover patterns in the data that may otherwise be missed.

Talent Advisors should be directly aligned with business outcomes and measured at an enterprise level by having the talent available to deliver effective project delivery; this will quickly elevate the recruitment function.

A summary of Talent Advisor's measurements includes:

Talent Advisors Metrics	Lead/Lag
Effectiveness • % of internal mobility to forecast • New hire attrition • Number of key projects that have the required talent to start as scheduled • Promotability of recent hires • Promotion of employees • Number of listening sessions conducted with all stakeholders • Number of trend analysis reports presented to the business • Number of proactive talent review meetings conducted • Workforce readiness to business strategy/budget (assessed by business) • Time to present candidates Time to hire (from role commencement to contract acceptance) for critical positions	Lag Lag Lag Lead Lag Lead Lead Lead Lag Lag
Satisfaction • Hiring manager survey NPS • Internal/external candidate survey NPS	Lag Lag
Volume • Number of positions under Talent Advisory guidance • Funnel conversion ratios to effectively manage roles, and minimise areas of talent waste	Lag Lag
Cost • Cost of Talent Advisory to the business • Reduction in external recruitment based on increased internal mobility • Reduction in cost of workforce based on internal mobility	Lag Lag Lag

Table 3.

What are the key outputs of this position?

Aligning the business needs to the realities of the market is the key. Other outputs include Personas, Workforce Strategy, actual data and insights, metrics such as response rates, and an understanding of scarcity vs demand.
These build a sense of how we can fill the roles we need, what we see, what they mean, and what we do next.

Talent Advisors provide insight into whom they can find and, importantly, afford. If they can't afford it, what are the alternatives? Can we build/buy/borrow? Talent Advisors also need to understand how to:

- Remap the workforce to know how they could move into future careers
- Use people in the future in a way that will benefit them in becoming career guides rather than recruiters.
- Assess aptitude vs. opportunity and volume vs. strategy and focus on "build" elements.

Based on the above, Talent Advisory's reporting differs from the traditional. The types of reports produced are shown in table 4 below.

Types of Talent Advisory Reports/Dashboards	
Name	**Purpose**
Macro market trend by critical skill	Provide the business with a planning tool in terms of future external recruitment. This report can also serve as a retention tool by understanding what skills are in the demand and who may be at risk as a result.
Competitor hiring report	Reports on the activities of key competitors for similar purpose as above.
Internal skills report	A list of skills contained by employees and associates that can be used to supplement recruitment activities.
Skills to be automated	A report listing the skills and activities that will be automated so that work can be augmented.
Skills that can be borrowed or loaned report	Agreements with partners who have banks of skills that can be borrowed to supplement talent needs. Skills available internally that can be loaned to partners.
Adjacency report	Details the likelihood of skills to be automated in the next year based on AI and software development to demonstrate the impact on the organisation.

Table 4.

STRUCTURING TALENT ADVISORY IN THE BUSINESS

Setting context & gaining buy-in

Aligning an organisation's business drivers to Talent Advisory will assist in focusing the output such that it makes a positive contribution to the business.

For example, your primary organisational business drivers may be:

- Business growth – having the required talent to meet forecasted growth; or
- Business sustainability – minimising unwanted turnover; or
- Business agility – ability to move talent between projects as needed.

While these business drivers sound similar, they all have different nuances; you can build the Talent Advisory function around the most important ones and report on these progressively.

Holding a workshop with key business leaders to define how Talent Advisory supports desired business drivers and comparing the future state to the current state will optimise the function and gain buy-in plus funding.

Different Talent Advisory models & their location

Many different approaches can be taken to implementing Talent Advisory. Some of these include:

- Current Talent Acquisition function set up.
- Investment required, funding and ownership.
- Technology stack and its functionality.
- Skills and capabilities of your current Talent Acquisition team.
- Number of requisitions.

Many organisations will typically assume Talent Advisory may reside with the existing function. The workshop above should decide optimally where Talent Advisory sits.

Alternatives are outlined in diagram 3.

Centralised

Talent Advisory located with the current Talent Acquisition function.

Talent Advisory provided by an external provider and is typically located with the existing team and reporting directly to the current function.

Insourced

Outsourced

Talent Advisory located with the business reporting directly to the business leadership.

Talent Advisory provided by an external provider typically located outside the organisation and, potentially, shared with other organisations.

Decentralised

Diagram 3.

Where do you focus on Talent Advisory?

As mentioned above, using a Criticality and Scarcity matrix and classifying positions or skills is an excellent way to understand the scope and focus of Talent Advisory. As shown in the diagram below, it makes sense to commence Talent Advisory in the Critical & Scarce segment.

Determining which skills or jobs fall into this category should be undertaken in a workshop between talent and the business. The focus should be on the short-term for external recruitment and the medium-term for skills that can be developed.
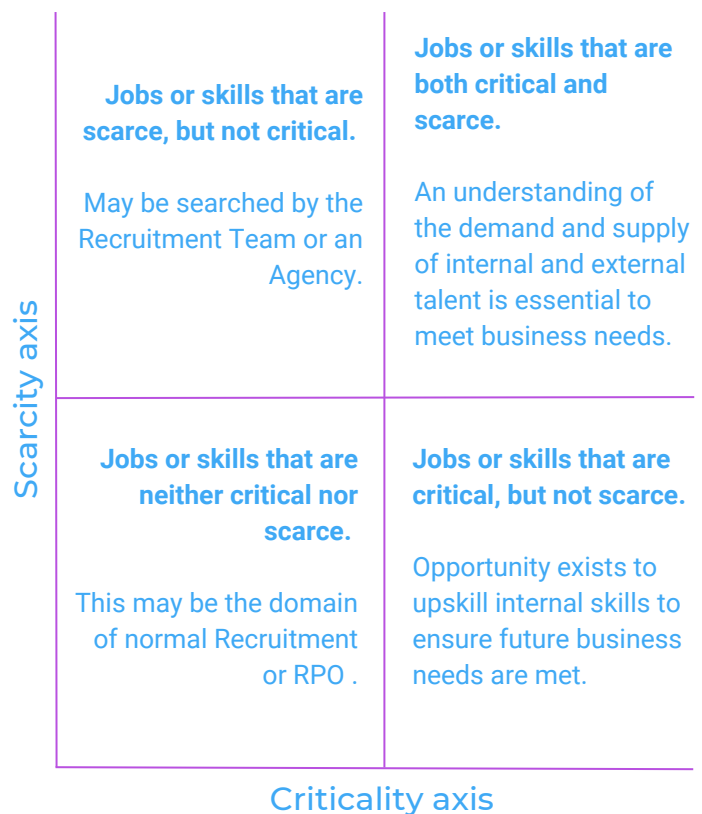
Jobs or skills that are scarce, but not critical.

May be searched by the Recruitment Team or an Agency.

Jobs or skills that are both critical and scarce.

An understanding of the demand and supply of internal and external talent is essential to meet business needs.

Jobs or skills that are neither critical nor scarce.

This may be the domain of normal Recruitment or RPO .

Jobs or skills that are critical, but not scarce.

Opportunity exists to upskill internal skills to ensure future business needs are met.

Scarcity axis

Criticality axis

Diagram 4.

How do you run the machine effectively?

Sourcing, selection, creation and fill of the funnel remain paramount. However, doing so in a way that reduces extra work and leverages data to narrow down the right people faster will increase capacity across the team.

Taking a holistic approach to team build and results enables the workload to be spread more effectively, increasing capacity across the team.

Service credibility must be defined to explain that Talent Advisory will reduce open roles, but it takes time to fix. Education about the approaches and expected results is vital to confirm critical data points, sources, and outputs.

> "The goal is to be involved in the discussion before the discussion happens."

Where do Talent Advisory and organisational development meet?

Talent Advisory informs talent strategy. The Human Resources functions need to know what our data means and how to leverage it effectively. Talent Advisory can identify the skills we have today, those we need today, and the skills we need tomorrow. A skills ontology combined with data around location, job categories, trends, and automation can be used to build a hyper-personalised approach to resourcing.

When looking at skills or an internal talent diagram, Talent Advisory can help identify opportunities, and Organisational development can operationalise this. This can be more demanding, particularly considering the speed of upcoming waves of skills changes. In the past many businesses have considered it time-consuming and costly to upskill current staff instead of buying in ready-to-go external people. Talent Advisory assists with proactively upskilling internal talent ahead of the need.

To maintain a competitive edge and leverage the skills/advisors around them, the internal resources must be presented with opportunities first.

CAN RPOS UNDERTAKE TALENT ADVISORY?

An external provider can provide Talent Advisory services if they have access to the required data they have access to the required data streams. streams.

The problem for external vendors comes from something other than the capability to deliver; indeed, most RPOs have the skills and can be configured to provide Talent Advisory better than internal talent functions, but more from the need to build relationships with the business to provide them with the required access.

This is more of a trust-based decision. Does an organisation trust an RPO to provide strategic Talent Advisory given that they do not know the internal culture?

However, it is important to note that not all RPOs have the same expertise and experience in talent advisory services. So,

evaluating the vendor's capabilities and qualifications is essential before engaging them for this service.

It is also essential to ensure that the vendor has the right resources to provide effective talent advisory services, including data analytics and technology. The vendor should also be able to align its services with your organisation's specific goals and objectives and provide clear metrics and measurements to track the success of the services.

RPOs are inherently designed to ensure flexibility of delivery ensuring that operational roles are filled while still providing Advisory, and other, services even during a downturn.

In some cases, the ability to provide Advisory services is what keeps the RPO in situ; day to day delivery is expected, Advisory is a true value add service.

Case for RPOs providing Talent Advisory

- RPOs tend to have a more comprehensive view of the external talent market
- They can be configured to achieve this in the business
- RPOs can share resources and technology between clients making it easier to gain the skills and technology required
- The company may hold the RPO in higher regard to provide advice as they are external
- RPOs are well placed to provide Borrow as they have a diverse client mix
- RPOs are faster to innovate than internal talent functions
- There is much more at stake for an RPO to get this right (renewal of contract and staff employment).
- Ensure delivery during variable demand as they can flex up and down with workforce planning.
- Can provide a wider range of services on demand.

The case against RPOs providing Talent Advisory

- If Talent Advisory is seen as a mission-critical operation that enables business growth, it should be owned by the business
- RPO, as they have a diverse client mix, must ensure confidentiality
- The staff at an RPO needs to remain relatively stable if it is building knowledge and providing Talent Advisory service.

HOW DOES TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT TALENT ADVISORY?

Leverage new and existing technology to improve business outcomes and simplify operations while providing access to new insights.

Thanks to advances in technology, Talent Acquisition and indeed HR, are data-rich functions, but only recently have we been willing or able to take advantage of this. By leveraging the tools available, we can provide insights that will enable us to gain credibility, get us a seat at the table as well as solving real business issues.

Technology needs to arm the Talent Advisor with reliable data to help them inform and build trust with hiring managers but also provides opportunities to create significant value throughout the recruitment and employee lifecycle. For example:

- External demand and supply of talent plus salary benchmarking, helping inform your buy/build/borrow or bot strategy
- Competitor intelligence on what skills they are hiring and where they are shedding talent that we could acquire
- Internal talent - highlighting existing employees that may have the skills and capabilities to fill current roles or those that only require minimal upskilling to meet future demand
- An understanding of who is a potential flight risk for critical positions or who could be pipelined for critical roles
- Anticipating the skills needed across the organisation to meet business goals, and planning how these can be developed or acquired

Leading edge organisations are capitalising on new and existing tech, giving them the ability to anticipate and respond quickly to change.

This bigger, holistic view of how talent is acquired, developed, and retained requires effort and involves change - it isn't just about the team's capability to interrogate the data available to extract insights. This requires the ability to think differently about how roles will be filled in the future.

"Recent advancements in talent technology such as internal talent marketplace platforms not only provide a wider view on what talent is already available, but also allow organisations to leverage existing talent in new ways to fill critical projects and internal roles"

Scoping our requirements

Tech for tech's sake can create complexity, consumes vital resources, and increases cost. Tech and therefore data, for practical analysis is vital to the Talent Advisory process.

Before undertaking any technology projects, it's important to understand the problem you're solving and the business benefit of doing so. For example, a company in growth-mode may choose to prioritise insights that will enable fast and effective external hiring. A larger, more established company or one that is focused on cost-savings might focus on internal mobility or talent-retention. Anyone in innovation mode may benefit more from tools that will enable project-based mobility and identifying talent ripe for reskilling.

We also suggest including financial and ROI data-points to your business case, particularly if you're asking for investment. This could include example modelling of potential cost savings for reducing external recruitment costs or employee retention (at least 1 x salary of every employee retained), predicted business benefits of filling roles faster or demonstrating the salary differential between growing internal talent vs hiring externally.

Armed with this information, an understanding what data is needed for effective ongoing measurement and analysis becomes the next key criterion.

Where systems are already in place, an audit of existing data streams should be performed to identify which systems and data points can be readily integrated at minimal cost and effort. More advanced talent teams may also wish to broaden their thinking to mine skills and demand data from business systems like MS Teams, Slack, and other project management tools in combination with sources of external talent intelligence.

Understanding the emerging tech landscape

Understanding the latest technology and data trends is important not only to make future-proof investments in your tech stack but also as a way of anticipating potential impact on the talent needs of your organisation.

Some market trends we see are:

- The emergence of talent intelligence platforms – software that combines internal talent data with external labour market data, powered by AI.

- The growth of employee and candidate listening tools - some of which collect passive data without people needing to complete traditional surveys.
- Vast improvements in the capabilities of core HCMs - to include predictive insights related to hiring and throughout the employee lifecycle with more focus on the employee experience.
- The rise of people-analytics functions and supporting technologies - with the ability to offer the same quality of insights about talent as we are used to for our customers
- The adoption of the internal talent. marketplace - with new players in the market making it affordable organisations with as few as 500 employees to adopt an internal-talent centric approach to filling critical roles and projects.

Internal

HRIS/HCM
Performance data

LMS
Skills developement

Existing employees   Job families

Existing skills
taxonomy

Leavers   Open vacancies

ERP/Resourcing
Tools
Availability of
resources,
current/future
demand

Predictive Analytics /
WFP Tools

Data

ATS
Live vacancies,
applicant flow, time-
to-fill, salaries

Talent
Intelligence

Skills

Value proposition
comparison

Labour Market
Supply and demand

LinkedIn Talent

Sourcing
channel
information

Emerging
automation
platforms

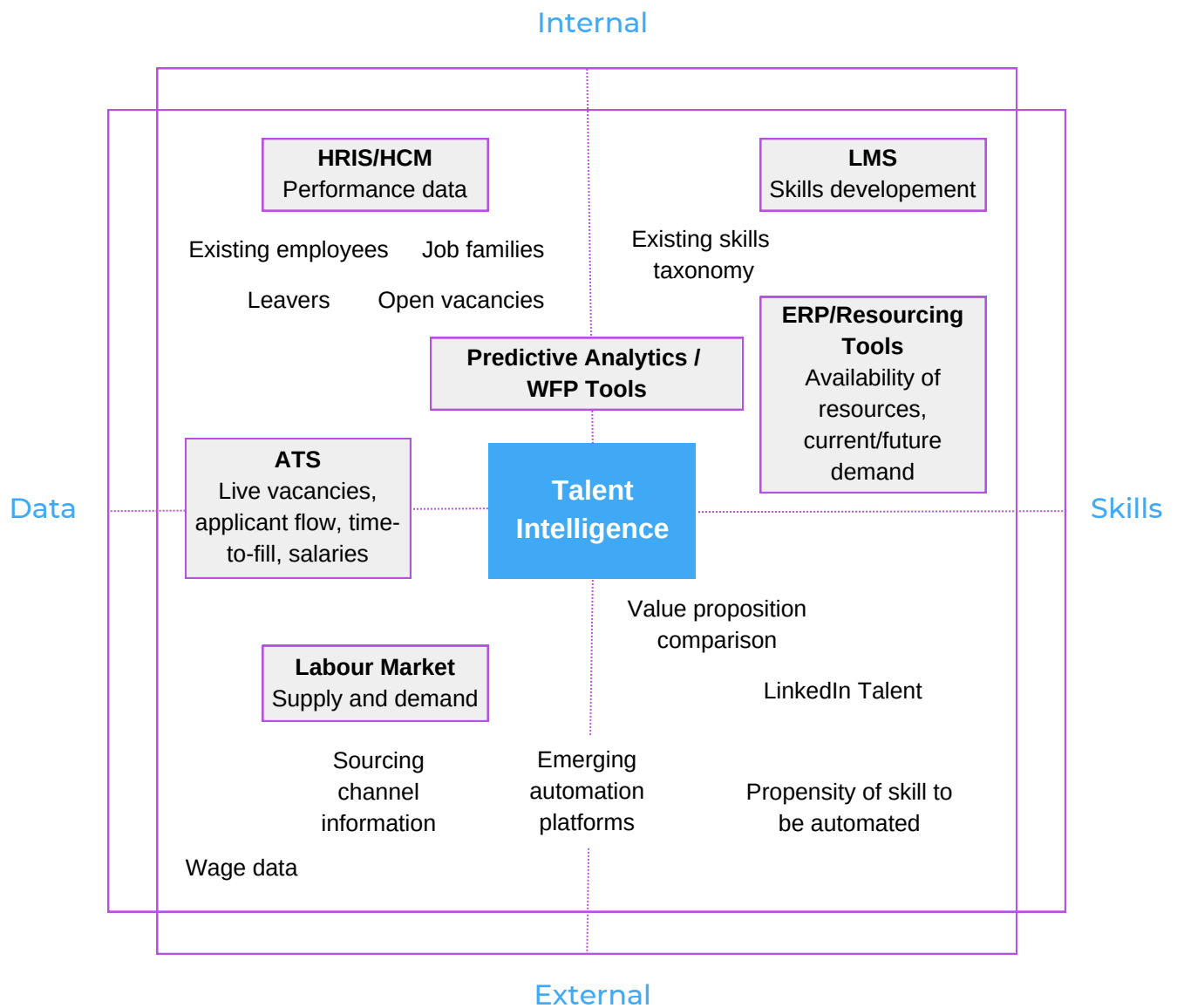Propensity of skill to
be automated

Wage data

External

Diagram 5.

INTO THE FUTURE

Ensuring Talent Acquisition is considered a commercial criticality rather than an afterthought is vital to long-term development.

Talent Advisory will become increasingly important as organisations face increased competition for talent and a rapidly changing workforce. Talent Advisors play a crucial role in helping organisations understand their current and future talent needs and in developing and implementing effective strategies to attract, retain, and engage top talent.

As technology continues to change the way we work and the nature of work, Talent Advisors will need to be well-versed in new tools and technologies and how they can be used in talent management.

As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse and global, talent advisors will need to be able to navigate the complexities of hiring a diverse and distributed workforce.

Using data and analytics in talent management will also become more prevalent and nuanced, enabling organisations to make more informed decisions about their talent management strategies and providing insights on improving them.

Recruiters and Sourcers can move into Talent Advisory roles to ensure job security, but most will require development in critical skills.

One step we can take to help ensure this is to build the permission into their roles; "it's part of my role to inform and influence, to confirm the purpose and then fill the skill gap". Using data to confirm the right strategy leads to the right resources.

What will the world look like when they can't retain and hire people trying to pull the best talent out of externals? Too often, people are still seen as commodities; COVID-19 should have taught us that this isn't so. The right people for your business are scarce and must be developed effectively.

The expected move to further leverage internal mobility and agility will mean the traditional Talent Acquisition role will need to pivot, focusing on internal skills availability and capability. We are developing the future workforce from within, helping to retain top talent, and complementing any gaps with external talent.

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Developed by Trevor Vas, Simon Townsend, and Dr Simon Moss, TCS Insights provides individual and team assessments across Talent Acquisition.

Based on real world situations, the assessments explore the Traits, Competencies, and Skills that lead to business success and drive value beyond recruitment.

If you are interested in assessing your team's readiness for Talent Advisory, or another area of Talent Acquisition, do reach out to us – we'd love to hear from you.

TCS Insights
www.tcsinsights.com
hello@tcsinsights.com

TRAITS
COMPETENCIES
SKILLS