Reimagining Employment Systems

Using artificial intelligence to modernize employment systems and processes is a game-changer for both agencies and job seekers. Dan Hopkins, vice president, applied AI & public sector with Eightfold AI, shares insight into how a unified talent intelligence platform helps redefine and optimize unemployment and re-employment processes.

What employment challenges are keeping state and local government leaders up at night?

COVID-19 showed that existing systems are inadequate. Most of us have heard stories of states struggling to process unemployment claims and benefits. Systems and processes were overwhelmed. Equally important is what happens after an unemployment claim is processed. How do states or local agencies enable upskilling, reskilling and re-employment? Today we have a re-employment system that relies on displaced workers' ability to search and interpret vaguely worded job descriptions and to self-assess their own fit to roles. Anyone who has ever done a job search knows that this is a broken, frustrating and time-consuming process. Yet state benefits subsidize this inefficient system, paying millions of dollars weekly until their residents discover the right job. I think leaders are now realizing that if they can optimize the job matching system, they can quickly find people the right employment opportunities, which reduces time on unemployment and benefit obligations.

How can state and local governments use AI and automation to redefine and optimize their employment outcomes?

For the unemployed, finding a job is simply a search problem. It's not that there aren't any jobs out there. It's knowing which jobs are right for the individual. This is where AI can be a game-changer. By understanding what an individual is capable of through a deep understanding of their skills and capabilities, we can instantly surface the best jobs for them — even if they have never done the job before.

Why is it important to have a single talent intelligence platform to support re-employment?

A single platform is uniquely able to provide deep insights at scale. When you can use AI on one side to rationalize job requirements and on the other side to create a capabilities matrix of individual job seekers, you create some very powerful outcomes. So, a talent intelligence platform really becomes foundational to enabling a number of use cases such as dramatically reducing the time to re-employment, minimizing underemployment and reimagining learning and apprenticeship opportunities. And because AI is self-learning, a talent intelligence platform means these outcomes continually improve over time.

How can government organizations use deep learning or other AI processes to promote inclusion and diversity?

First, AI can guard against bias by masking the identity of an applicant to a hiring manager. This ensures a better analysis of candidates based on their merits, and it mitigates the unconscious bias of the reviewer. Second, AI can surface a candidate for consideration based on their potential. This becomes very powerful for promoting upward mobility. Often when hiring managers are determining fit, they only look at what a candidate has done in their past and they don't evaluate their potential. With AI suggesting candidates based on their capabilities and potential, job seekers get the break they need and the consideration they deserve.

Where should state and local governments start on the path to employment modernization?

Just start! The great thing about an AI talent intelligence platform is that you can stand it up very quickly and it will begin to learn from day one, creating even better outcomes over time. So, the faster you implement a system, the more insights and options you have when reimagining service delivery.

What's your vision for the future of government employment offices?

We believe that employment is the backbone of our society and that everyone deserves the right job. I think COVID-19 has forced state and local government leaders to take a hard look at their existing systems and realize that it's time for a change. There has been so much technical innovation over the last 10 years that government organizations can now implement powerful tools to help overcome employment and training barriers. A modern system that enables self-service, optimizes the job search, reduces time on unemployment, and reduces underemployment through upskilling and reskilling is in everyone's best interest.

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