

CUSTOMER STORY

Why GE Healthcare introduced TechWolf

As explained by David Sperl,
Head of HR Tech and People Experience
at GE Healthcare, in
Human Capital analyst firm RedThread's
Skills Oddysey podcast series.

TECHWOLF

Introduction: What is TechWolf?

Today, most businesses are either in the midst of a digital or green transformation, or they're shifting to a more agile, project-based way of working.

Either way, they need people with new, specific and often hard to find skills to make the change happen.

At the same time, shortages in the labour market are problematic.

The problem is too big to ignore. While the solution is not straightforward, one thing is certain: companies that have a laser sharp view on the skills they need and the skills they already have, are way ahead of those who are fumbling around in the dark.

To shed a bright light on the Skills question, TechWolf uses AI to create a skill inventory for all employees in a company.

Once you know the skills of people, so many processes in HR and business in general just get so much easier.

Read on for a detailed account of GE Healthcare's Skills journey with TechWolf.

About GE Healthcare and David Sperl

David Sperl is Head of HR Technology and People Experience at GE Healthcare, a leading global medical technology and digital solutions innovator that employs more than 50.000 people worldwide.

David and team are chartered with leading the digital transformation at GE from an HR perspective in 50-plus countries in Europe, Middle East and Asia.

With GE's relentless focus on technology and transformation, it comes as no surprise that the company is looking into Skills, driven by the need to attract and retain great talent and using the best and latest technology.

How does GE Healthcare look at Skills?

David Sperl: “Like in many other companies over the years, we had various teams and organisations at GE Healthcare establish a competency model.

We did skill surveys, employees were assessed and measured, and elaborate development plans were put in place.

We hadn't really taken a scientific approach to the project though: the HR teams and learning teams went off in a myriad of different directions, without a clear underlying Skills taxonomy.

Over the last year we realised we needed to address that gap. So instead of manually measuring competencies or Skills at a snapshot in time, we decided to go the other way around, and ask ourselves a few questions first:

- What is our Skills taxonomy?
- What are the Skills operations?
- How do we get to a permanent assessment of Skills of each and every single individual in the organisation?”

On the evolution in HR technology

David Sperl: “Technology, especially HR technology, has evolved so much, and developed so quickly over the last few years, it's sometimes a challenge to keep up with the incredible speed.

As you dive deeper and get excited about certain technologies, it's certainly a question of prioritizing what you really need first. The suite of offerings is just so big.

On the flip side, I'd say we have all gone through countless sales pitches by solution providers who suggest fixing all of your problems with just one new tool.

So getting that feel for ‘hey, what's the sales pitch and what's really helping you solve a business problem through technology’ is really important.”

Why insight in Skills is so important now

David Sperl: “We see two main drivers to go after Skills in a more elaborate way right now.

One driver is linked to attrition and internal mobility. Like many companies, we have seen attrition go up significantly. In exit surveys, we've heard ‘I don't feel I grow and develop in this organisation, and I am lacking career opportunities.’

That's ironic, right? We're a company with tens of thousands of employees, with constant churn so there's bound to be opportunities. That means there is lack of visibility and lack of curation as to how people see what is there for them next.

The second driver is the speed of technology and the advent of AI in Skills management. Over the last years, we have seen so many offerings of AI, that we decided to step away from a manual competency assessment in pockets of the organisation. These are outdated the moment you start implementing any solutions based on them.

Skills Inference based on data seems to be a logical move for us, with internal mobility and the advent of AI in Skills management as the drivers for us to grow around Skills.”

Running experiments on Skills at GE Healthcare

David Sperl: “We didn't have a good understanding of which Skills we have in the organisation, what the relative strength of our Skills is and where we are lacking compared to the market.

We started out with Workday Skills Cloud, an integrated solution that suggests Skills to employees based on their job history. People then need to manually confirm each skill. We thought great, let's see what we learn, what we can do with that data. We made plans for it, and then we came away disappointed, because only 20% of our employees had taken the effort to list their Skills. It's a pointless exercise if you want to do it at aggregate level.

That told us we needed to be doing something differently. Ideally, without any manual input.

That's what we're currently doing with TechWolf: assessing Skills based on job history, job profiles, job descriptions, learning history and so on. It makes a big difference that there is no manual work needed from the employee base.”

What's next for Skills at GE Healthcare?

David Sperl: “We’re definitely planning to expand our efforts in the workforce planning arena.

We’re looking into Skills to better predict headcount, but even more to include more granular and complex forecasting based on Skills.

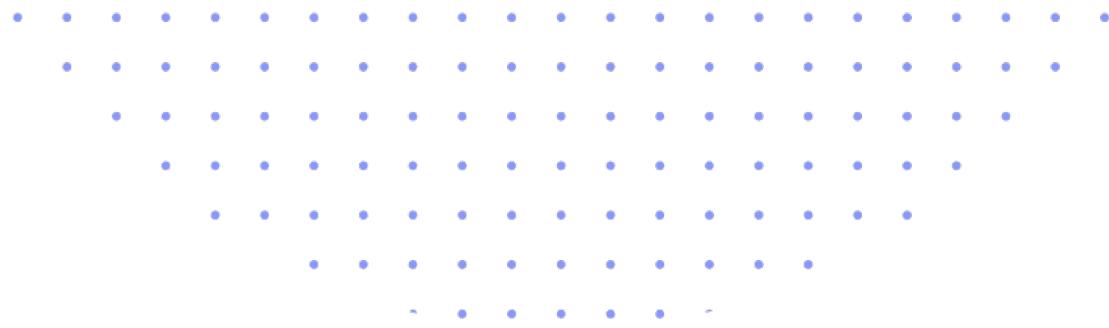
The ultimate goal is to come to prescriptive analytics for the organisation. It’s more a vision and an outlook, but where we are now, I feel good from a workforce planning perspective.

Adding on that Skills element will give us a ton of things to learn.”

Advice for others embarking on their Skills journey?

David Sperl: “Learning from others is always a good start. Talk to peers, listen to podcasts, attend HR conferences.

But ultimately, the recommendation is always: what you do now, will be your base for years to come. Because Skills have such a fundamental impact on all parts of the organisation, you want to do this thoroughly and spend enough time from the start.”



TECHWOLF

AI-Driven Skills Intelligence

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hello@techwolf.ai