



**Head
Light**

Questions to Ask of Your Talent Management Platform Provider

part of our Practical Steps series

The Talent Cloud Platform

Developing Skills. Encouraging Performance. Boosting Recognition.





Contents

Introduction	3
<i>Question 1: Data security is a real concern for us. What safeguards do you have?</i>	3
<i>Question 2: We're looking to introduce a Talent Management platform in one area of our talent work, but how can we make sure that as our needs change, the software will continue to support us?</i>	3
<i>Question 3: What guarantee comes with your talent management software?</i>	4
<i>Question 4: How do you balance innovation with robustness – and how can I influence product development?</i>	4
<i>Question 5: Can we be self-sufficient in our day-to-day usage and configuration of the software – and customise it to suit our needs?</i>	5
<i>Question 6: Can we analyse trends, track change over time and use the data and information to support our HR decision making?</i>	5
<i>Question 7: We've fallen foul in the past to limited availability or uptime of software. How available is your system?</i>	6
<i>Question 8: And when we do have problems, how will we be supported?</i>	6
<i>Question 9: How often will the software be updated, what do I need to budget for this – and how do you notify customers?</i>	6
Next steps	7
About Head Light	7



Introduction

After making the decision to invest in a talent management platform, you'll be keen to ensure that you work with a vendor able to meet your defined needs. You will want them to help you work through scenarios to 'future-proof' the solution, to train, support and guide you and to be transparent, up front and committed to the working relationship.

You will want to ensure your platform provider is robust and dependable, proven and yet innovative.

Head Light is proud to be included as a Solid Performer in the 2022 Fosway 9-Grid™ for People & Success.

To help in your selection of a talent management platform provider, here are nine essential questions you need to ask potential vendors.

Question 1:

Data security is a real concern for us. What safeguards do you have?

Data security is non-negotiable when partnering with a third party. You must ask your vendor about this.

You need to feel confident that it has the systems, checks and processes in place to protect the individual's data.

Head Light has achieved and annually renewed its ISO 27001 certification since 2018. This is a high standard and covers all legal, physical and technical controls involved in managing data to, ultimately, manage risk.

Our customers can be assured of the resilience and excellence of the systems we have in place.

In addition to our data centre being secure, we also encrypt all data – and doubly encrypt passwords. Back-ups are also encrypted and remain on site in a secure facility in Europe and are mirrored to a standby facility.

Our Helpdesk staff are security vetted, our data handling procedures and policies government audited and our software is both penetration tested, and cyber vulnerability assessed and validated.

Your data could well be more secure in our hands than in those of your own IT department!

Question 2:

We're looking to introduce a Talent Management platform in one area of our talent work. How can we make sure that, as our needs change, the software will continue to support us?

This is becoming increasingly important as organisations look to future-proof their workforce and acknowledge that their talent management practices also need future-proofing.

Typically, organisations begin their talent management journey by focussing on, and implementing, one talent area, such as 360-degree feedback or performance management. Then, as its value is realised by the business and the information is used, they build on this by refining activities, such as succession planning or employee engagement.

This evolution in talent management makes sense.

You need to know that, as your needs develop, so too will those of your talent management platform. Find out if the software supplier's offer is commercially flexible enough for you to bolt on new functionality or modules or do you have to buy it all and let half of it sit on the shelf – or worse, require you to implement more than you need just to get the part you really want working? Challenge the sales team on this.



As well as needing to be sure that the software will accommodate your future and as-yet-unknown talent needs, you also need reassurance that the platform itself is part of an ongoing programme of tested and trialled development. It is important to ask about this.

Look at the broader offering of the vendor. Don't sign up to a single 'specialist' that focuses on one or two areas and cannot, therefore, support you as your needs change or expand. Check on how often upgrades and updates are made to the software, how enhancements can be suggested and how you can work with your vendor to configure the best system for your organisation.

The Head Light Talent Cloud® system is modular and configurable – and has a product roadmap. It means it can grow as your organisation does and you don't need to buy or implement it all at once when you or your managers and employees just aren't ready for it.

But also think about support beyond that of a technical nature.

You will no doubt want to know about good practice, what pitfalls you need to avoid during implementation and how you can get the very best out of the talent management platform once deployed. Perhaps you will need support to develop your coaching team or line managers, or advice on how to interpret the talent data. Make sure you explore with your vendor how they can support you beyond that of the technical.

Question 3:

What guarantee comes with your talent management software?

You may be asked this internally by your own team, so ask it of the supplier.

Head Light guarantees its service availability – and we build this into our service level agreement. If you adopt our Talent Performance module and, providing that you work with us to calculate the expected ROI, we guarantee a return on your investment.

Question 4:

How do you balance innovation with robustness – and how can I influence product development?

No talent management platform can remain static – even more so in today's fast-moving talent world. Talent management platform vendors should be constantly looking to improve the user experience – be they the employee, line manager or HR/L&D team.

It is no longer good enough for the technology to be outstanding, free from glitches and designed well. The information it provides must be of real value and utility – to all users.

You need to ask vendors about the innovations and enhancements they've made over time, and what they have planned for the future.

Also, you'll have great ideas of your own for future developments as you use a platform – and many of these may also be beneficial for other organisations. How do you go about getting those built?

Head Light prides itself on innovation across the entire Talent Cloud® platform. From specific ways to focus in on the most important competencies in a 360, to heatmaps showing areas of strength and need across the workforce. From the ability for employees to ask for ad hoc specific project feedback to easy-to-understand, number crunch and present-to-others data. From recognising the different information needs of different user types, to creating links and integration across all the talent modules. All innovations are tested as ideas with the User Group, trialled in product development and monitored once released.



Our product development process is also informed by business psychology, with the need to create impact firmly at the forefront of our thinking. Our software developers work with our psychologists to create features, analytics, reporting options and dashboards that have the end user – at every level – in mind. We work to ensure our software encourages better conversations, enables ownership and drives behaviour change.

We hold client consultation periods once a year during which we ask for comment and feedback on our proposals. We develop these proposals from the feedback and suggestions that come to us via our Helpdesk and from our conversations with our User Group which is held twice a year and is free to attend.

Question 5:

Can we be self-sufficient in our day-to-day usage and configuration of the software – and also customise it to suit our needs?

Most organisations want to be self-sufficient, to know how they can access reports, configure modules and make changes as needed – even if they also then choose to outsource some of this work.

The answer to this question will vary on the talent management platform provider you are asking.

The Talent Cloud® platform enables a significant level of self-sufficiency. We will work with you and show you how to achieve this through on-site and online training in how best to use and adapt the software, so it follows your process and your way of working. Our training and Helpdesk teams are staffed by experienced trainers and practical problem solvers.

Question 6:

Can we analyse trends, track change over time and use the data and information to support our HR decision making?

Talent Management Systems collect and generate lots of potentially useful data. The challenge for many is how to make sense of this, not be overwhelmed by the possibilities and to use it to support talent decisions.

At the outset, we will work with you to define the questions you and business leaders will want to find answers to. That will drive the on-boarding process to meet business needs and set up the platform for the future and the ability to monitor trends.

Regardless of what you need, make sure your talent management provider knows how the system is used to meet use-cases in the real world – and not just content for user manuals.



Question 7:

We've fallen foul in the past to limited availability or uptime of software. How available is your system?

To make talent management embedded within your organisation, you need your talent management platform to be available when it's needed by your people. Working patterns are no longer static. People are empowered to work flexibly and, therefore, access talent management platforms outside of the 'standard' working days and times. Organisations work globally and operate across time zones or on different days of the week. Access is required for when people need it.

Head Light's Talent Cloud® system is available at least 99.999% of the time. Check how other suppliers compare.

Question 8:

And when we do have problems, how will we be supported?

From the outset, you should expect implementation support and training on the system so that you are able to meet the immediate needs of your people. And that's what we, at Head Light, do for all our clients.

For those more common questions, you can search our Knowledge Bank. Our experts are also available through our online support Helpdesk that is staffed by experienced training and software specialists. We are proud of our support response times. We close support calls within an average of 43 minutes; close 99.2% of support calls within one working day and 90.4% of calls are closed on the same working day.

Question 9:

How often will the software be updated, what do I need to budget for this – and how do you notify customers?

These are important questions. You will need to look at on-going costs for upgrades – or choose to work with a supplier that provides upgrades as part of the annual fee. You will want to know when and how the software gets to be upgraded. So, make sure you ask your vendor.

At Head Light, we provide updates and upgrades usually three times a year – at no additional fee. We not only issue release notes of additions to functionality that provides you with a full explanation of how to use the new features, we also schedule the upgrade at a time that suits you and your business. And, if it isn't convenient, you stay on your version until you are ready.



Next steps

Whether you are just beginning to look at implementing robust talent management practices or are now investigating how to improve what you are already doing, asking the right questions of your short-listed providers will enable you to make informed decisions.

For more information on how we can work with you using our award-winning online talent management platform, Talent Cloud®, please get in touch.

About Head Light

Head Light is an award-winning talent management and talent retention software and consulting firm that works with clients to define and implement impactful talent management strategies.

Talent Cloud® is our cloud-based portfolio of integrated talent management platform tools designed for those who expect the maximum return from talent management processes. Our training and consulting services uniquely complement our platform that engages employees, managers and senior leaders in the selection, development, and progression of people in their businesses.

Companies in the FTSE 350, public sector, large and small, from retailers to high tech innovators have all benefitted from our tools, techniques, and expertise. Founded in 2004, we are headquartered in the UK.

Head Light has attained the ISO27001 standard for Information Security. Certificate No 217613.





How do I...

transition to Continuous Performance Management

How do I...

introduce robust Succession Planning

How do I...

spot High Potentials and Future Leaders

How do I...

boost Recognition

How do I...

drive Engagement through Career Conversations and Development

How do I...

embed new values and improve culture

How do I...

develop Skills of the Future

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