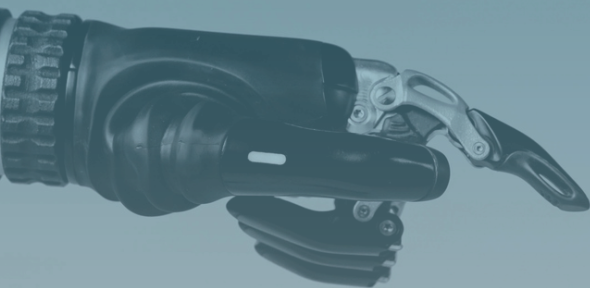


THE ERA CONFERENCE



THE HUMAN EDGE

TALENT & TECH IN
SKILLS-BASED HIRING

20TH MAY 2026
SADLER'S WELLS, LONDON

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Welcome to...

THE ERA CONFERENCE

THE HUMAN EDGE: TALENT & TECH IN SKILLS-BASED HIRING

On behalf of us both and the rest of the ERA Committee, we would like to welcome you to this year's conference!

At last year's conference, we looked "beyond the uncertainty" which we were all facing across executive search, research, talent acquisition, and the HR industry in general.

While it feels like that uncertainty remains and AI is changing at an ever increasing pace, one thing remains constant, and that is the human edge we all bring to our work.

Over the last few years, companies have increasingly explored becoming skills-enabled to understand the skills that exist across their workforces, but also in the external talent marketplace. In taking this approach, as talent professionals we are ideally placed to understand and advise how skills are evolving over time.

In taking a slightly more advanced but still tangible approach, if we can understand, measure, and track skills in a world of advancing AI, then we are able to identify which uniquely human skills are needed, where they are needed, and why.

For this year's conference, we've brought together an agenda that combines industry thought leadership with practical ideas and solutions. As with last year and following the feedback shared from attendees, we've been intentional in allowing social time throughout the day for networking as well as catching up with colleagues and friends.

We also encourage you to meet with our fantastic Gold sponsors, Talentis and Cluen who have stands in the main mezzanine area.

Enjoy the day and please speak to a member of the Committee if you have any questions.

Kind regards,



ERA Committee Co-Chairs
Sam Fletcher and Liz Shay

Stay connected



WiFi Details:

Network: Sadlers Guest
No password needed



Be social:

#ERACONF
@The Executive Research
Association

Agenda

09:30 – 10:00 Registration & refreshments

10:00 - 10:15 Co-Chair Welcome

10:15 - 11:00 **Keynote speaker presentation**
Felix Wetzel, VP Product Innovation & Strategy @ Cielo
The Great Recruitment Reversal

11:00 - 11:20 **Gold Sponsor Presentation**
Jason Starr, CEO @ Dillistone Group Plc
The Business Cost of Stale Data in Executive Search

11:20 - 11:40 Break

11:40 - 12:25 **Panel**
Navigating skills: how companies are leveraging skills-based approaches.

12:25 - 13:25 Lunch

13:25 - 13:45 **Gold Sponsor Presentation**
Heidi Braun Senior Solutions Consultant @ Cluen
Skills Mining Your Database

13:45 - 14:30 **Emi Beredugo, Senior Manager, Recruiting Enablement @ Elastic**
From CVs to Capabilities: How to Make Skills-Based Hiring Stick with Change Management

14:30 - 14:45 Break

14:45 - 15:15 ROTY Award Presentation

15:15 - 15:30 ERA Update

15:30 - 15:45 Closing address

15:45 - 17:00 Networking & refreshments

The Great Recruitment Reversal

Felix Wetzel
VP Product Innovation & Strategy @ Cielo



The Great Recruitment Reversal: As AI transforms our industry, we're witnessing an unexpected plot twist - instead of robots replacing humans, AI is actually pushing all recruitment to become more like executive search, not less.

Combining insights from the Recruitment Renaissance Manifesto (a framework for navigating recruitment's AI revolution) with real-world experience building AI products, this session explores why this shift will create both winners and losers in our profession - and why many aren't prepared for what's coming. In a world where predictability is an illusion and traditional management approaches are failing, success will belong to those who can embrace uncertainty and navigate the creative chaos that defines modern talent acquisition.

Felix Wetzel drives product strategy and innovation at Cielo, where he leads teams building AI solutions that are transforming how the world's largest companies hire talent. Drawing from hands-on experience as both a Talent Acquisition Director and product innovator, he's on a mission to prove that AI's real power lies in making recruitment more human, not less.

Author of "The Recruitment Renaissance Manifesto" and a certified AI for HR & TA professional, Felix builds solutions that work in the real world while challenging conventional wisdom about automation in hiring.

The Business Cost of Stale Data in Executive Search

Jason Starr
CEO @ Dillistone Group Plc

In executive search, outdated data silently drains productivity and profit. Join us to uncover the hidden costs of data decay and learn how modern data enrichment can transform your database into a living, accurate, time-saving asset.

We'll explore how search firms lose money each year to bad data — and how automation and AI can stop the cycle. Discover practical strategies to boost search speed, accuracy, and revenue.



Jason Starr joined Dillistone Group in 1994, becoming Marketing Manager in 1996 and Managing Director of the UK business in 1998.

Following the MBO, Jason became Chief Executive of the Group.

Jason has a BA (Honours) business studies degree from the London Guildhall University.

Skills Panel

Navigating skills: how companies are leveraging skills-based approaches.



Neeta Saggar
Skills Consultant @ Jiva Solutions

With over 25 years of transformative experience in Talent Acquisition and Talent Development, Neeta has been at the cutting edge of reinventing how organisations think about talent and is a recognised thought leader in skills-led organisation change. She is both a strategist and a hands-on expert.

A passionate advocate for skills-based organisations, she has spent her career helping businesses shift from traditional roles to a future where skills truly drive success. Her holistic approach spans the entire talent lifecycle, from culture transformation to designing and embedding AI-powered solutions that elevate workforce potential.

Nithya Singaram
Skills & Capability Development Lead
@ London Stock Exchange Group



Nithya is a global Learning and Organisational Development leader known for translating skills data into meaningful business and talent outcomes. With 12+ years of global experience across technology, financial, and professional services, she helps organisations move beyond traditional talent models to skills-based decision making that unlocks potential and accelerates growth.

With a career spanning the UK, Europe, and India, Nithya has delivered impactful talent interventions through a data-driven, skills-first approach. At LSEG, she leads transformational initiatives focused on enterprise AI upskilling, skills-based job architecture, learning design, and career pathways – enabling people to identify, build, apply skills in ways that truly matter.

Skills Panel

Navigating skills: how companies are leveraging skills-based approaches.



Karl Weston
VP Consulting Solutions
@ Lightcast

Karl is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Skill Collective, part of Lightcast. He has over 25 years of expertise in HR and skills transformation.

With a focus on HR technology, learning platforms, and workforce mobility solutions, the organization partners with clients to address complex challenges, such as aligning talent strategies with business objectives.

Anna Fourie
ERA Committee / Executive Career Coach
& Founder @ Talent Potential

Anna is an experienced HR professional with a wealth of experience in talent acquisition, outplacement, recruitment solutions and career coaching. She is the founder of Talent Potential, a career coaching consultancy, and serves on the ERA Committee as Co-Treasurer.

Before creating Talent Potential, she was the EMEA Talent Sourcing Senior Manager at Microsoft, overseeing Sourcing for 'Go to Market' functions across the EMEA region. She was responsible for developing and implementing 'at-scale,' external talent attraction strategies to support the company's growth and innovation objectives.

Previously, she was based out of Singapore, as part of the ASIA Global Talent Acquisition Team, leading University Recruitment and internship hiring for APAC. This required multiple sourcing strategies across complex regions whilst navigating cultural nuances.



Skills Mining Your Database

Heidi Braun
Senior Solutions Consultant
@ Cluen



Join Heidi Braun from Cluen to explore how executive research teams can move beyond job titles and adopt a skills-first approach to uncover hidden talent.

Learn how to build a practical skills taxonomy, capture skills from CVs, LinkedIn profiles, assessments, and structured surveys. We'll navigate how to track shifts in skill demand over time, identify target companies based on "skills density" and turn your database into a scalable talent intelligence engine. Plus, get an exclusive preview of Cluen's whitepaper: 2026 Top Trends in Executive Search Technology & Leadership Consulting, and stay for the survey participant gift card winner announcement.

Heidi joined The Cluen Corporation in 2002. Over the last 23 years she has helped thousands of executive search and sourcing teams all over the world evaluate, implement, and manage executive search technology. Through both her work at Cluen and on her free time, she plays an active role helping executive search professionals network and benchmark best practices. Heidi began her career in the search industry in 1997 at a boutique where she managed her firm's proprietary database while conducting research and candidate development. Just prior to joining Cluen, she spent a year working with a start-up recruitment portal and publication selling online and print advertising to businesses who serve the recruiting industry. It's here that she met Cluen and as they say, the rest is history.



From CVs to Capabilities

Emi Beredugo
Senior Manager,
Recruiting Enablement @
Elastic

Most organisations agree that skills-based hiring makes sense. It promises fairer decisions, better matches, and stronger teams. But agreeing with the idea and making it work are two very different things.

That's where change management comes in. It's not enough to roll out a new approach and hope people follow it - you have to change mindsets and everyday hiring habits.

In this session, we'll talk openly about this resistance, why it's usually not stubbornness, and the practical steps you can take to help skills-based hiring stick, so it becomes "how you hire," not just another initiative that sounds good but never quite lands.

Emi Beredugo is a seasoned Talent Acquisition leader with over 20 years experience delivering on complex Talent Acquisition projects and programmes whilst leading day-to-day Talent Acquisition teams across various territories including the UK Middle East and Africa.

Emi currently works as the Senior Manager, Recruiting Enablement at Elastic. Her focus is to lead a team of Recruiting Enablement professionals whose role it is to support the Recruiting Team in delivering recruiting operational excellence. With a focus on improved efficiency, improved experience and inclusive recruitment, she oversees several recruitment transformation pillars including: Recruiting Tools and Systems, Recruiting Data and Analytics, Recruitment Marketing, Recruiting Learning and Development, and Recruiting Division Onboarding .

THE GILLIAN YOUNG MEMORIAL AWARD FOR
THE RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR

The Gillian Young Memorial Award for the Researcher of the Year is awarded in recognition of outstanding work in Executive Research.

The award was established to commemorate our dedicated colleague and committee member, Gillian Young, who sadly passed away in September 2024. To honour Gillian's commitment to the ERA we feel that this award, which celebrates the achievements of the Executive Research community, is a fitting tribute.

We would like to extend special thanks to Tim Young, Gillian's husband for having the memorial trophy made which will be presented to each year's winner.

2025 Winner:
Miguel Mayorga



parkhousebell

This award is kindly sponsored by Parkhouse Bell who have provided a prize to recognise the achievements of each year's winner. Full details on how to nominate a colleague or apply for the award yourself will shortly be published on our website.

We want to hear your feedback!

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entered into a prize draw for a £100
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Talentis is the revolutionary executive search software with AI at its core – it's a new generation cross between CRM, LinkedIn Recruiter and ChatGPT!

Search across hundreds of millions of profiles, manage your assignments, develop your client relationships, and transform how your search firm performs.



Cluen has the industry-leading executive search software that secures you ahead of the competitive landscape. Encore Max's AI-enriched technology helps organizations all over the world nurture important relationships, track historical data, and win new business. Experience the advanced executive search software that eliminates your repetitive tasks and integrates with LinkedIn, Gmail and Outlook to streamline your process.

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