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Industry Bulletin From The Starr Conspiracy Intelligence Unit

## **Workday Puts the Big in Big Data, Acquiring Identified Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, and Acqui-hires Make It the Move to Watch**

By Lance Haun, Editor, TSCIU

*Note: This bulletin is part of The Starr Conspiracy Intelligence Unit's industry coverage. The views expressed here are based on publicly available information, as well as our own industry background.*

**FORT WORTH, Texas (March 6, 2014)** – Most companies don't send out a press release a year and a half before they plan to release a product. In the case of cloud HCM and ERP provider Workday, their recruiting product was important enough to do [just that](#). Announced in November 2012 and scheduled to be released sometime in mid-2014, Workday's new recruiting product has spawned a lot of hope and hype.

[Buying Identified last week](#) – one of the many big data talent acquisition tools on the market – wasn't on the list of possible recruiting-based acquisitions. A cloud-based applicant tracking system? We could've seen that. But Identified was too newfangled and primarily a sourcing tool. Could Workday really be adding that functionality for a Day One launch of its recruiting product?

As Josh Bersin [wrote](#), "Workday could decide to build a social sourcing engine right into its platform, totally changing the game in their goal to enter the cloud-based recruitment market." Given the timing, it would be hard to imagine any deep functionality getting integrated before launch. The possibilities are there, though.

That doesn't mean there isn't something a bit more interesting coming soon.

### **Analytics and machine learning**

According to a [statement released](#) with its fiscal 2014 results, Workday said it acquired Identified and was bringing on its product development team to, "enhance search capabilities and accelerate the delivery of predictive analytics and machine learning throughout Workday's suite of applications."

We've seen an increased interest in analytics from HR buyers, all with the idea of getting critical information in their hands quickly and easily. While some of that functionality exists in a rudimentary sense in most HCM packages, the appeal of the added breadth and depth would excite almost any HR leader.

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What should get them even more excited, though, is the idea of machine learning getting access to the data usually locked away in a database. The possibility is a contextually aware HCM system. In our [Future of HCM white paper](#), we wrote:

*Contextual computing isn't about the software or the application; it's about pulling the information when you need it, where you need it. Do you need to hire an account manager? You can get candidates from your extended network in your workspace. It's more than LinkedIn, more than your company's candidate database. It's all of those and more, without having to go to the data source. The data will come to you.*

If Workday can get to that — and we think that's a big if at this point — that would be much bigger than adding advanced sourcing functionality to a recruiting product. It could shift the game and strategy of any of the major players in HCM.

### **Acqui-hires and why every big data player in HCM should be a little worried**

In October, Identified [hired one of the top data scientists](#) away from Facebook who had been a former senior data scientist at Netflix before that. That's a big win for Workday, even if it comes at the price of a large acquisition.

Any smaller organization that is doing unique things with data and analytics in the human capital space should be asking themselves who their data scientists are having coffee with after work. We're only half joking. It's not only going to be tougher to fly under the radar after this acquisition is fully realized, it's going to be tougher to field the heavy-hitting talent that can bring the vision of next-generation HCM to light.

*Lance Haun is an editor for The Starr Conspiracy Intelligence Unit. You can reach him at [lance@thestarrconspiracy.com](mailto:lance@thestarrconspiracy.com).*

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TSCIU takes your business as personally as you do, and we will challenge you to shift your perspective. Most important, though, we deliver marketing clarity so you can make decisions with confidence.