Building a Job Architecture for SAP SuccessFactors

2026

A Guide for Project Managers



binder | consulting

What Can You Expect From This Guide?

The importance of a Job Architecture in SAP SuccessFactors

In today's business landscape, **SAP SuccessFactors has become a central platform for global HR management**. Organizations use the suite to streamline workforce processes and apply consistent standards across the employee lifecycle.

But what enables SuccessFactors to deliver on this promise? The answer lies in the quality and consistency of the underlying job data. This is where a Job Architecture comes in! By connecting job families, roles, levels and related attributes like skills or qualifications, it creates a common framework that helps standardize job data across the organization.

This supports the integration of core HR, talent management, learning, compensation, recruiting and workforce planning processes.

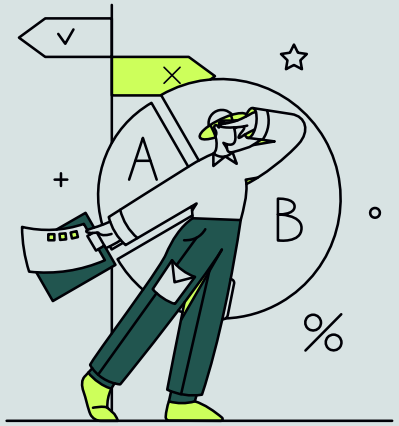
What happens when this foundation is missing? Organizations often face inconsistent job information, limited comparability and fragmented processes, reducing the value they can realize from SuccessFactors.

The following chapters explore **why a Job Architecture is a key foundation for SAP SuccessFactors and what organizations should consider when building it**.



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Why does job data matter?

High-quality job data is the prerequisite for high-quality HR processes in SAP SuccessFactors. To achieve this, job data must be structured consistently across the organization.

A Job Architecture provides this structure by defining a standardized framework for the relationship between employees, positions and job profiles: instead of maintaining requirements separately for every position**, job-related content is defined once and reused across the entire suite**.

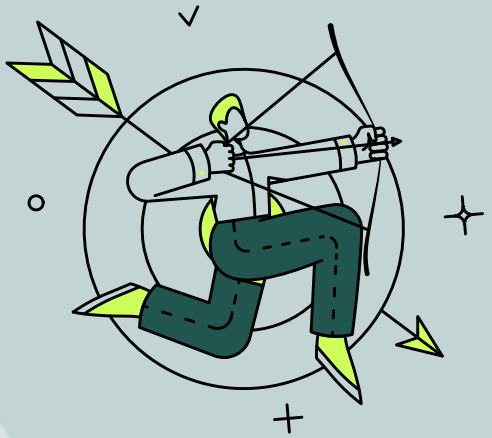
The **Job Profile Builder** in SuccessFactors operationalizes this approach by centrally managing job families, roles and job profiles, and linking them to attributes such as competencies, skills, behaviors and qualifications.

Once an employee is assigned to a job, the associated job content becomes available for downstream processes. For example, multiple local HR Business Partners can be mapped to the same global job profile. The required skills are defined once and inherited by every employee assigned to that profile.

In SAP SuccessFactors Learning, this can automatically drive learning recommendations tailored to that role and the employee's current learning status. Similar benefits apply across other SuccessFactors processes (which will be detailed further in this whitepaper). This way, **a Job Architecture transforms job data into a governed, reusable foundation for the entire SuccessFactors landscape**.

"A Job Architecture is critical to building an effective global HR system. Otherwise, you're just recreating the mess you already have in your existing systems."

The Power of Job Data 1



How a Job Architecture strengthens job data for end-to-end HR processes:



Data consistency

With a Job Architecture, organizations **define standard job attributes such as skills, competencies and qualifications once** and use them everywhere.

This makes data entry more consistent, prevents duplicate or conflicting records and reduces errors, so that reports and HR decisions are based on reliable information.

Automation & integration

When job data is defined consistently, it becomes a reliable driver for HR processes. In SAP SuccessFactors, performance forms or learning assignments can then be generated **based on the job profile and its associated skills, rather than being configured separately for each team**.

If responsibilities change, updating the profile automatically adjusts linked goals and learning items.

Data governance

Implementing a Job Architecture necessitates robust data governance processes. For example, global HR or Comp & Ben may own global job standards in Job Profile Builder, while local HR can suggest changes or maintain translations.

Combined with review cycles and data checks, this **keeps job data in SuccessFactors up-to-date without turning every change into a project**.



High-quality job data is also a prerequisite for skills management

A **Job Architecture** provides the **foundation for defining and governing skill demand** across the organization: it helps identify and analyze **which skills are required**, **for which roles** and at **what proficiency level**.



*The closer the **Job Architecture reflects actual work**, the **more useful** it becomes for talent processes.*

The Job Architecture as a foundation is becoming increasingly important as SAP continues to expand its skills-based capabilities. With SAP's first-half 2025 (1H 2025) release of **changes to the Talent Intelligence Hub, SAP is placing greater emphasis on centralized skills governance**, enabling organizations to leverage trusted skill data consistently across HR processes and workforce decisions.

A robust Job Architecture serves as the operational anchor for this approach. By linking skills and other workforce attributes to roles within a governed structure, organizations can **improve talent matching, strengthen workforce analytics and create a more reliable basis for strategic workforce planning**.

To support these requirements, SAP has enhanced Job Profile Builder with additional Job Architecture levels and greater sub job family flexibility. This matters because skill demand is rarely identical across an entire family. It enables organizations to **model their role landscape in a more realistic and scalable way**.

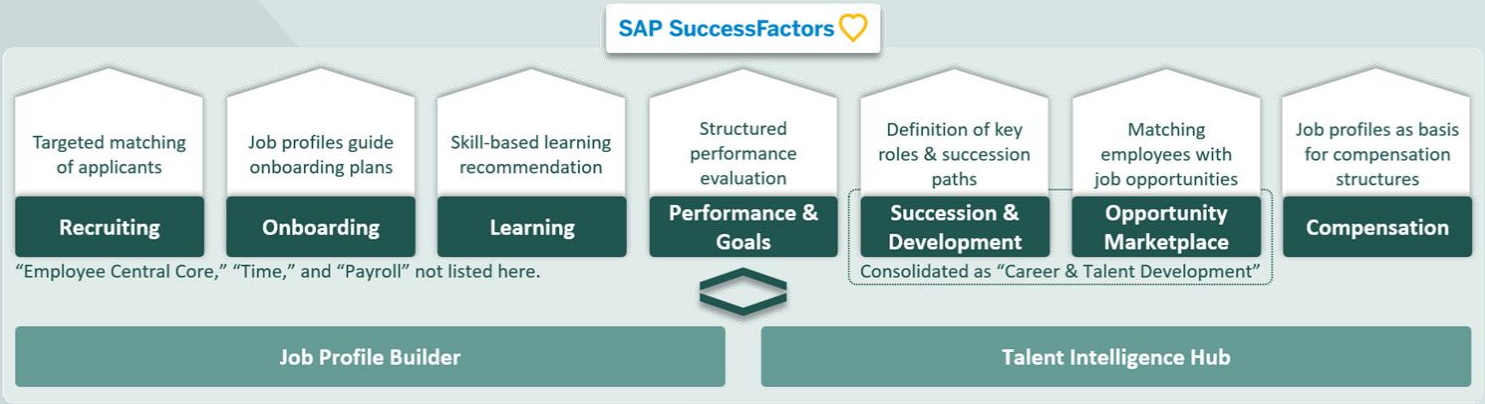
*Learn more about skills management in our **Ultimate Guide to Skills Management***

2 How a Job Architecture Powers SAP SuccessFactors

The value of operating SAP SuccessFactors with a Job Architecture

A Job Architecture gives SAP SuccessFactors a **common language that connects jobs, people, skills and decisions across the platform**. It doesn't just make the system function but adds value, turning isolated modules into an **integrated, data-driven landscape**.

This chapter explains how a Job Architecture **strengthens each module** and **creates consistency** across the entire SuccessFactors ecosystem.





Employee Central

SAP SuccessFactors Employee Central is the central source for employee and organizational data within the SuccessFactors landscape. A Job Architecture ensures that similar jobs are maintained consistently, regardless of local HR practices, establishing common standards across the organization. This **consistency strengthens data quality throughout the system**.

As a result, **reporting becomes more reliable, workforce analytics gain accuracy and comparisons across functions or regions become straightforward**. This allows HR teams to focus on **strategic decisions** instead of correcting data.

Recruiting

Effective hiring processes in SAP SuccessFactors depend on the quality of job data. A Job Architecture provides standardized input for job descriptions, so **similar roles are described consistently across recruiters, business units and regions**. Comparable positions come with aligned job requirements, responsibilities and candidate expectations.

This standardization **simplifies candidate screening**, as applicants are assessed against consistent criteria, **reducing subjectivity in hiring decisions**. It also **minimizes rework for recruiters**, who no longer need to manually reconcile job information. **Recruiting quality therefore becomes anchored in a shared organizational framework** rather than depending on individual recruiters or local practices.

Onboarding

Standardized role requirements enable **onboarding processes that are precisely tailored to specific roles**. New hires receive targeted onboarding experiences in SuccessFactors, with relevant training, information and early guidance delivered in a focused way. This **accelerates ramp-up time** and **strengthens the employee experience** from day one.

From an operational perspective, HR teams can rely on consistent, role-based onboarding content rather than adapting it manually for each individual role. **This reduces administrative effort, lowers the risk of inconsistency or configuration errors and supports scalability**.



Performance & Goals

SAP SuccessFactors Performance & Goals enables organizations to define goals, provide feedback and evaluate employee performance in a structured way. A Job Architecture **aligns performance expectations with clearly defined roles and job levels**, so performance criteria are interpreted consistently across teams and managers.

This leads to **more comparable evaluations for employees in similar roles**. As a result, organizations can reliably **identify high-potential employees, recognize performance trends and target development opportunities** where they have the greatest impact.

Compensation

Reward decisions in SAP SuccessFactors Compensation rely on a clear and consistent job structure. A Job Architecture with defined compensation benchmarks ensures that similar roles receive **aligned pay grades and salary ranges across business units and regions**, independent of local interpretations of responsibilities.

This strengthens internal equity and makes it easier to **assess whether employees in comparable roles are paid fairly**, which is an increasingly important capability given new pay transparency requirements, such as the EU Pay Transparency Directive. It also **enables meaningful compensation analysis and supports forward-looking budget planning and strategic reward initiatives**.

Learning

SAP SuccessFactors Learning is designed to support structured skill development, role-based learning and continuous employee growth. Consistently defined roles and responsibilities **allow learning activities to be closely aligned with employee needs**.

Employees and managers can **easily identify relevant training for current and future roles, maximizing the impact of learning investments and accelerating capability development across the organization**. At the same time, the **ability to identify skill gaps in a structured way** improves, as learning needs are addressed proactively through defined role requirements rather than reactive, local initiatives.

Succession & Career Development

Other SAP SuccessFactors modules that benefit significantly from a Job Architecture are Succession Management and Career Development Planning (summarized in Career & Talent Development). Structured talent identification and career progression rely on roles being defined consistently across business units and regions.

This makes it **easier to evaluate talent across the organization and identify suitable successors for critical positions, reducing reliance on individual judgment**. In practice, critical roles can maintain clearly defined successor pools and internal candidates' experience and capabilities are linked to a standardized role framework, making their potential visible. Organizations are therefore **better positioned to utilize existing talent and create transparency around career opportunities**.

HR Analytics



SAP SuccessFactors Workforce Analytics supports organizations in understanding their workforce, identifying trends and informing strategic planning decisions. With **consistent data**, organizations gain an accurate view of the workforce across the organization: **workforce reports become more comparable, skill gap analyses gain precision and scenario planning is based on reliable data that represents the actual status quo of the organization**.

As an outcome, workforce challenges become visible early, before they impact operational performance. **This strengthens the organization's ability to proactively align workforce planning with long-term business needs**.



The Impact of Job Architecture on HR Practices 3

The value of connecting HR processes with a Job Architecture

In the previous chapter, we examined how a Job Architecture strengthens each SAP SuccessFactors module individually, from Employee Central to HR Analytics. This chapter zooms out to the platform level: it examines **how a Job Architecture brings these individual module improvements together into a single, integrated HR operating model** and what that means specifically for HR teams, managers and employees in their daily work.

We focus on how a Job Architecture helps address HR challenges across the SuccessFactors landscape by strengthening its role as an integrated platform, show how standardized roles improve system-supported decision-making and highlight the **practical impact of a Job Architecture on day-to-day HR operations**.

From fragmentation to a unified HR backbone

A Job Architecture establishes a consistent structure across SAP SuccessFactors, turning previously fragmented data into a unified foundation. Instead of relying on local definitions and individual interpretation, **all HR processes are anchored in standardized job profiles and a shared role logic**.

This directly **strengthens data consistency in Employee Central and creates a reliable basis for all downstream processes**. Recruiting, onboarding, performance management and compensation operate on a common framework that ensures alignment across regions and business units.

As a result, decisions across the employee lifecycle become more comparable and objective. Candidates are assessed against consistent criteria, employees are evaluated based on clearly defined expectations and compensation is aligned to transparent job levels rather than local benchmarks.



More upside

Beyond process alignment, standardization reduces operational complexity: HR teams no longer need to manually reconcile differences between roles, adjust data or compensate for missing structure.

What this means in practice for HR:

Improved operational efficiency

By embedding standardized jobs and skills into day-to-day processes, a **Job Architecture shifts HR operations from reactive and manual to structured and scalable.**

Job requisitions, onboarding, learning assignments and performance goals are derived directly from job profiles, **reducing manual effort and increasing consistency**.

Clarity for employees & managers

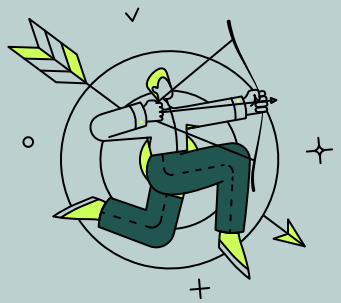
Employees and managers benefit from greater clarity and transparency. Role expectations, required skills, career paths and development opportunities are clearly defined and consistently applied.

This improves the quality of performance discussions, enables **more targeted learning** and makes **internal mobility more accessible**.

Stronger workforce intelligence

A standardized Job Architecture **unlocks the full value of workforce data**. Because roles, levels and skills are consistently defined, organizations can identify skill gaps, compare talent and build structured succession plans.

Workforce analytics becomes more precise, enabling earlier identification of risks and more informed workforce planning.



A Job Architecture transforms HR from managing fragmented processes into operating an integrated, data-driven system with a consistent view of roles across the organization.



4 Designing & Implementing a Job Architecture

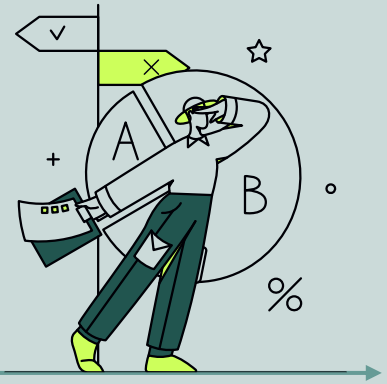
If a Job Architecture is so important, how do we actually build one?

The previous chapters highlighted **how a structured job framework can deliver in SAP SuccessFactors**.

Now, we take a closer look at **how to design and implement a Job Architecture**. To achieve a successful outcome, organizations must ensure alignment with business objectives and existing operating models. As a Job Architecture impacts data structures, HR processes, governance and the overall employee experience, its design must follow a carefully considered approach.

This chapter outlines the key considerations for introducing a Job Architecture. It covers design decisions, governance requirements and implementation principles. These help organizations create a **sustainable framework capable of supporting both current HR processes and future skills-based workforce strategies**.

Best practice: Job Architecture design process in 8 steps



1

Job analysis

Analyze existing roles and **identify the responsibilities, experience and knowledge required for each role**. This is typically a collaborative task, as no single individual has sufficient insight into all roles across the organization. In practice, HR Business Partners and business experts are best positioned to provide the necessary input through e.g., interviews or workshops, helping to create a **comprehensive view of the organization's job landscape**.

2

Framework

Define a framework that serves as the foundation for the Job Architecture. It should include **job families and sub job families, job levels and job titles**. To ensure consistency and comparability, **clear criteria and terminology** for framework and job descriptions must be defined upfront. This requires alignment across stakeholders and often involves adapting industry standards to the organization's specific context. The framework should be aligned with the overall business objectives.

3

Job descriptions

Develop **job descriptions that accurately reflect the tasks, responsibilities and requirements** of each role. Use the results of job analysis and framework to ensure comparability. Include capabilities and knowledge required for successful performance but avoid details that would reduce flexibility and increase maintenance effort. Maintain all job descriptions in a **centralized repository where they can be updated over time**, with appropriate access rights for the responsible stakeholders.

4

Pay structures

Assess existing compensation structures to ensure alignment with the new Job Architecture. The objective is to establish a fair, market-competitive and consistent framework. This requires analyzing salary, benefits and other compensation data across roles and **defining consistent levels and grading based on responsibilities, skills, effort and working conditions**. A standardized approach highlights outliers, which must be reviewed and addressed jointly. Keep in mind that this will soon be a legal requirement under the **EU Pay Transparency Directive.**

Best practice: Job Architecture design process in 8 steps



5 *Employee mapping*

Map all employees to the appropriate job based on the Job Architecture structure and job descriptions. **This is a critical implementation step**, as the quality and consistency of the mapping determine the success of all downstream processes. The stronger the foundation built in steps 1-4, the more accurate and comparable roles, levels and responsibilities become across the organization. **This creates a reliable data foundation** for learning, career development, workforce planning, and internal mobility.

6 *Change communication*

Communicate the Job Architecture transparently and consistently across the organization. Explain not only what is changing, but also **why the changes are necessary and how employees will benefit** from a clearer, more structured framework. A well-planned communication approach helps **build trust, reduce uncertainty and create early buy-in**. It also supports a smoother transition during implementation and increases the likelihood of long-term adoption.

7 *Implementation*

Implement the new Job Architecture, including job descriptions and skills into your systems and processes. Ensure it is **integrated into all relevant target HR processes** such as performance management and compensation processes. Operating SAP SuccessFactors without a Job Architecture significantly limits its capabilities. **Careful implementation within the system** is therefore essential to unlock its full potential.

8 *Monitoring*

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new Job Architecture on an ongoing basis. The **value of a well-designed Job Architecture increases as the organization evolves**. A governance model with **clear processes, roles and responsibilities is essential**. Adjust the Job Architecture as needed to ensure it continues to support business needs and goals.

Principles to consider before starting your Job Architecture project:



Define your objectives

Define what you want to achieve with a Job Architecture. **Clarify the specific business needs that the Job Architecture is supposed to address**. For example, improving organizational efficiency, addressing specific use cases or ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. These objectives are unique to each organization.

Set the scope

Identify existing approaches, methodologies and resources within your organization to understand what is already in place in a good quality and **what still needs to be improved, standardized or developed** for your Job Architecture. This includes reviewing existing job categories and levels, as well as available data sources such as job descriptions, performance evaluations, compensation data and other relevant information.

Involve the right people

Making Job Architecture work for everyone involves collaboration. **Engage key stakeholders from different levels and functions within the organization** (such as senior executives, HR and job experts) **from the very beginning** to ensure that their needs and concerns are taken into account. This will help create a Job Architecture that reflects the needs of the entire organization.

Choose the best process

Choose the **best process for your organization**. For example, you might choose a top-down approach where the Job Architecture is developed by senior leaders and then cascaded down to lower levels, or you might prefer a bottom-up approach, where employees and managers are driving the process.

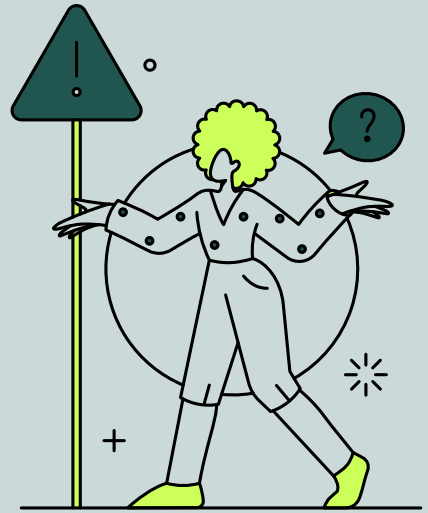
When SAP SuccessFactors runs without or with a flawed Job Architecture

Earlier chapters highlighted how a well-designed Job Architecture creates a reliable foundation for SAP SuccessFactors through standardized job data and shared role logic. This chapter looks at the reverse scenario: **what happens when that foundation is missing or compromised**.

Not every organization faces the same version of this problem. Some run SAP SuccessFactors **without any Job Architecture at all**, relying instead on local practices, individual judgment and manually maintained data across modules.

Others have implemented a Job Architecture, but one that is **inconsistently applied, poorly maintained or too rigid or too granular** to function well in practice.

Both situations undermine the value of the platform, but they do so through different mechanisms and require different fixes, which is why **this chapter treats them as two distinct scenarios rather than a single "lack of structure" problem**.



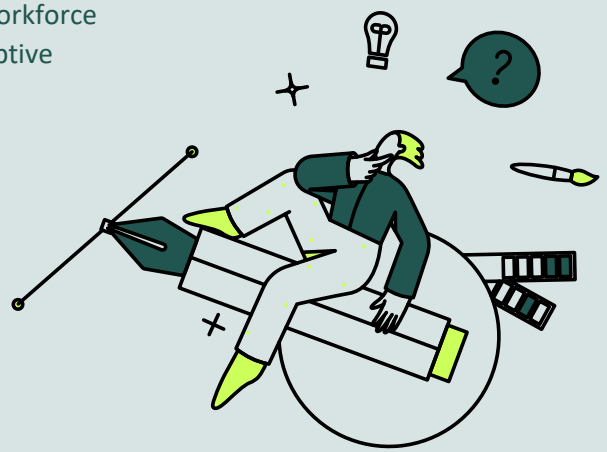
The Risks of Job Architecture Gaps 5

1) Operating SAP SuccessFactors without a Job Architecture

Running SAP SuccessFactors without a Job Architecture **does not stop the system from functioning, but it sharply reduces its value**. The system can still store and execute transactions, but the organization loses the common language needed to connect jobs, people, skills and decisions across the platform - the opposite of the module-by-module benefits outlined in Chapter 2.

In practice, this shows up as a **consistent pattern across the platform**: data quality erodes in Employee Central, hiring and onboarding become dependent on individual recruiters and managers rather than shared standards, performance and compensation decisions lose comparability across teams and regions and workforce analytics becomes descriptive rather than predictive.

Left unaddressed, these gaps compound over time: **what starts as local inconsistency in one module gradually undermines trust in workforce data across the entire SuccessFactors landscape**.



Key takeaway

SAP SuccessFactors can run without a Job Architecture. Without one, however, the platform remains a system of transactions, **limiting** the platform's ability to provide **consistent, end-to-end employee lifecycle management**.

2) Operating SAP SuccessFactors with a poorly designed Job Architecture

Cascading impact on downstream HR processes

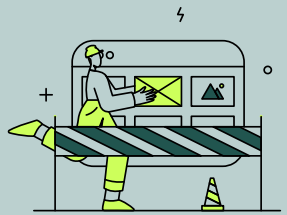
SAP SuccessFactors modules supporting talent management all rely on **shared Job Architecture data maintained in Job Profile Builder**. If this data is inconsistent, incomplete or poorly maintained, inconsistencies **affect downstream processes** through incorrect job assignments, inconsistent role structures, unreliable reporting and reduced ability to compare roles across business units.

Erosion of compensation defensibility

Local job catalogs that evolve without global alignment, leveling criteria that differ across regions and job titles used instead of proper job evaluation are common structural gaps in SuccessFactors environments. These gaps make it **difficult for Compensation to compare truly equivalent roles**.

Requirements for regulatory reporting

The EU Pay Transparency Directive, for example, requires organizations to explain pay differences, not just report them. **Structural weaknesses become directly exposed** once Compensation and Analytics modules must produce pay-gap reports by worker category.



Whether a Job Architecture is missing or poorly designed, the impact in SAP SuccessFactors is similar: data quality decreases, downstream modules receive unreliable role information and compensation or compliance risks increase. The main difference is visibility: a missing Job Architecture is usually easy to identify, **while a flawed one can remain unnoticed** until pay equity reporting, an audit or a major reorganization reveals the issues.

What's Next?

Without a Job Architecture, HR systems remain fragmented. With it, SAP SuccessFactors becomes an integrated platform for data-driven workforce and talent decisions.

Today, the business case for Job Architecture in SAP SuccessFactors is stronger than ever. The **Job Profile Builder provides the structural model** for jobs and job profile content, the **Talent Intelligence Hub strengthens the skills layer and governance model** and recent enhancements in Job Architecture levels make it easier to represent organizations more accurately.

The central lesson remains unchanged: without Job Architecture, SuccessFactors can digitize processes, but it cannot fully connect jobs, skills, people and decisions. **With a well-governed Job Architecture that includes skills and related attributes, organizations gain cleaner data, stronger process integration, more reliable talent decisions and a practical foundation for a skills-based organization**.



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