



Brandon Hall Group
**EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

Executive Interview

with **Linda Ginac**,
Founder and CEO,
TalentGuard

Redefining Reskilling and Upskilling

About TalentGuard

[TalentGuard](#) is a leading Workforce Skills Management Platform that unlocks complete visibility of skills with intelligent data insights to meet business and workforce demands for upskilling and reskilling, talent mobility and personalized development.

Recognition

A Brandon Hall Group Silver Preferred Provider, TalentGuard won two Brandon Hall Group Excellence in Technology Awards in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

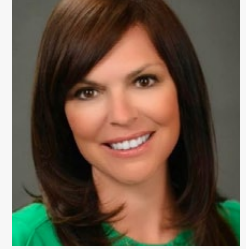


Talent Management	1 Bronze Award
Future of Work	1 Bronze Award

Brandon Hall Group Preferred Provider Program is specifically designed as a single source of truth that can validate your technology selection decisions.

[Learn More](#)

About Linda Ginac



Linda Ginac is the founder and CEO of TalentGuard. Before TalentGuard, she founded The Ginac Group, a successful career development franchise, serving clients across the U.S. and Canada. Before that, Linda was vice president of Product Strategy at Cofiniti, where she was instrumental in pioneering Cofiniti's global entry into collaborative financial planning using cloud-based technology and helping to prepare the company for a successful exit to H&R Block. Linda also served as a marketing executive at pcOrder, collaborating with the team that led the company from a start-up to a NASDAQ-listed public corporation.

Linda is based in Austin, Texas and has a master's degree in career development from John F. Kennedy University and a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Norwich University.

In prior leadership roles, Linda served as vice president of marketing at EPSIAA, where she led the global expansion of the brand through acquisition by Fiserv; was vice president of Business Development at Computer People, and served in several marketing roles at Digital Equipment Corporation.



About Rachel Cooke

Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.

Q

RACHEL

What are some of the challenges that you see with upskilling?

A

LINDA

The customers we're attracting are in 19 major industries that are being disrupted. They range from manufacturing, where they are seeing jobs go away or skills turn over at such a rapid pace that they can't keep up, to insurance companies, where a lot of their jobs are anticipated to be gone by 2025-30. If they have 500 claims adjusters internally, they want to keep those individuals, but they must be reskilled to do something the business needs in the future and we don't know what those future jobs might be. They're feeling the disruption. Those employees have to develop different skills and the companies need someone to help keep the forecast up to date and fill the skills gap. They then must do a highly curated personal learning plan not only for the individual, but for cohorts as well, and make that learning happen in a short timeframe. They also need to make those internal transitions happen seamlessly.

Most of the time, we're dealing with organizations with extremely messy skill landscapes. Oftentimes, there are hundreds if not thousands of skills disrupted across multiple tech stacks.

Some live in the ATS, HRIS or a competency management system and some are just on paper. Sometimes they're overlapping and ill-defined and the companies don't know where to start because it's complex. TalentGuard helps organizations first and foremost by baselining their skills and jobs. We can get very structured or very flexible and loose. It doesn't matter what format your data is in; it can be a PDF, Word doc or in an electronic format, and we can access it via API. Because TalentGuard has broad data across 19 different verticals in our taxonomy that are kept up-to-date monthly, we're able to normalize, structure and standardize data sets in days or weeks instead of 18 months to two years.

The first experience in TalentGuard is usually a deep talent assessment of someone's skills, aspirations, experiences, qualifications and certifications. We build an incredible "passport," which is the talent profile of the employee. We can get deep insights and analysis on individual, team, job, family and corporate gaps to prioritize and deliver the right kind of learning. Most organizations have between three and six LMSs. We manage linking out to the right LMS, learning resource or references at the right time, based on subscriptions, to give an employee a single seamless view of their learning and action plan. Bringing that together is extremely complex. We're not a nice-to-have HR tech stack; we're powering the ATS, LMS, HRIS, etc. If we go down, they go down. We become very mission-critical in an organization to serve up the talent insights they need on demand.

Q

RACHEL

Are you seeing clients with one integrated suite?

A

LINDA

The dream is that we can have one suite that does everything but in reality, it's just not true.

Where you're going to see integrated suites is on the end-to-end HRIS, handling all the employee demographics and some of those more HR operational tasks. When someone comes to us, they're saying, "we need an upskilling and reskilling solution." They see that TalentGuard has a broader platform and want to start buying more modules to complete the end-to-end view of that employee. TalentGuard is not an LMS and we don't have an ATS. We're typically doing a lot of integrations — three to six per customer. One of our customers pulled a report and there were a million transactions a month for one account across their ecosystem on the number of calls that were being made. So, it's high-volume. I don't know how anyone can be just a single standalone these days. Companies are being pressured to make decisions quickly and they can't make them unless they have complete visibility into their workforce. It's only now that the elements can come together so organizations can be interoperable and share that data across various HR tech stacks and organizational tech stacks.

Change management is the biggest challenge we see in an organization.



Typically, they want to centralize the rollout within a centralized Center of Excellence in HR. You often have one functional organization as the adopter of the tech stack, which is usually the one feeling the greatest pain within upskilling and reskilling, and you roll out from there. Too many people pay attention to the solution and not enough attention to risk management. We talk to our RCS team and say, "if you don't have that spine covered — meaning the head of HR, your executive functional owner and the middle-management layer that's going to be driving interactions in the system — it's going to fall flat on its face." We spend more time on risk management and change management than training our HR admins on the tool. That's just a lot of work and it can't be underestimated.

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RACHEL

Can you talk a little bit about talent mobility?

A

LINDA

Talent mobility is an output of upskilling and reskilling. Some organizations are going to upskill within a current job. Then there's upskilling for bending the arc of career transition and trajectory, where people wanting to go to the next career ask, "What's next for me?" In TalentGuard, you have a many-to-many relationship, meaning many skills sit across many jobs. It gives visibility into what skills are transferable, showing opportunities people might not be aware of across the lattice or even right down the ladder. We have a massive Baby Boomer population who want to decelerate. We can provide insights to these individuals showing them the skills that are important to the organization and where they are needed. We can see if those skills are transferrable to a role or project, or into a gig that gives them the ability to gain experience in those particular areas so they can decide whether they want to take them on full-time. When you make an internal transition like that, people don't understand how complex it is. It kicks off a lot of other processes. The Learning and development start over again because what's going to be recommended for the new job might be very different from the last job.

For a leadership job, we might want to do a 360 assessment so you have insights into your leadership capabilities and you need to start thinking about managing critical talent pools to

develop your team. There is also a lot of triggering that happens and that's not an easy process. When you move one person, it's a cascading effect; you have to move other people internally. Our goal is about an 85 percent internal transition rate. We want to expose if organizations can make these internal transitions, then where can they go for an external hire?

Also, you're going to promote the people you know but there might be somebody else in the organization more qualified. One of the things we do when you create your talent pool, we make the people in that pool blind, meaning you can't see someone's picture or someone's name. You just see their talent profile and they're going to be in the order of the best match based on the query. Then we can begin to set up exchanges based on your talent profile and talent match. Based on that data, you're going to be able to make data-driven, science-backed, evidence-based decisions about what talent might be right for the role. It's getting a lot of great feedback and we're seeing a lot of great ROI on it. It positively supports DE&I. We're seeing better internal transitions and more mixed transitions across the board when it comes to age, background, ethnicity, etc.

Q

RACHEL

What are some of your business priorities for next year?

A

LINDA

We're going to continue to invest in data. We have a lot of real-time data and integrations keeping our content management system and our structured taxonomy up to date. But we're going to move more toward verification. For example, an employee can self-assess. We can invite a subject matter expert to assess certain skill cards and a manager can assess others. We're doing some partnerships where we can verify through tests on a particular skill. We have scores in other areas where we do a lot of certification management and tracking. For example, instead of a nurse adding their certificate and having it move up the chain, we're pulling in more evidence-based data to do the verification and validation, so it makes it easier for organizations to do the work they need to do to get their jobs done.

We'll also be investing in more data and content partnerships. We have a lot of content companies coming to our door, saying "we want to map our content to your taxonomy so we can serve it up in a more skills-based way to close the skills gap." We'll be investing in further integrations as we continue to grow. As we get more global, we meet more and more vendors to cooperate with within the ecosystem. We just opened in Ireland and are expanding globally so we can serve customers closer to where they are. We're in Mexico City, Austin, Texas and Cork, Ireland and we're looking at Singapore, Abu Dhabi or India next.

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 29 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.