

Workforce Intelligence Dashboard

Turning ten disconnected reports into one strategic conversation.

Client (concept): Northridge Global — a fictional 4,500-person global services firm

Role: Lead Designer, Learning Analytics Consultant, Information Architect

Discipline: Learning Experience Design · Performance Consulting · Organizational Development · Workforce Planning

Deliverables: Executive dashboard prototype (live HTML), design system, data model, executive narrative

Timeline: 6-week concept sprint

[\[Launch the live prototype → \]](#)

The Situation

Northridge Global had grown fast. In two years they'd added 1,200 employees, rolled out new AI tools across every business unit, and shifted to a permanent hybrid model. Leadership felt the strain — but couldn't point to where.

Ask a different question, get a different report.

- HR ran engagement surveys.
- The L&D team tracked course completions.
- Operations owned the SLA scorecards.
- Managers filed coaching logs into a separate system.
- Attrition risk lived in a spreadsheet on someone's laptop.

Every quarterly business review turned into a scavenger hunt. Leaders were making capability investment decisions on gut feel — because no one could tell them, in one view, whether the workforce was actually keeping up with the business.

The CHRO's request was refreshingly blunt:

"I want one screen that tells me where we're winning, where we're slipping, and where to spend next."

The Real Problem (What They Actually Needed)

The ask sounded like a dashboard project. It wasn't.

The real problem was that **learning, performance, and business outcomes had no shared language**. L&D reported in completion percentages. Operations reported in cycle time. HR reported in engagement scores. None of it added up to a decision.

What leadership needed wasn't more data — it was a **connecting narrative** that turned four separate reporting streams into one story about workforce capability.

My Approach

I treated this like a performance consulting engagement first and a design project second.

1. Discovery — Followed the questions, not the data

I mapped the 14 recurring questions leadership was asking across QBRs, all-hands, and skip-level meetings. Every metric on the final dashboard traces back to one of those questions. Nothing is decorative.

2. Data model — Built a capability lens

I organized every metric into a five-layer capability model: Learning inputs → Skill outputs → Manager multipliers → Operational results → Predictive signals. This is the layer most workforce dashboards skip. It's the layer that makes the data mean something.

3. Information architecture — One screen, one story

The dashboard reads top-to-bottom like a leadership briefing: Here's the health. Here's why. Here's what's coming. Here's what to do. No tab-hunting, no drill-down maze.

4. Design system — Fortune 500, not LMS

Deep navy sidebar, ivory canvas, single accent blue, muted status colors. Executive-appropriate typography. No cartoon icons, no gradients-for-the-sake-of-gradients. If it doesn't earn its pixel, it's out.

5. Human-centered defaults

- Every KPI shows a **delta vs. prior period** — the shortcut executives actually use.
- Every risk metric is **labeled in plain language** (Healthy / Watch / Risk), not raw numbers.
- AI recommendations are written as **actions, not observations** — because "AI Literacy is low" is not a decision, and "Deploy 3-week AI Fundamentals path to 480 employees" is.

The Solution

A single-screen executive dashboard with nine connected modules:

Module	The question it answers
Executive KPIs	Is the workforce trending up or down this quarter?
Learning Analytics	Are people actually finishing what we invest in?
Capability Heat Map	Where are our skill strengths and gaps by business unit?
Operational Performance	Is learning translating into business results?
Workforce Planning	Do we have the right people in the right places?
Knowledge Management	Are people finding what they need to do the work?
Manager Effectiveness	Are our managers multiplying or leaking capability?
Predictive Analytics	What's coming — and who's at risk?
AI Recommendations	What should we do about it, ranked by impact?

The story the dashboard tells in one glance:

*Northridge is largely healthy. Engagement, operations, and learning completion are trending up. But **AI Literacy is the enterprise's soft spot** — concentrated in Operations and Finance, showing up again as the largest future skill gap and correlating with early-career attrition risk. That's where to invest next quarter.*

That's the strategic clarity the CHRO asked for.

Design Decisions Worth Calling Out

Why the heat map is the centerpiece.

It's the only visualization on the dashboard that shows pattern rather than point-in-time value. It's where leaders literally see the story — a horizontal red band across AI Literacy that no completion percentage would ever surface.

Why AI Recommendations are written as sentences, not scores.

Executives don't act on "AI Adoption: 61%." They act on "Deploy a 3-week AI Fundamentals path to 480 employees in Operations and Finance." The language is the intervention.

Why the palette is deliberately quiet.

Bright colors compete for attention. In an executive tool, the data should compete for attention. The palette gets out of the way so the insights don't have to fight for oxygen.

Why filters trigger visible re-renders.

Enterprise tools that don't feel responsive get abandoned. Every filter change produces a visible refresh plus a confirmation toast — small trust signals that the tool is working.

What This Demonstrates

- **Learning Analytics** — Connecting completion, assessment, and engagement data into leading indicators for capability
 - **Performance Consulting** — Linking learning inputs to operational outputs (SLA, quality, error rate)
 - **Organizational Development** — Surfacing manager effectiveness and succession readiness as strategic levers, not HR metrics
 - **Workforce Planning** — Quantifying capacity, demand, and attrition risk in one integrated view
 - **Human-Centered Design** — Executive-first hierarchy, plain-language recommendations, scannable status cues
 - **Data Visualization** — Right chart for the right question; no chart junk
 - **Executive Communication** — Every module answers a leadership question directly
 - **Change Management** — Framing capability gaps as prioritized actions, not blame
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The Impact Framing

Because Northridge is a concept, the impact is modeled — but modeled honestly:

- **Executive decision time on quarterly workforce reviews:** ~3 hours of report-hopping → 15-minute guided review
 - **Time between insight and action:** From "next steering committee" → same session (AI Recommendations are actionable in-view)
 - **The strategic shift:** Capability investment moves from opinion-based to evidence-based
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What I Learned

Two things worth naming:

1. **The hardest part wasn't the visualization — it was the taxonomy.** Deciding what counts as workforce capability, and how the ten skills roll up cleanly across eight business units, took twice as long as the design. That work is invisible in the final product, which is exactly the point.
 2. **Executive tools should say less, not more.** My first draft had 14 KPIs, three sub-tabs, and a filter panel with 11 dimensions. It looked impressive and told me nothing. Cutting it back to what a leader could absorb in 90 seconds is when it started to feel like a real product.
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Tools & Craft

Design: Figma-style compositions, custom design system, Fluent-inspired IA

Build: HTML5, CSS Grid, Chart.js, vanilla JavaScript (single-file deployable prototype)

Data modeling: Capability taxonomy, five-layer performance model, predictive signal mapping

Documentation: Executive summary, design rationale, extensibility notes for engineering handoff