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RESEARCH

# UKG ASPIRE 2024 UPDATES

## ANALYST

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

At UKG's annual Aspire conference, the vendor made several announcements, shared items on its roadmap, and provided updates on the performance of recent investments. Having released Generative AI capabilities through UKG Bryte over the past year, UKG plans to expand its footprint to include AI agents that can autonomously complete multi-step tasks across various departmental and vertical-specific cases. Additional announcements include the launch of the UKG Pro Talent Marketplace and UKG One View Direct, as well as enhancements to the UKG Ready suite. These investments set the stage for UKG to continue its strong performance in the smaller, midmarket, and enterprise spaces, offering solutions that can manage varying levels of organizational complexity while promoting high usability and overall user engagement.

## OVERVIEW

At UKG's annual Aspire user conference, the vendor reflected on the performance of recent developments, which laid the foundation for several new announcements around agentic AI, talent management, and further enhancements to its UKG Ready and UKG One View products. The vendor unveiled its expanded vision, which focuses on four main differentiators: creating great places to work through technology, actionable insights through differentiated data, the vertical advantage, and making the complex simple for real-time decision making. These themes were present across all announcements made at the event and will serve as guidance for the vendor's product roadmap looking ahead.

### UKG BRYTE GETS AN AGENTIC UPGRADE

During the Aspire event, UKG announced plans to release UKG Bryte AI agents to autonomously complete various multi-step tasks. These agents, driven by large action models, are trained on specialized proprietary datasets curated by the vendor and aim to reduce manual effort while mitigating the risk of inaccuracies. The first wave of agents will focus on compliance (Continuous Compliance Agent) and talent management (Promotion Agent). For example, the Continuous Compliance Agent enables payroll staff to keep track of changes to tax compliance requirements without the need to spend time manually researching changes and determining their impact. Meanwhile, the Promotion Agent can streamline workflows around promotions, eliminating manual processes while creating employee-specific training plans based on current skills and future needs. The Continuous Compliance and Promotion agents are set to release in early 2025, with additional process and industry-specific agents to follow later in the year. Nucleus expects the vendor's initial approach to target agentic AI towards more mundane, repetitive administrative tasks to ease adoption. This is especially true as many organizations grapple with presenting AI as a means to give employees time back to do more meaningful work rather than taking over their roles.

**Bryte AI agents are set to release in early 2025**

### UKG PRO TALENT MARKETPLACE

UKG also announced the launch of its UKG Pro Talent Marketplace solution, an AI-powered talent management application that helps organizations fill existing labor gaps while providing frontline and salaried employees with new career opportunities and development

paths. The vendor plans to release the internal marketplace in early 2025, with the externally facing marketplace following in the second half of the year. Once released, the internal marketplace will enable employees to create talent profiles, map out their career interests, and identify the skills that they need to meet specific goals. By aggregating data based on employee strengths, work experiences, and aspirations, the solution can provide users with personalized development experiences. The external marketplace will also allow companies to benefit from extended talent pools externally, contractors, gig workers and actual talent pool sharing with other companies.

## UKG ONE VIEW DIRECT

Following last year's public release of UKG One View, the vendor has announced that it will launch One View Direct as a solution to synchronize, manage, and perpetually validate payroll calculations from all of an organization's in-country payroll providers. In essence, the solution creates a single payroll process within one solution, which is particularly attractive for global customers who must manage the complexity of having several providers across in-country locations. Additionally, for organizations currently employing managed services for in-country providers, One View will provide the opportunity to easily self-manage. UKG One View Direct is expected to be released to early adopters in the first quarter of 2025, followed shortly by a general availability launch.

**One View Direct creates a single payroll process across all in-country providers**

## UKG READY IS "READY" FOR AI

UKG Ready's target has continued to expand, with last year's coverage benchmark moving from 250 to 500 employees. Now, acknowledging that complexity and organizational size don't always correlate, UKG's go-to-market strategy for UKG Ready will no longer focus strictly on the number of employees, but more on customer requirements and workforce complexity. Along with this shift comes subsequent improvements to the suite, including the addition of UKG Bryte AI job description (Job Genius) and interview question (Interview Guide) generation capabilities. Additional improvements include out-of-the-box integrations with NetSuite for ERP and Employee Navigator for Benefits Administration, as well as the availability of UKG One View and the UKG Great Place to Work Hub for UKG Ready customers. These investments align with UKG's pursuit of maintaining enterprise-level capabilities for non-enterprise size customers with complex operational needs.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Building on the foundation of last year's announcements, UKG continues to incorporate new technological innovations while remaining on track with its mission to make complex operations simple. The vendor's pace of AI investments has matched this initiative, specifically by rolling out its AI agents slowly and covering broad and repeatable tasks to ease adoption. Meanwhile, investments in usability have matched the influx of functionality to avoid instances where customers feel overwhelmed by or unaware of what features they can take advantage of.

As UKG equips both its UKG Pro and UKG Ready suites with the necessary functionality to meet varying levels of organizational complexity, the most significant move is the vendor's shifting GTM strategy. As the market for "smaller and midmarket-centric" HCM solutions grows increasingly competitive, UKG has aptly identified that an organization's size does not necessarily correlate with its complexity or HR maturity. Nucleus expects more organizations to follow this shift, assessing needs based on the complexity of their HR operations instead of headcount. UKG's strategy makes it the first vendor to recognize this reality, with the opportunity to capitalize on a greater mindset shift in the market as smaller and midmarket companies that may have been undersold on lightweight suites pursue higher-value options. At the same time, UKG remains squarely focused on meeting the needs of large enterprises, leading with its expertise across verticals and knowledge of the intimate relationship between time and pay to reduce the complexity of workforce management, especially on a global scale.