

All things Skills

Shape the Future, February 2026

Simon Brown, Nyenrode Business University



The better the question. The better the answer. The better the world works.



EY

Shape the future
with confidence

Agenda

1

- Skills – HR Indulgence or Business Imperative?

2

- Skills powered organization @ EY

3

- Does AI Change the Game?

4

- Discussion

1. Skills – HR Indulgence or Business Imperative?

HR Indulgence?



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TALENT AND SKILLS

Skills-Based Organizations Aren't Reaching Their Potential. Here's How They Can Succeed.

By Sebastian Ullrich, Jens Baier, Vinciane Beauchene, Suketu Shah, and Fabio Tank

ARTICLE | JULY 03, 2025 | 12 MIN READ

Forbes

SMALL BUSINESS

Beyond The Hype Of The Skills-Led Transformation

By René Janssen, Former Forbes Councils Member.
for Forbes Business Council, COUNCIL POST | Membership (fee-based)
Published Jan 23, 2025, 10:00am EST

René Janssen, Founder & CEO of Lepaya, is passionate about human and business potential enabled by tech-enabled L&D.



HR's skills priority for 2025: 'revolution' or time to reinvest, rediscover and reform?

[Blog posts](#)

16 Jan 2025



Dr Duncan Brown, Principal Associate

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Recruiting Future with Matt Alder

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Ep 718: Is Skills-Based Hiring Hype Or Reality?

JULY 18, 2025



Recruiting Future is a podcast that helps Talent Acquisition teams drive measurable impact by developing their strategic capability in Foresight, Influence, Talent, and Technology.

This episode is about Talent.

After years of hype surrounding skills-based hiring, the data is showing that it is really happening at scale and becoming strategically important across all sectors and company sizes, with some surprising patterns emerging. Organizations are seeing benefits beyond just filling roles, and the implications for TA and HR are significant. What's driving this shift, and what do TA teams need to know?

BLOG / FEB 05, 2025

Why most skills initiatives will fail in 2025 (and how you can beat the odds)

Business Imperative?

Gartner Search

AI Reality Check **New** Cost Optimization in a Volatile Economy Federal Policy Guidance

How Organizations Are Achieving ROI With Skills-Based Talent Management

Issue Context

Skills Intelligence Core to HR's...

More Detail

More on this Topic

23 January 2026 - ID G00843649 - 12 min read **Viewed**

By Cian O'Mearain, Chantal Steen

Shareable Summary
View & download slides

RECOMMENDED BY AUTHOR

- Navigate the Skills-Based Talent Management Technology Landscape
30 August 2024 - 20 min read
- Case Study: Foundational Skills Strategy to Close Skills Gaps

Insights at a Glance

Organizations investing in skills-informed approaches target improvement in three talent areas on average. ROI from these investments is starting to

Skills-Based Hiring Is Finally Going Mainstream (And Companies Are Actually Dropping Degree Requirements)

Judah 'News Boy' Jacobs December 8, 2025

Share this article: X X LinkedIn Copy

Remember when skills-based hiring was just a buzzword that everyone talked about at conferences but nobody actually implemented? Well, 2025 might be the year that changed. We're seeing

Global Study: Skills-Based Strategies Guard Against Talent Shortages

New research from Workday explores why leaders are organizing work around skills, not jobs, in the age of AI, how they're preparing for a potential talent shortage, and the key strategies they're adopting.



Chris Ernst
Chief Learning Officer
Workday

Skills-Based Organizations: A Strategic Imperative for HR Leaders in 2025

July 17, 2025

Skills-Based Hiring Revolution 2025: What Recruiters Need to Know

October 8, 2025

The recruitment landscape has fundamentally shifted. New data reveals that companies are now prioritize skills over degrees, forcing recruiting software platforms to become obsolete.

The Death of Degree-First Hiring

Insert footer text here

organizational structures are struggling to create a new normative framework, equipping companies to combat skill obsolescence, and evolving market conditions. Here are five actionable strategies for effective

Forbes

INNOVATION

Graduating Into Uncertainty: Why Skills-Based Hiring Matters

By SAP, BRANDVOICE | Paid Program

Published Jun 18, 2025, 07:34am EDT

1. Skills – HR Indulgence or Business Imperative?

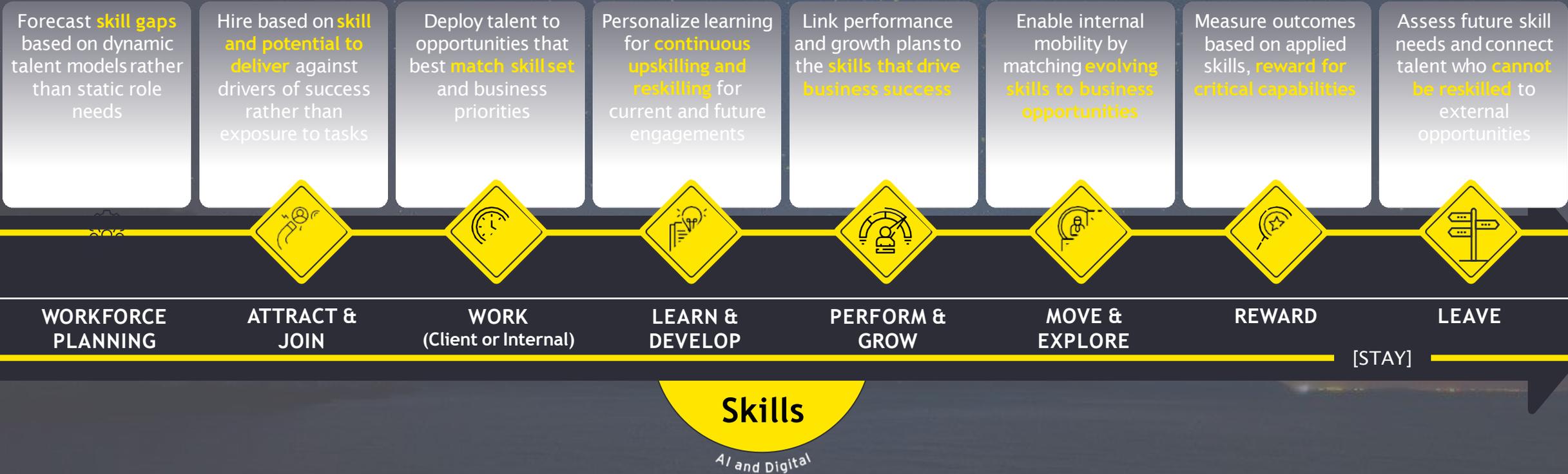
2. Skills powered organization @ EY

Our vision is to embed skills as a common thread through the talent lifecycle

EY Skills Vision:

- 1 Place **skills at the center** through integrated technology and AI
- 2 Connect global **supply of talent to market** demand
- 3 Enable employees to **shape their careers** with confidence

Skills-powered strategies can exist **across the employee lifecycle**



A skills-powered organization places measurable capabilities at the center of planning, growth, and operations, allowing proficiency and potential to predict performance

We need **confidence** in the skills our people have to **shape our future**

Signature capabilities of skills-powered organizations

Catalog workforce skills most valued to address current needs and future growth

Plan future workforce investments based on skills intelligence of talent supply and market demands

Promote continuous upskilling and cross skilling based on data-backed assessments

Form teams based on specific skills rather than traditional backgrounds (e.g., degrees)

Measure performance based on skills achievement and reward for skill development

Why it matters to EY



Talent attraction and retention: Candidates and employees expect a skills-focus as part of their value proposition



Cost of turnover: Reskilling and retention of high performers will drive talent replacement cost savings



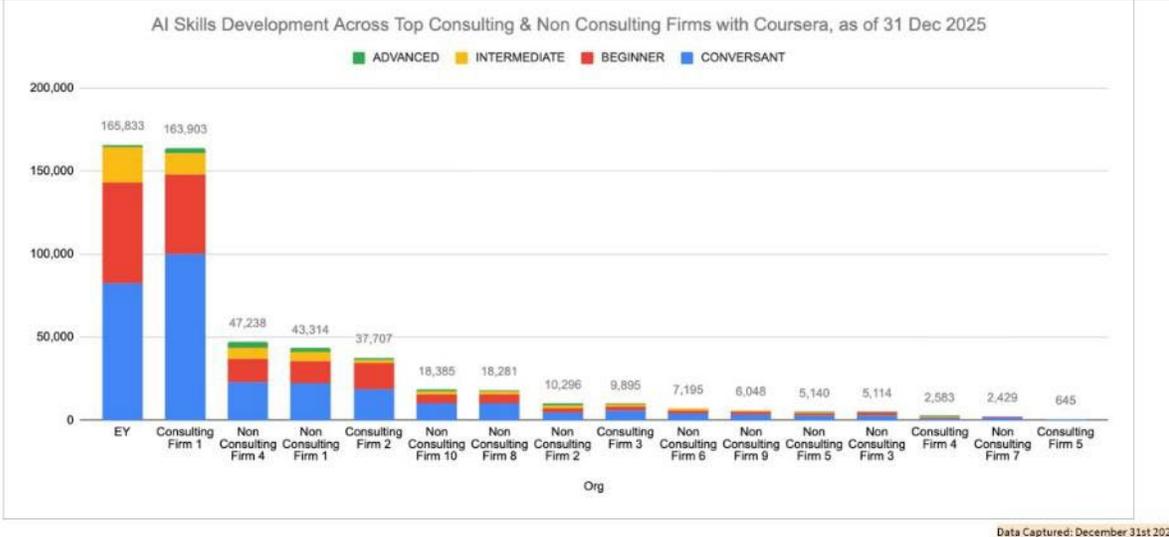
Innovation: Our people must continuously adapt and evolve their skills to keep pace with the rapid technology-driven changes shaping the future of work



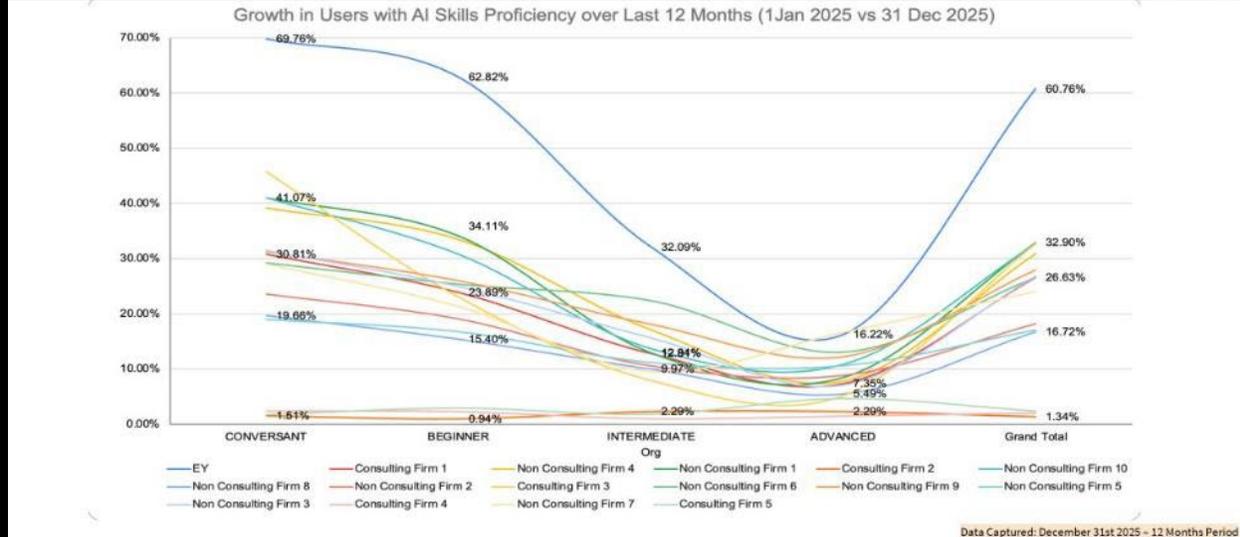
Client centricity: Growth of relationships at accounts enabled through continuous talent

Example: Having delivered 5m hours of AI Learning, Industry Benchmarks show EY leads in AI/ML skills

AI Skills Development Benchmark Broader comparison with enterprise clients



Growth in Users with AI Skills Proficiency Broader comparison with enterprise clients



Significant **acceleration** in AI skills growth between Aug and Dec 2025.



Extended our lead as **largest AI-skilled population**, especially at Intermediate and Advanced proficiency.



We are the **only organization** to have positive growth across all proficiencies while others plateau or decline.



Advanced proficiency population expanded most notably, strengthening our position.

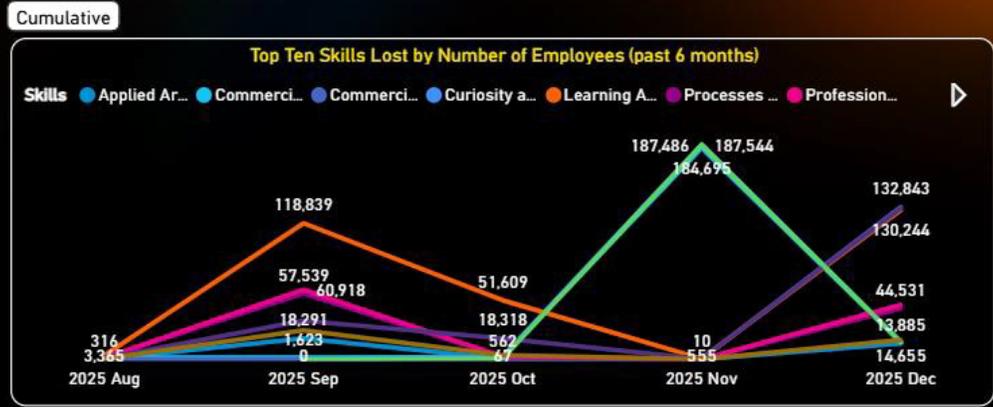
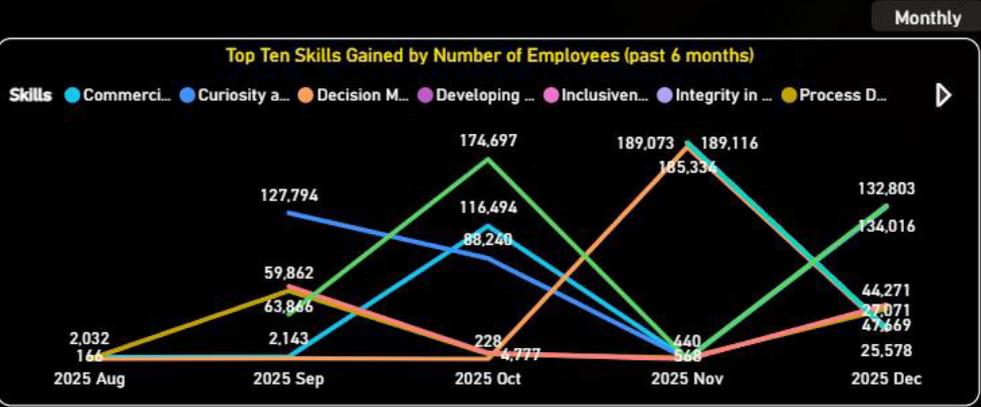
- My Career Hub
- Introduction
- Skills Dashboard
- Skills Overview**
- Skills Deepdive
- Skills by #Employees
- Skills Gap Dashboard
- Skills Detail
- Usage Dashboard
- Skills Summary

Skills Dashboard Overview

Greater China is excluded (Geo Region)

Year Month: 2025 Dec | Refreshed Date: 30-Jan-2026

# Headcount eligible for My Career Hub 384,466	# Hires (past 6 months) 50,456	# Hires who added Skills (past 6 months) 36,435	# Skills Gained (past 6 months) 31,916	# Skills Lost (past 6 months) 50,423	# Roll Over Skills (previous month) 135,189	Skills growth MoM % Dec -33% Nov 7,759 11,647
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3. Does AI change the game?

AI Won't Cause a Jobs Apocalypse, but It Will Unleash Job Chaos

3 November 2025

Summary

Shareable Summary

AI will lead to more job gains than losses, starting in 2028-2029. Thirty-two million jobs will be transformed each year, requiring upskilling or refactoring. AI leaders can use this forecast analysis to reflect on AI job impacts across broad industry types and anticipate and support these changes in their organizations.

Published: 7 January 2025

The Future of Jobs Report 2025

Download PDF

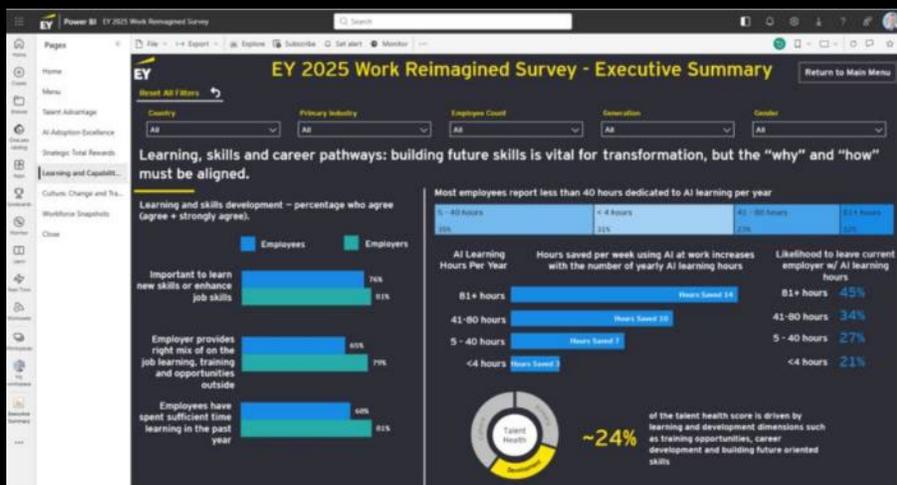
Technological change, geoeconomic fragmentation, economic uncertainty, demographic shifts and the green transition – individually and in combination are among the major drivers expected to shape and transform the global labour market by 2030. The *Future of Jobs Report 2025* brings together the perspective of over 1,000 leading global employers—collectively representing more than 14 million workers across 22 industry clusters and 55 economies from around the world—to examine how these macro trends impact jobs and skills, and the workforce transformation strategies employers plan to embark on in response, across the 2025 to 2030 timeframe.



On average, workers can expect that two-fifths (39%) of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the 2025-2030 period.

Given these evolving skill demands, the scale of workforce upskilling and reskilling expected to be needed remains significant: if the world's workforce was made up of 100 people, 59 would need training by 2030. Of these, employers foresee that 29 could be upskilled in their current roles and 19 could be upskilled and redeployed elsewhere within their organization.

81+ hours learning unlocks 14 hours / week productivity



A Human + Agentic Workforce is coming - The Signals Are Unmistakable



New skills needed to succeed...

Global trends show that human + agent teams *will* define the next era of work:

- 40k+ EY agents already in use;
- 88% of people use AI in daily work
- Agent adoption accelerating across industry (Microsoft, Goldman Sachs, ARM, Salesforce)
- Compute, datasets and capabilities doubling at exponential rates
- IDC forecasts 1.3bn agents by 2028
- Gartner: 40% of enterprise apps will have agents by 2026

The shift is already underway – not hypothetical, not distant

What this means - these signals point to a fundamental transformation:

- Productivity will scale far beyond human capacity alone
- Roles will change faster than ever before
- Leadership roles, workflows, and team structures will evolve rapidly
- Firms that build human + agent operating models early will lock in disproportionate advantage

*“We are entering a new era where the partnership between **humans and machines** is fundamentally transforming how we work, create value and organize.”*

*Megatrends,
January 2026,
EY.com*

Does upskilling and reskilling provide the answer?

4. Discussion

EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

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