



Don't Get Left Behind By Skills Gaps

Discover how organizations can embrace a skills-based approach to talent – in order to futureproof their workforce strategies, and stay ahead of growing skills gaps.

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Introduction

Across sectors, businesses are navigating a perfect storm of disruption. From rapid technological advancement and AI adoption to evolving customer expectations, competitive pressure, and regulatory complexity, there is a lot for businesses to adapt to.

Organizations are also in the midst of high-stakes transitions. Whether it's navigating the complexities of a merger or acquisition, rolling out a digital transformation strategy, expanding into new markets, launching innovative products, or "internal transformation" to address challenges like employee retention and engagement – **success increasingly depends on understanding and activating the skills within your workforce.**

The pressing issue? The skills needed for these transformations are often hard to find, harder to keep, and evolving faster than most companies can keep up with. Traditional hiring practices and rigid job frameworks no longer work in an environment where roles are being redefined overnight, and AI is reshaping how work gets done.

“ The skills gap continues to be the most significant barrier to business transformation today, with nearly 40% of skills required on the job set to change.

World Economic Forum



AI is quickly becoming a foundational part of a new workforce strategy. But to harness its potential, organizations need the right people in the right roles, with the right skills – and that's where many are falling short.

The reality is that skills gaps are widening, and also ever-changing. To close this gap, businesses must shift to a skills-based approach: one that focuses not on job titles or traditional org charts, but on the actual capabilities needed to move the business forward – and not just the capabilities they need today, but what is needed in the future.

This means breaking down roles into tasks, surfacing hidden skills within the organization, integrating workforce data across systems, and using AI to identify gaps and recommend targeted actions – whether that's hiring, upskilling, or redeploying talent, or embracing [automation](#).

HR has a unique opportunity to properly shape the future of work.

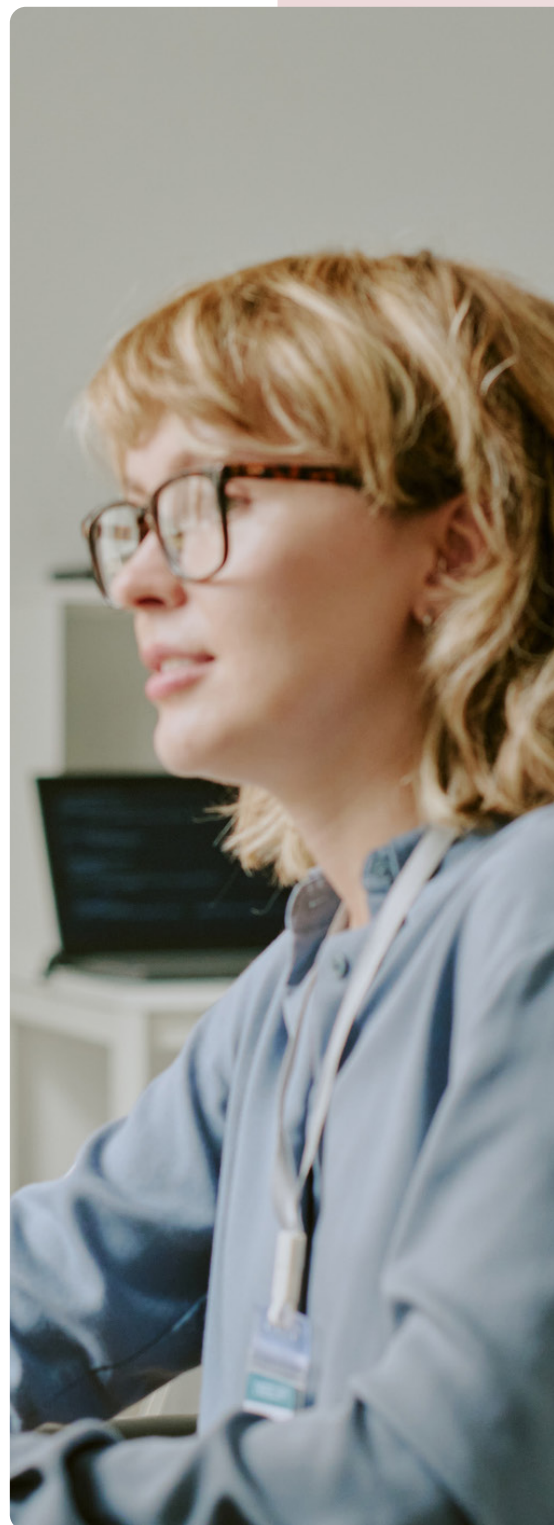
Whether you're integrating teams post-acquisition, rolling out new technology, entering a new market, or trying to retain your top performers, your ability to understand, activate, and evolve your skills base will determine how successfully you navigate change, how warmly you embrace new technologies – and how prepared you are for what's next.



Two out of three HR employees say that if they don't take action to improve HR's approach to technology, their function's effectiveness will decrease.

Gartner

Drawing on insights from leading organizations and real-world examples, we explore how AI and skills intelligence provides the solution: offering the visibility and agility leaders need to make smarter talent decisions – at scale and at speed.



Embracing a skills-based approach

Skills-based organizations are **107%** more likely to place talent effectively, **52%** more likely to innovate, and **57%** more likely to anticipate change and respond effectively and efficiently.

Deloitte

Traditionally, the underlying “data” for hiring and career progression has been experience, education, and former job titles. However, this model frequently overlooks qualified candidates – narrowing the talent pool – and can result in (costly) mishires.

Only 40% of U.S. workers actually have a 4-year degree, for example.

Could strict qualification requirements and inflexible job structures be holding your organization back?

Progressive companies such as IBM and Accenture have begun removing degree prerequisites for many roles, widening their talent pools and ensuring that candidates are evaluated based on meaningful, measurable criteria: skills (and potential skills). Beyond simply filling roles, this approach enhances productivity, efficiency, and equity in both hiring and career development.

But you need more than just a mindset change to make the skills-based approach work.

The skills needed for tasks at work, in every industry, are changing. Sometimes they don’t even need human beings to carry them out. This new era isn’t only about “updating your job descriptions” to reflect new needs – this is about fundamentally transforming how your job architecture, and work, is structured and designed, in order to ensure total agility.

You need dynamic insights – what we call skills intelligence – to make the right decisions. And the only way to unlock those insights is with high quality data, and powerful AI.



How the skills-based approach works

Closing skills gaps requires greater visibility: of what you have, and what you need – today and tomorrow. You need the right insights and technology to efficiently “build, buy, borrow or bot” your way to closing them.

RETHINKING WORK AND WORKERS



While 85% of HR executives claim to be working on skills frameworks, only **10%** say they are effectively executing them.

Deloitte

To close skills gaps effectively, you need data: to pinpoint where there are shortages, growing gaps, or emerging opportunities.



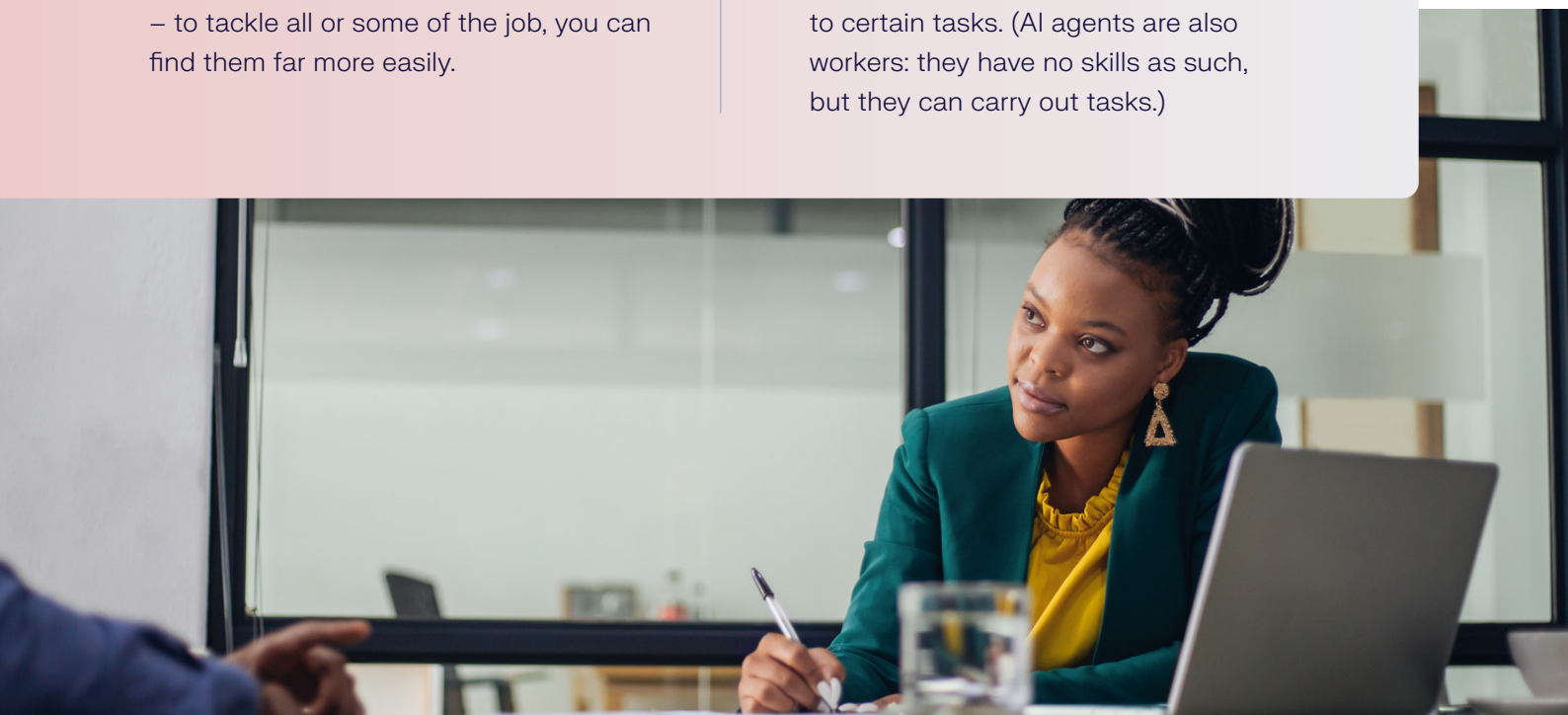
Work

Identify the core skills and competencies required for each function, and the tasks required in each role. This means the roles are defined more accurately, and when you look for people – or AI agents – to tackle all or some of the job, you can find them far more easily.



Workers

Think about your talent pool – sourced candidates, previous applicants, “talent community” members, existing employees, alumni and so on – as a collection of skills, that can be applied to certain tasks. (AI agents are also workers: they have no skills as such, but they can carry out tasks.)



How? With AI. AI can infer the skills and proficiency level needed for a role, and the tasks required, from the unstructured data within job descriptions, as well as data about the company and industry. It can also work out the skills someone has, based on their resumes and employee profiles, and infer additional skills they may never have listed on their resume. With that, you can build out skills-based profiles, and job descriptions, at scale.

This gives you a consistent, accurate and normalized database you can query for every new requisition – and from which to build data-driven workforce plans.



“ Every employee and potential prospect that ever came to BBVA ... within every country, will be in that database with the skills. So anywhere, a new recruiter in the world can find any person in the world to work with them.

Fernando Bellon

Head of Talent Acquisition, BBVA



Building actionable skills intelligence

All of this relies on – and feeds back into – a consistent, relevant skills framework for your organization: one that classifies and organizes workforce capabilities in a structured, standardized way, so it can work across all your HR systems (from TA to learning), and make fair, consistent talent-related decisions.

This is the sort of project that has historically been hugely time consuming – taking teams of consultants months or years to complete, costing a lot of money, and going out of date (and unusable) quickly.

Today, with the help of AI, companies can [build out dynamic job architectures in a matter of days](#). What's more, these don't have to be out-of-the-box skills taxonomies that don't quite describe your business – they can be completely customized to your organization and the work taking place there.

Quality Metrology Engineer 2

Approved

Skills 23

View proficiency scale

+ Add skill

Skill name ↴	Proficiency ⓘ	Required? ⓘ	
3D CAD	★★★★★ Experienced	✓	⋮
CAD Software	★★★★★ Expert	✓	⋮
Calibration Management	★★★★★ Experienced	✓	⋮
Data Analysis	★★★★★ Advanced	✓	⋮
Equipment Management	★★★★★ Advanced	✓	⋮



Combined with external insights about the labor market – the skills that are fading or growing in popularity, where demand and cost is changing – this framework helps align hiring, internal mobility and training efforts with business needs.

This gives you actionable skills intelligence: AI-powered insights that analyze workforce skills supply and demand in real time, help you spot gaps, and predict where gaps can be most readily addressed with your own workforce (through reskilling or redeployment).

It's all there: the work to be done, today and tomorrow, and the talent available to you, from candidate pools to existing employees. Described in a common language, enriched with external and inferred data, and kept up to date. Richer insights built for fast and precise actions, on an ongoing basis.



“ Skills intelligence is an evolution of core HR data. We see skills as the next layer of maturity in our talent acquisition function, driving the evolution of how we identify and attract talent.

Art Lokerson

HR Product Management Director – Talent Acquisition, Wells Fargo



Closing the gaps

With the right skills intelligence in place, organizations are well placed to operationalize the skills-based approach to talent acquisition, talent management, and workforce planning.

In other words, they are set up to quickly and continuously close critical skills gaps – at scale.

In a skills-based organization, we match people to opportunities based on skills, rather than job titles. When AI gets involved, this can work seamlessly in two directions:

1. Candidates see personalized job recommendations, whether on external careers sites or internal talent marketplaces, to encourage relevant people into the talent pool and along the journey to a relevant role.
2. HR teams and leaders have AI-powered recommendations at their fingertips to make better decisions about hiring – as well as outsourcing, upskilling, reskilling and redeployment.

For both of these, it's not just about finding a 100% “skills match” today. It's about uncovering the talent that could learn new skills to enhance their existing profile; tweaking role requirements to widen the talent search; and future-proofing your business by building talent pipelines for likely future needs.

Suggested roles

Software Engineer

★★★★★ 5.0

🔗 Mobile Engineering

📍 Paris, Ile-de-France, France

🕒 Full time

Posted 4 days ago

[View](#)

QA Automation Engineer

★★★★☆ 4.5

🔗 Product and Engineering

📍 Leipzig, Saxony, Germany

🕒 Full time

Posted 8 days ago

[View](#)

Embracing AI for workforce planning

AI is doing two things in this process: giving you the richest possible “data layer” regarding work and workers, and then analyzing the gaps, patterns and opportunities across this data layer.

Even better: AI can work at a macro level to provide insights about your whole company, or entire departments, so you can make (and execute) workforce plans that give you a competitive edge.

For example, if you are reducing your frontline customer service staff, what transferable skills are you about to lose? Who has nearly all the skills required for a new type of role in your company?

If you merge with another company, or move into a new market: will you find the skills you need there? What major upskilling programs will you need to support your next innovation, or the automation of certain processes within your company?



“ The difference now is that there is a tech enablement opportunity that we didn’t have before. We were all probably looking at spreadsheets and then they’d become obsolete... Now, having the ability to know what skills you have in your company... to then predict what skills you’re going to need in the future, and filling the gap, is really how your company is going to grow.

Jacqui Canney

Chief People Officer, ServiceNow



A connected ecosystem



“ The epiphany has been how easily interconnected everything can be. And I really think that that’s the answer to the skills ecosystem.

Ash Walvoord

Associate Vice President of Talent Management at Verizon

A skills-first strategy requires a strong commitment to continuous learning and development. This includes providing employees with access to online learning platforms, financial support for certifications, job rotations, and of course those AI-driven personalized learning paths that match individuals with relevant development opportunities.

This is one example of how the AI-powered skills-based approach creates a virtuous cycle: AI enriches your skills data to provide suggested training programs to employees, employees take the courses and can add new skills to their profile, the data is added to the profile, and the AI can make ever-better recommendations, to both individuals and leaders or HR teams.

This works most effectively when you have an integrated HR tech stack: and don’t worry, this isn’t as difficult to achieve as it may seem. Once you know that skills intelligence is the solution to better workforce plans and decision making, you will find that there are “middleware” solutions out there – like Beamery’s – that can help.

Beamery connects all your Talent Acquisition, Talent Management, Learning & Development and Workforce Planning platforms, keeping data flowing between them to ensure that you are working from a single source of truth – and are able to make informed decisions – wherever you are working.

And so, the flywheel effect: better decisions powering better data to power better decisions, across every HR tool in your organization.



A note on ethical AI: questions to be asking

In case it's not already abundantly clear, AI is the secret sauce in making the skills-based approach work. AI can quickly structure and normalize job and talent data; it can infer the skills someone is likely to have or a job is likely to need; it can also suggest where people have potential to add a new skill and have skill "adjacencies".

AI can pinpoint gaps, and suggest the best tactic for closing a skills gap. It can shortlist candidates at the touch of a button, and update the shortlist based on a change to the role requirements. It can even help teams decide where to open new locations.



“AI will help us understand how we identify skills that we need... the Beamery platform will really help us have a clear picture of what skills we have, and what skills we need to be successful both today and tomorrow.”

Martin Stubbs

Talent Acquisition Leader, Sellafield Ltd





Of course, AI needs to be approached with caution. It needs to be fed with the right data: but talent data must also be kept secure, maintaining privacy and compliance, and ensuring no protected characteristics are used in the recommendation process.

- Does your AI vendor have the right checks and balances in place to ensure this?
- Are the models audited for bias?
- Is only the necessary data being fed into the models?

As well as data privacy, you need data quality. Ensuring you have a single source of truth for the AI to work on is also key: another benefit of a connected ecosystem.

- Do your HR tech solutions speak to each other, with a shared taxonomy for skills?
- Are integrations seamless and safe?
- Can your AI vendor actually unlock nascent value from your tech stack, rather than adding another silo and more complexity?



Finally, transparency and explainability is paramount.

- Can users of AI-powered tools see why a recommendation was made?
- Is it clear which factors were taken into account, and to what extent?
- Are humans kept in the loop at key stages, to ensure AI is never “making” a decision?

AI in a skills-based environment is about empowering people: giving HR teams the insights to make more informed decisions, and then take on a more strategic role in a workplace that is undergoing unprecedented change.

If your tech partner cannot reassure you around compliance, transparency, secure integrations, and human oversight at the right places, no impressive functionality should convince you – or will convince your legal team – that the “efficiency gains” are worth it.

[Discover ethical AI that works for enterprise HR teams.](#)



The CHRO's Playbook For Closing Skills Gaps

STEP 1. DIAGNOSE YOUR SKILLS GAPS WITH REAL-TIME INSIGHTS

- ☐ Conduct continuous (not one-off) skills assessments across your workforce.
- ☐ Use AI-driven skills intelligence to map current capabilities against future needs.
- ☐ Identify adjacent skills: where employees can transition with minimal training.

Top Tip: [Invest in an AI-powered skills platform](#) that integrates with your HRIS, LMS, and talent marketplace.

STEP 2. CREATE A UNIFIED SKILLS DATA ECOSYSTEM

- ☐ Centralize skills data across HR, recruitment, and L&D systems.
- ☐ Standardize skills taxonomies to enable skills-based hiring and internal mobility.

Top Tip: Use a connected skills intelligence system that [integrates with Workday, SAP, and learning platforms](#).

STEP 3. RETHINK HIRING – FROM CREDENTIALS TO SKILLS-BASED TALENT ACQUISITION

- ☐ Redesign job descriptions to prioritize skills over degrees & job titles.
- ☐ Use AI-driven talent matching to widen the pool and identify non-traditional candidates.
- ☐ Expand recruitment pipelines through bootcamps, universities, and partnerships.

Top Tip: [Implement ethical AI](#), structured skills assessments and blind hiring practices to reduce bias.

STEP 4. BUILD A SCALABLE UPSKILLING & RESKILLING STRATEGY

- ☐ Offer modular, AI-personalized learning paths in key areas.
- ☐ Provide on-the-job learning opportunities through project-based reskilling.
- ☐ Enable cross-functional mobility so employees can shift roles within the company.

Top Tip: Create skills-based career pathways with clear internal mobility options. AI can help you do this at scale.



STEP 5. LEVERAGE EXTERNAL TALENT AND ALTERNATIVE WORK MODELS

- ☐ Tap into freelancers, contractors, and external talent networks to fill immediate gaps.
- ☐ Use skills-based workforce planning to align hiring locations with talent availability.

Top Tip: [Use an AI-powered talent CRM](#) that can accommodate both internal and external talent.

STEP 6. EMBED SKILLS INTELLIGENCE INTO WORKFORCE & SUCCESSION PLANNING

- ☐ Develop real-time, dynamic workforce planning rather than static annual plans.
- ☐ Predict skills shifts using labor market data and internal workforce analytics.
- ☐ Design future-proof leadership pipelines for the critical roles of tomorrow.

Top Tip: Use AI-driven succession planning tools to identify high-potential talent.

STEP 7. MONITOR TRENDS & STAY AHEAD OF INDUSTRY SHIFTS

- ☐ Partner with universities and industry bodies to influence curriculum development.
- ☐ Advocate for government incentives around AI and digital upskilling in your sector.
- ☐ Embed external talent market insights into HR decision-making.

Top Tip: Use real-time market intelligence to track demand for emerging skills.

[Download PDF checklist](#)





Benefits of the skills-based approach

Adopting a skills-based approach delivers significant benefits beyond closing skills gaps more effectively and efficiently. It enhances agility and adaptability, helping organizations to redeploy talent internally, respond to market changes faster, and innovate more effectively.

In addition to improving responsiveness, a skills-based strategy boosts productivity and performance. [Research has shown that](#) hiring for skills is five times more predictive of job success than hiring based on education, and twice as predictive as hiring based on work experience. By uncovering hidden talent and optimizing workforce capabilities, companies can improve efficiency and reduce hiring costs.

A skills-based approach also supports retention. Deloitte has noted that skills-based organizations are 98% more likely to retain high performers and to be recognized for strong career development programs.



Skills-based hires have a 9% lengthier tenure at their organizations compared with traditional hires.

BCG



Moreover, a skills-first model promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion – and thus power innovation and growth – by reducing biases associated with traditional credentials. [Eighty percent of executives believe](#) that hiring, pay, and promotions based on skills would lead to fairer outcomes and reduce workplace bias, according to Deloitte, and [LinkedIn research](#) has found that a skills-based approach widens the talent pool.

This approach expands access to opportunities for career switchers, non-traditional candidates (such as [STARs: workers who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes](#)) and underrepresented employees. This is supported further by the use of bias-audited, transparent AI tools in the process. As well as objectively matching people to work, AI can help benchmark role descriptions against internal high performers – often revealing that top employees don't match traditional hiring criteria.



“We’ve ... looked at some of those high performers’ backgrounds and their skills that they possess. And it turns out a lot of them aren’t typically what the hiring manager would have set out to hire for, but they possess those skills.”

Olga Power

Global Director of Talent Acquisition, Just Eat Takeaway



How Beamery Helps

At Beamery, we help organizations implement a skills-first strategy by providing AI-driven skills intelligence, tailored talent-related recommendations, and data-driven workforce planning solutions. Our platform enables organizations to gain real-time visibility into workforce skills, identify gaps, and build an agile, future-ready talent strategy.



Get started with your own dynamic job architecture and skills framework in just **1 day**



See up to **90%** skills relevance on first review



Reduce job framework complexity by **97%**



Reduce time to hire by more than **11 days**



Reduce the time to identify best-fit candidates by at least **30%**

For one client, resurfaced hires – that is, talent found in the Beamery database – with a strong “skills match” were 270% more likely to get an offer (versus all other sources). Another client reported a 25% increase in performance for Beamery-sourced hires vs non-Beamery hires.

The skills-based approach powered by Beamery gets you the right person in the right seat faster – and you’re rewarded with greater performance.

[See how it works with a bespoke skills consultation](#)



Case studies



Flex used Beamery to transform unstructured data, including job descriptions, into a customized skills framework. They can now match candidates to roles, with greater consistency, agility, and confidence.

[Learn more](#)

DraftKings achieved a 333% ROI through the use of Beamery's AI-driven Talent Match and Suggested Contacts – helping them to fill vacancies faster, with better talent, using fewer resources.

[Learn more](#)

At Hilti, the role of TA professionals has evolved thanks to Beamery, as they become more like “strategic advisors” to hiring managers: with clearer insights around the availability of skills, ideal candidate profiles, and readiness to fill roles. This has enhanced the quality of the talent pipeline, and of hires.

[Learn more](#)



In a changing world, companies must rethink how they attract, develop, and retain talent. A skills-first approach is not just a competitive advantage – it is essential for long-term success.

By embracing a skills-based approach powered by AI and richer data, your business can close skills gaps, improve agility, enhance workforce productivity, and foster a more equitable workplace.

Discover a new powerful solution for closing skills gaps. Book a skills consultation with Beamery now.

[Get in touch](#)

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