



Participating CAHRS Companies:

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A growing trend in talent development is the redefinition of work around skills rather than job roles. For example, many organizations are actively exploring methods to upskill and reskill talent to align with rapid technological advancements and the changing nature of the workplace. Employees are also reported to support this transition which places more value on their skills over traditional credentials and degrees. In this working group, CAHRS companies convened to share their perspectives on this emerging skills-focused trend. They offered insights into the current challenges they encounter in skill development endeavors and exchanged best practices for effectively navigating these challenges.

Key Takeaways:

Reactions to the Shift towards Skill-Based Work Practices

Participating companies shared mixed reactions to the emerging trend towards skill-based work practices. Some expressed skepticism, while others identified themselves as part of this movement.

- Those skeptical of the trend did not believe it introduced a substantial change in how we should think about talent development. They explained that focusing on skills was not a new concept in the world of work. Effective organizations have always prioritized hiring candidates with the appropriate skills for their jobs and have developed employees' skills through training programs.
- On the other hand, some companies reported their increasing focus on skills and competencies. However, many of them were still in the early stages of the transition (e.g., defining skills and competencies).

Challenges Associated with Reskilling and Upskilling Talent

Identifying skills

- For effective talent reskilling and upskilling, organizations must understand and identify the current and future skills required for each role in their workforce. Predicting future skills and devising a skill development plan, however, can be time-consuming and challenging. The mapping process may quickly become outdated by the time organizations complete it.
- There is a lack of guidance for leadership development, such as what top skills leaders should possess, what commonalities exist among successful leaders, and how much skills vary across leadership levels. There is also a need to develop leaders in both leadership competency and functional/ technical competency.

Developing skills

- Skill development is partly considered a product of experience, as employees enhance their skills by actively applying their knowledge in real-world scenarios. In more technical roles, organizations can help employees gain experience through simulation activities. However, for leadership roles, organizations still grapple with identifying the specific experiences leaders need to undergo to build skills not only on the technical side but also in leadership competency.

Verifying skills

- It is still unclear how to train hiring managers to interview for skills and ask appropriate questions to verify those skills, as well as how to enable employees to demonstrate that they possess the necessary skills. Certain skills, such as leadership skills, are often self-assessed, yet there is no proven method to help organizations verify these self-assessments.
- Current technological platforms are not sufficiently developed or customized to assist organizations in effectively defining, aligning, calibrating, and validating skills.

Maintaining skill development programs

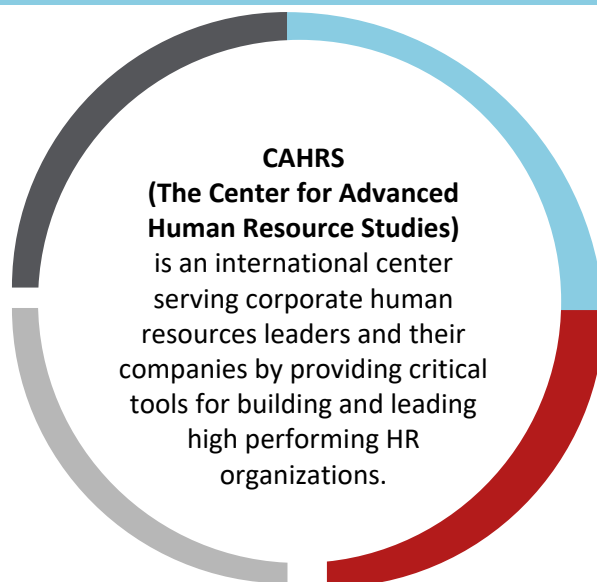
- Some companies have tried to establish an internal gig marketplace where employees get to develop skills by exploring job opportunities in different roles and units. However, these programs can be challenging to nurture and require significant management effort to sustain their continued success.

Retaining employees after reskilling and upskilling efforts

- Skill development programs typically demand significant time and resources from organizations. Therefore, organizations are concerned about motivating employees to apply the skills they acquire as well as ensuring employees' continued commitment to the organization.
- After participating in skills development programs, employees can develop unrealistic expectations, such as believing that completing the program will automatically lead to a promotion or other significant benefits from the organization. However, it is not feasible for organizations to promote employees solely based on completing a skills development program and most organizations do not reward skills gained with compensation. When employees are not promoted, they might consider leaving the organization. Another possibility is that employees may focus on checking off boxes rather than genuinely developing their skills.

Best Practices

- To develop a good understanding of the skills needed for any role, hiring managers would benefit from collaborating with team/functional leaders to clarify the skills and capabilities required for the role.
- HR should maintain frequent communication with team/functional leaders to assess the need for skills development and identify specific areas requiring attention. Then, HR and leaders can evaluate whether current employees possess the capability to learn and apply the necessary skills, or whether it is more beneficial to bring in new people.
- In tight or competitive talent markets, it is crucial for hiring managers to identify the most important skills for a position and focus on evaluating those skills, rather than expecting candidates to excel in all areas. Hiring managers can also consider candidates for multiple open positions that require similar or adjacent skills, rather than solely focusing on the position for which the candidates initially applied.
- To manage employees' unrealistic expectations after completing skills development programs, organizations may prefer not to label the programs as 'career progression' programs. Instead, using a more holistic name such as 'self-improvement' programs may be a better approach. Besides focusing on job-specific skills, some organizations reported providing learning opportunities related to personal management (e.g., personal finance) for employees.
- In addition to formal job shadowing, some organizations have offered swapping opportunities for employees to immerse themselves in a function or area they are not familiar with but would like to explore. Employees can work on projects there for a short period (e.g., four to six months). After this time, employees can decide whether to return to their initial function or request an official transfer.



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