hilighter

TEAM & DEPARTMENT LEADERS EDITION

From Jobs to Skills

The practical guide for building a skills-based learning organization

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90-day plan and 12-month roadmap

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Read online: https://www.hilighter.io/guides/from-jobs-to-skills

How to use this edition

Start with Chapters 1, 3, 5 and 8. Limit the pilot to one team and two useful outcomes.

Choose one real business challenge and one pilot team. Work through Chapters 1–8 in order for the first pilot, or jump to the chapters suggested by the optional 12-question check. Use a 60–90 minute workshop per chapter, assign an owner, and revisit your decisions every month. Complete the templates with real evidence - not aspirational statements.

Five operating principles

1. Begin with business outcomes and meaningful work, not a giant skills catalogue.
2. Define observable capabilities and validate evidence; do not confuse course attendance with skill.
3. Build psychological safety: employee development is not covert surveillance or an automated ranking.
4. Make learning happen in work, with support from managers, peers and accessible opportunities.
5. Start small, measure changes in work quality, and iterate before scaling.

Boundaries and safeguards

This is an educational method, not a legal, psychometric or compliance certification. Respect local employment and data-protection law, consult workers and their representatives where required, and keep legally mandated qualifications when safety or regulation requires them. AI suggestions are hypotheses for human review - not proof of competence.

Working definitions

Term	Definition
Job / role	A bundle of responsibilities; roles change as work changes.
Skill	An ability to perform a meaningful task in a defined context.
Proficiency	How independently and reliably a skill can be demonstrated.
Evidence	An observable work product, demonstration or other relevant proof.
Learning organization	An organization that routinely discovers, shares, applies and improves knowledge in its work.

Term	Definition
Skills-based	A decision approach that considers demonstrated capabilities alongside the requirements of work, rather than relying only on job labels or credentials.

Chapter 1: Connect skills to outcomes

Why this matters

A skills project without a business problem quickly becomes an expensive inventory. Begin with two measurable outcomes: faster service, safer delivery, less dependence on key people, higher quality, stronger mission impact or better adaptation to AI. Interview the people who actually deliver the work. Ask what regularly slows them down and what must change in the next 12 months.

How to run it

1. Write down the organization's top three outcomes for the next year, including at least one customer, service or mission outcome.
2. For each outcome, list the work that determines it; separate a task (what people do) from the skills (what makes the task reliable).
3. Choose a pilot group that owns one important workflow; prefer committed managers and accessible evidence over a fashionable department.
4. Assign one sponsor, one operational owner and at least one employee voice. Agree what will stop or be simplified to create time for learning.
5. Set a starting baseline, target, review date and explicit scope. Declare what the pilot will not do.

Workshop prompts

- If this succeeds in 90 days, which observable business result will improve?
- Which work depends on knowledge held by just one or two people?
- Who may be excluded unless they are invited to shape the pilot?

Adapt it to your organization

- Small business: focus on the single workflow that creates the most rework.
- Nonprofit: state the mission outcome and service-user protections.
- Business unit: obtain authority to run a pilot without waiting for an enterprise-wide framework.

Illustrative example

A 35-person maintenance company chooses first-time repair quality rather than "digital transformation". Its pilot covers six field technicians and one dispatcher. It measures repeat visits, demonstrates troubleshooting

tasks and trains backup coverage.

Common failure to avoid: Do not start by mapping every employee or by using AI forecasts as certainty. Keep the first pilot narrow enough for a manager to support.

What to measure: Baseline and change in workflow quality, service continuity, number of critical roles with an owner and weekly learning time protected.

Deliverable and exit test: A one-page charter stating outcome, pilot team, sponsor, two metrics, employee involvement and review date.

Worksheet 1.1: Business-outcome charter

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Business or mission problem	_____
Who is affected and how	_____
Baseline evidence (date and source)	_____
One 90-day target	_____
Critical tasks behind the outcome	_____
Sponsor and employee voice	_____
One thing we will stop doing	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Worksheet 1.2: Pilot-selection decision

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Candidate team or workflow	_____
Importance to organization (1–5)	_____
Manager commitment (1–5)	_____
Ability to observe results (1–5)	_____
Workload and inclusion risks	_____
Chosen pilot and reason	_____
Review or stop condition	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Chapter 3: Define a shared, usable skills language

Why this matters

A competency framework must be understandable to the people doing the work. Translate a small number of priority roles into essential tasks, then into skills with definitions and observable proficiency levels. Distinguish skills from tools, personal attributes, credentials and responsibilities. Use simple terms before adopting a sophisticated taxonomy.

How to run it

1. For each pilot role, choose five to ten tasks central to success, including tasks affected by automation, new tools or regulatory change.
2. Translate tasks into six to twelve essential skills per role; combine duplicate labels and explain each in plain language.
3. Define what "supported", "independent" and "advanced" look like in the actual context. Use the same wording for everyone in the role.
4. Check definitions with employees, managers and subject-matter experts; invite counterexamples.
5. Version the framework, give it an owner and schedule its review when work changes. Keep legal qualifications separate.

Workshop prompts

- Could a new employee tell from this definition what good work looks like?
- Does "communication" mean a specific observable action in this role?
- What should change when AI performs part of the task?

Adapt it to your organization

- Small business: keep role definitions to one page.
- Nonprofit: distinguish paid and volunteer tasks and required safeguarding.
- Business unit: reuse approved terminology where it is genuinely useful.

Illustrative example

A customer-support team replaces "excellent communicator" with "explains an issue in plain language, confirms understanding, and documents the agreed next step". Reviewers can now observe the same

behavior.

Common failure to avoid: Beware skill inflation: hundreds of generic labels, inconsistent level scales and "advanced" ratings based solely on seniority.

What to measure: Share of priority roles defined, role profiles reviewed by workers, ambiguous skills removed and time to update a changed role.

Deliverable and exit test: An approved pilot role-to-skills matrix with definitions, examples and a named maintainer.

Worksheet 3.1: Role-to-skills matrix

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Role and major responsibilities	_____
Critical task / outcome	_____
Essential skill (plain-language label)	_____
What competent delivery looks like	_____
Required proficiency (0–3)	_____
Regulated credential, if any	_____
Reviewer and next review	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Worksheet 3.2: Proficiency anchor card

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Skill and context	_____
Level 1: supported behavior	_____
Level 2: independent behavior	_____
Level 3: advanced behavior	_____
Accepted evidence examples	_____
Potential bias or accessibility concern	_____
Employee and manager sign-off	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Chapter 5: Turn everyday work into continuous learning

Why this matters

A course catalogue alone does not change a workplace. People learn when new knowledge is applied, rehearsed, supported and reviewed. Create small, repeatable routines inside existing meetings and project cycles. Offer multiple formats so shift workers, part-time staff, remote teams and volunteers can participate.

How to run it

1. Select one high-priority gap connected to a real work task and define a safe opportunity to practice it.
2. Pair learning resources with an application: shadowing, job rotation, coaching, guided practice, peer demonstration or an accessible short lesson.
3. Create a predictable rhythm: a ten-minute retrospective, a fortnightly peer exchange, or monthly demonstration.
4. Ask managers to make time, give specific feedback and remove barriers. Recognize people who teach others.
5. Collect evidence of application after two to six weeks; change the activity if work outcomes do not improve.

Workshop prompts

- Where can practice happen without risking customers or service users?
- Who has access to learning despite shifts, disability, distance or workload?
- What will managers stop doing to protect learning time?

Adapt it to your organization

- Small business: include practice in existing shift handovers.
- Nonprofit: offer asynchronous options to volunteers.
- Business unit: integrate with team rituals rather than adding meetings.

Illustrative example

A 12-person community charity pilots a 15-minute biweekly case review. Staff agree one improvement to volunteer onboarding and check whether handover errors decline.

Common failure to avoid: Do not use course completions, hours watched or certificates as the only signal that a capability improved.

What to measure: Practice opportunities taken, skill demonstrations, learning transfer, participant accessibility and workflow results.

Deliverable and exit test: A learning routine with an owner, an application task, an evidence rule and the next review.

Worksheet 5.1: Learning-in-the-flow experiment

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Critical skill gap	_____
Real work task for practice	_____
Learning method and accessibility adaptation	_____
Frequency and time protected	_____
Coach or peer supporter	_____
Evidence after 30 days	_____
Continue / change / stop decision	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Worksheet 5.2: Individual development agreement

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Skill to strengthen and why	_____
Current evidence / uncertainty	_____
Specific development goal	_____
Practice assignment and support	_____
Accessibility / time needs	_____
Evidence to review after 30–60 days	_____
Employee choice and manager support	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Chapter 8: Measure outcomes, improve and scale

Why this matters

If the scoreboard counts only courses and profile completions, the transformation may look successful while work stays unchanged. Separate activity measures from evidence of improved capability and actual organizational outcomes. Review results with staff, compare against the baseline and keep learning costs visible.

How to run it

1. Set a short balanced scorecard: one outcome measure, one capability measure, one participation/fairness measure and one workload measure.
2. Record baseline and data source before interventions; avoid inventing precise attribution to learning from a small pilot.
3. Run a 30-, 60- and 90-day review. Ask what changed, what did not, and what unintended harm appeared.
4. At day 90, decide explicitly: scale, revise, pause or stop. Specify which practices can be copied and which require local adaptation.
5. For the next year, assign ownership for skills framework updates, onboarding, manager training, data review and recurring checks of new technology and work.

Workshop prompts

- Can we show changed work outcomes, not only more recorded skills?
- Whose voice is missing from the results?
- Is maintaining the process proportionate to its value?

Adapt it to your organization

- Small business: keep at most four measures.
- Nonprofit: measure service-user outcomes as well as volunteer participation.
- Business unit: check consistency without claiming enterprise-wide representativeness.

Illustrative example

A 70-person operations team sees fewer repeat escalations after a skills pilot but also higher manager workload. It simplifies evidence reviews before expanding to the next team.

Common failure to avoid: Do not advertise statistical causality from a tiny, self-selected pilot or publish cross-company rankings from inadequate samples.

What to measure: Business outcome trend, evidence-based coverage, time to proficiency, participation equity, manager workload and monthly review completion.

Deliverable and exit test: A 90-day evidence summary, scale/no-scale decision and a 12-month ownership roadmap.

Worksheet 8.1: Balanced scorecard

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
Business or mission outcome + baseline	_____
Capability / evidence indicator	_____
Learning application indicator	_____
Fairness and access indicator	_____
Time / administrative burden	_____
Source and cadence	_____
Owner and decision threshold	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Worksheet 8.2: 90-day decision review

Copy and fill in this template during a working session. Name an owner, use verifiable facts and record the next review date.

Prompt / field	Your notes / decision
What improved with evidence	_____
What failed or was not used	_____
Unexpected employee concerns	_____
Cost and managerial workload	_____
Keep / change / stop decisions	_____
Next team and prerequisites	_____
Sponsor decision and next review	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Your first 90 days

Choose one real business challenge and one pilot team. Work through Chapters 1–8 in order for the first pilot, or jump to the chapters suggested by the optional 12-question check. Use a 60–90 minute workshop per chapter, assign an owner, and revisit your decisions every month. Complete the templates with real evidence - not aspirational statements.

Days 1–15: agree

Sponsor, worker input, business challenge, pilot scope, baseline and privacy assumptions.

Days 16–30: map

Critical tasks, five to ten tasks per role, required skills and observable levels.

Days 31–45: evidence

Invite employees; assess available evidence; resolve uncertainty without over-scoring.

Days 46–60: practise

Launch one practical learning routine and protect manager time for feedback.

Days 61–75: decide

Apply the information to one transparent staffing, learning or continuity decision.

Days 76–90: review

Compare with baseline, hear concerns, record overhead, decide whether to scale or revise.

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____

Suggested action	Owner	Review date	Evidence / result
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

12-month expansion roadmap

Months 1–3

Run pilot; fix evidence and governance rules; decide whether to continue.

Months 4–6

Extend to two related teams; train managers; test reuse of skill language; remove duplicate administration.

Months 7–9

Connect onboarding and one staffing or internal-project decision; review equitable opportunity access.

Months 10–12

Update framework for changing work and AI; publish internal lessons; decide next year's priority outcomes.

Proficiency example: common four-level language

- 0 - **Not yet demonstrated:** No usable evidence yet; not a judgement of potential.
- 1 - **Supported:** Can perform the task with guidance or an example.
- 2 - **Independent:** Can deliver the task reliably in a normal situation.
- 3 - **Advanced / enables others:** Handles exceptions and helps others improve their practice.

Your next move

Pick one pilot team, name the accountable sponsor and book the first 45-minute workshop. The outcome of the first month is not a complete taxonomy: it is agreement about the work that matters, which capabilities enable it, and how you will observe progress.

Going further

All 8 chapters, the three examples and every source are in the complete edition and online:

Read online: **https://www.hilighter.io/guides/from-jobs-to-skills**

PDF: **https://www.hilighter.io/downloads/from-jobs-to-skills.en.pdf**

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