



Sana™

How to get rightskilling right

Roundtable
White Paper

Introduction

Skills have increasingly shorter lifespans. According to the World Economic Forum, 50% of our current skills will not be applicable in 3-5 years. To future-proof our organizations, we need to do more than upskill and reskill, we need to rightskill:

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Rightskilling is about giving employees the skills they need to add business value rather than simply notching up more hours of learning.



To understand the different aspects of rightskilling, we brought together a group of HR and learning executives from leading technology, consumer goods, manufacturing, automotive, and industrial goods companies.

The discussion covered three areas:

01 Overcoming the vicious cycle of skills mapping

02 Navigating the uncertainty of the future

03 Bringing learning and talent management together



01 Overcoming the vicious cycle of skills mapping

To get rightskilling right, we need to bridge the gap between the skills we already have within our organizations and the skills we'll need for the future. One common way to build that picture is by skills mapping, a tool that the executives agreed should be used with caution:

“ Many L&D teams get caught in the skills mapping trap. They invest a lot of time and resources building a vast database, only for that data to become rigid or obsolete shortly after. That leads to another round of lengthy updates, and then another round, and so on.

To escape this cycle of information obsolescence, L&D needs to pull rather than push. Here, incentivizing employees to update their skills to a central system, like a talent marketplace, is key. Talent marketplace platforms match internal opportunities—like temporary assignments and open positions—to employee competencies, skills, and ambitions. Because employees can update their information in real-time, the organization is always in a position to benefit from the untapped skills of its people while supporting personal development.

02 Navigating the uncertainty of the future

Pinpointing the skills of the future is crucial to rightskilling, but it's not without its challenges. While L&D can foresee certain skills becoming increasingly important over time, others may be more difficult to anticipate.

“ What are skills that we need in the future that we haven't even envisaged? What are the unknown-unknowns. And how do we identify them?

The executives agreed that expecting L&D to predict all future skills is naïve. To remain adaptive, organizations need to establish a framework to respond quickly to emerging skills.



Bringing learning and talent management together

There's often a conflict between L&D and talent management that manifests through a lack of communication, collaboration, and common language. Even the terms Talent and Development are at odds with one another: Talent implies innate abilities, while development implies acquiring abilities.

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Imagine that we are a pizza-making shop, and we need tomatoes, which we can either buy or grow. Now substitute tomatoes with skills. Talent management knows whether we can buy them at our local supermarket or if we need to import them, what their quality is, and if we need to pay a premium. L&D, on the other hand, knows how long it takes to grow a tomato, how many they could grow in a season with the right conditions, and what investment that would be.

The solution is simple: L&D and talent management need to join forces. The more these two functions collaborate, the greater the chance of ensuring the most fit-for-purpose workshop. And, of course, getting rightskilling right.

This white paper is based on insights generated from a roundtable discussion moderated by Lori Niles-Hofmann (NilesNolen) with participation from Arne Dahlberg (Outokumpu), Christoffer Levak (Coca Cola European Partners), Joshua Clark (Cisco), Kristina Gauffin (H&M), Lina Thomassen (AhlSell), Mikael Landberg (Veoneer), Wendy Tai (Barry Callebaut), and Sofie Nabseth (Sana Labs).

