SKILLSFUTURE JOBS-SKILLS INSIGHTS

The Key to Productivity & Growth:
Building a Skills-First Workplace

Publication By

hrp INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS

In Partnership with

SKILLS*future* SG

FOREWORD

We are honoured to introduce our latest SkillsFuture Jobs-Skills Insights, a partnership between Institute for Human Resource Professionals (IHRP) and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) on "The Key to Productivity and Growth: Building a Skills-First Workplace". This report delves into the crucial role of HR professionals in championing a skills-first approach within the organisation. For too long, the conversation surrounding talent management has revolved around academic qualifications. But today, we challenge this status quo. Today, we advocate for a bold new approach – a skills-first approach.

Given the challenges that Singapore is facing today, such as an ageing population and a shrinking talent pool, the traditional methods of recruitment and talent management are no longer sustainable. A skills-first approach can potentially help to address this. This means placing skills at the forefront of everything we do – from recruitment to development to talent management. It means recognising that the true measure of an individual's potential for a job role must go further to include their ability to adapt, learn and grow. By embracing a skills-first mindset, organisations can cultivate a dynamic and adaptable workforce capable of navigating the complexities of the modern business landscape.

HR emerges as the pivotal player to drive this shift from the forefront. Through strategic collaboration with business leaders, HR can align workforce planning efforts with organisational objectives, ensuring that skills-first initiatives are done to drive productivity and growth. As advocates of change, HR professionals have the opportunity to shape the future of work.

We urge our readers to heed the call to action and resources embedded within these pages. Embrace a skills-first mindset within your organisations and empower your HR professionals to lead the change. Together, let us build a workplace where skills are valued above all else – a workplace that thrives on innovation, agility, and continuous learning.

Thank you for partnering with us on this journey, and we look forward to sharing more insights with you in reports to come.

ASLAM SARDAR

Chief Executive Officer
Institute for Human
Resource Professionals

DR GOG SOON JOO

Chief Skills Officer
SkillsFuture Singapore

QUOTES BY SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

"SkillsFuture Singapore supports IHRP in advocating for a skills-first approach to hiring and workforce development, recognising the importance of employers in empowering individuals to continually develop and demonstrate their skills. By prioritising skills over traditional qualifications, we can create a more inclusive and dynamic workforce, better equipped to adapt to the evolving demands of the economy. This approach not only benefits individuals by enabling them to leverage their full potential, but also strengthens our businesses by fostering a culture of lifelong learning and skill mastery.

XU WENSHAN

Director, Enterprise Engagement Division, SkillsFuture Singapore

SOON ENG-SING

Vice President, Talent, Development & DEI, Singtel

"In embracing a skills-first approach, recruiters and hiring managers must cultivate open-mindedness, recognising that exceptional talent often transcends traditional qualifications. Concurrently, employers must commit to accelerating the upskilling and reskilling of their workforce, ensuring relevance and adaptability in an ever-evolving landscape. This dual commitment not only enhances organisational competitiveness but also fosters a culture of continuous learning and sustainable growth, propelling both individuals and businesses towards success. This IHRP report adeptly highlights all pertinent aspects of skills-first, emphasising the imperative for holistic talent strategies, providing straightforward use cases, and offering a range of additional references for HR professionals to adopt skills-first practices. It's an invaluable resource for navigating the modern talent landscape.

"Building a Skills-First Workplace" Jobs-Skills Insights report is a great step to learn more about a skills-first economy and move towards a skills-first model. It shares tangible benefits of doing so, such as having a larger talent pool and an improved quality of performance. This is complemented by actionable ideas and resources to support organisations on their Skills-First journey in areas such as Skills-Based Hiring.

LEE KIAN CHONG

Director BNF Group

QUOTES BY SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

"

The Jobs-Skills Insights Report is a timely nudge to the HR Community to start thinking of skills as the currency of the future. It not only sets out a compelling case for a skill-first approach but more importantly, incorporates many practical suggestions on how an organisation can embark on such a journey. To inspire, there are examples of firms who have successfully pivoted to this approach, and to encourage, there are links to many resources. A must-read!

"

YAP AYE WEE (IHRP-MP)

Group Head of Learning & Transformation, OCBC

DAMIAN LIM

Deputy Director, Industry Training and Transformation, National Trades Union Congress

"

Focusing on a person's demonstrated abilities rather than traditional credentials allows businesses to access a broader talent pool and aligns closely with the real needs of the workplace. This report provides a compelling case for businesses to seriously consider the value of having employees with the right skills and what they could potentially bring to their businesses.

"

"

The report is timely in highlighting the importance of skills-first to help businesses and their workforce succeed in today's rapidly evolving landscape. The "Why" stands out clearly – Employers stand to widen their access to talent and develop a resilient and productive workforce especially critical with tight labour market, while employees receive opportunities to build and showcase their versatile skillsets. Aligned with MOM's HR Industry Transformation Plan (HR ITP), the report also underlines the importance of empowering HR to lead this mindset and behavioural shifts to revolutionise the way we hire and develop our workforce.

"

TAN YI HUI

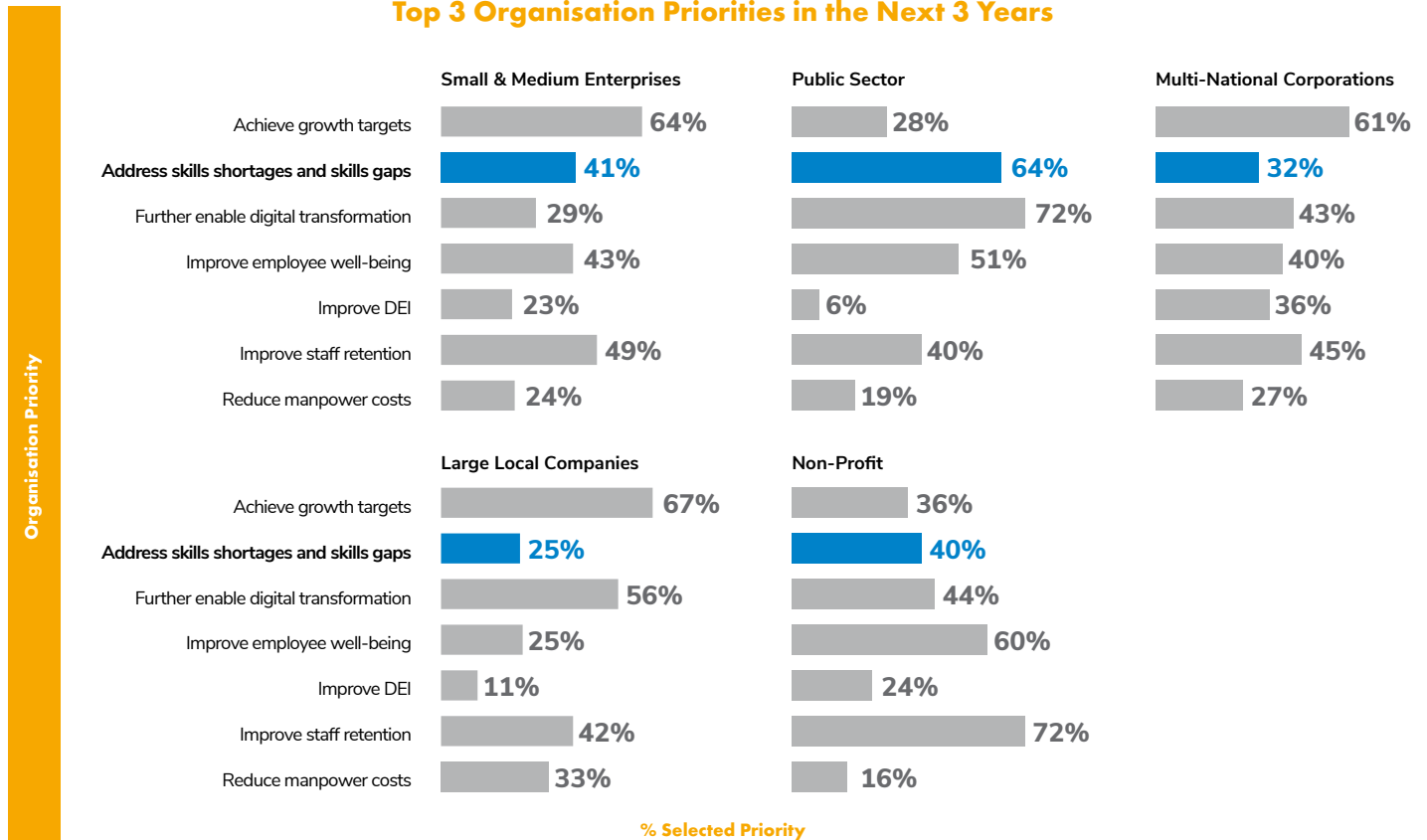Director, HR Sector Development, Ministry of Manpower

CULTIVATING A SKILLS-FIRST CULTURE

The rise of technology has reshaped how the world operates, driving rapid evolution and compelling industries to swiftly adapt for a competitive edge. As industries continue to evolve due to technology and business model innovation, how we perform our work will change. According to a LinkedIn Workplace Learning report, the skill requirements for jobs have changed by 25% since 2015, a figure projected to double by 2027.[1] This finding is in line with CIPD's Learning at Work report which highlights an increased focus on addressing skills gaps in the workforce, with 21% identifying this as a top three priority in 2023 compared with 15% in 2021[2].

Let us look at employers in Singapore more closely. An IHRP survey of more than 300 HR professionals on skills-based approaches in Singapore revealed that only the public sectors indicated "addressing skills shortages and skills gaps" as their top three organisation priorities for the next three years. In contrast, Multi-National Corporations (MNCs), Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Large Local Companies (LLCs) and non-profit organisations did not prioritise skills upgrading to the same extent. Over half of private organisations (MNCs, SMEs and LLCs) prioritised achieving growth targets as their top business goal. Other priorities include improving staff retention and enabling digital transformation.

Top 3 Organisation Priorities in the Next 3 Years

Organisation Priority

Small & Medium Enterprises

Priority	%
Achieve growth targets	64%
Address skills shortages and skills gaps	**41%**
Further enable digital transformation	29%
Improve employee well-being	43%
Improve DEI	23%
Improve staff retention	49%
Reduce manpower costs	24%

Public Sector

Priority	%
Achieve growth targets	28%
Address skills shortages and skills gaps	**64%**
Further enable digital transformation	72%
Improve employee well-being	51%
Improve DEI	6%
Improve staff retention	40%
Reduce manpower costs	19%

Multi-National Corporations

Priority	%
Achieve growth targets	61%
Address skills shortages and skills gaps	**32%**
Further enable digital transformation	43%
Improve employee well-being	40%
Improve DEI	36%
Improve staff retention	45%
Reduce manpower costs	27%

Large Local Companies

Priority	%
Achieve growth targets	67%
Address skills shortages and skills gaps	**25%**
Further enable digital transformation	56%
Improve employee well-being	25%
Improve DEI	11%
Improve staff retention	42%
Reduce manpower costs	33%

Non-Profit

Priority	%
Achieve growth targets	36%
Address skills shortages and skills gaps	**40%**
Further enable digital transformation	44%
Improve employee well-being	60%
Improve DEI	24%
Improve staff retention	72%
Reduce manpower costs	16%

% Selected Priority

Source: Skills-Based Landscape Approaches Survey, IHRP, 2024

Question: What are your organisation priorities for the next 3 years? (multi-select question).

Base (N): All respondents (N=317)

However, addressing skills shortages and gaps is inherently linked to achieving these key business priorities; these goals are not mutually exclusive. Adopting strong skills-first practices improves productivity, promotes talent retention, and encourages innovation, resulting in a more adaptable and competitive workforce[3].

[1] LinkedIn, Workplace Learning Report, 2023
[2] CIPD, Learning at Work Report, 2023
[3] Deloitte Insights, The Skills-Based Organisation, A New Operating Model for Work & Workforce, 2022

As stewards of organisational development and advocates of change, HR assumes a pivotal role in serving as the bridge between employees and managers and driving the company's adoption of skills-first approaches. This includes setting out how skills are to be identified, prioritised, assessed and recognised which in turn shapes the recruitment process, onboarding procedures and ongoing development of employees for higher roles. This collaborative effort entails close alignment with business unit leaders to tailor recruitment and workforce strategies to specific business objectives using skills as the common language. We call this a "skills-first" thinking.

In this report, we look at how HR can lead their organisations in strengthening their skills-based hiring and development practices to encourage a "skills-first" mindset and to build an agile workforce for driving business growth and outcomes.

What is the difference between skills and competencies?

The two terms are often used inter-changeably. SSG refers to skills as specific learned abilities required to perform a given job, while competencies refer to knowledge and behaviours that help one succeed in a job. Regardless of one's choice of words, the key point is for employers to focus on acquired and demonstrated abilities, both for hiring and for staff development.
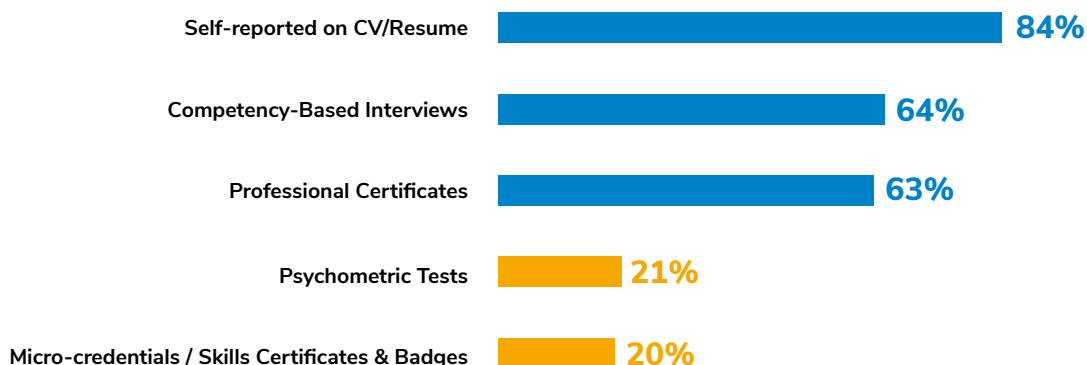
LOOKING BEYOND THE RESUME FOR NEW HIRES

A skilled workforce is essential for driving growth, as employees equipped with the right skills can drive innovation, adapt to market changes, and capitalise on opportunities, thereby fuelling business expansion. Hiring employees with the right skills is therefore of paramount importance.

In this rapidly evolving landscape, the traditional emphasis on formal academic qualifications in hiring may not be enough to accurately capture an individual's ability for a job role. A skills-first model therefore requires a shift in focus from conventional criteria such as academic qualifications to a more holistic evaluation of specific skills relevant to the job role.

IHRP's survey revealed that employers are still predominantly prioritising educational qualifications as primary considerations in determining the suitability of candidates, over professional certifications, and competency-based interviews. There is a low recognition for micro-credentials and skills badges and another forms of aptitude tests.

Hiring Tools Used to Evaluate Skills

Tool	Percentage
Self-reported on CV/Resume	84%
Competency-Based Interviews	64%
Professional Certificates	63%
Psychometric Tests	21%
Micro-credentials / Skills Certificates & Badges	20%

Source: Skills-Based Landscape Approaches Survey, IHRP, 2024
Question: Please indicate the type of tools used to evaluate candidates' skills (multi-select question).
Base (N): Those who indicated yes to consider skills in candidate screening/selection process (N=306)

Many employers may overlook the fact that traditional methods such as self-reported CVs/resumes, competency-based interviews and professional certificates only provide indicators of past experiences and qualifications rather than predictive insights into future job performance and suitability. These methods alone no longer suffice to gauge a candidate's ability to excel in a given job role.

A skills-based hiring approach will require both HR and hiring managers to look past the traditional resume reviews and adopt a more comprehensive approach in evaluating a candidate's skills-sets. This entails identifying the key skills required for a particular role and assessing candidates' proficiency in those specific skills, ensuring a better match between the candidate and the job role. Some hiring assessments include psychometric tests, case study presentations, as well as micro-credentials and skills badges which validate the skills required for specific areas. There are also solution providers out there that can assist in helping to evaluate skills of candidates. These providers include AON, SHL and Saville Assessment.

Let us look at examples of job roles that skills-based hiring assessments can be incorporated into.

Job Role	Possible Skills-Based Hiring Assessments
Digital Marketing Executive Possible skills test: Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Google Ads, Campaign Management, Creativity	• Case studies – provide a business goal and have candidates present a proposed digital marketing strategy. • Portfolio review – have candidates showcase campaign reports or sample content plans they have created. • Psychometric test – assess candidates' innovation and creative abilities to come out with unique ideas.
Manufacturing Technician Possible skills test: Hand-eye Coordination, Machinery Operations, Safety Orientation	• Simulation exercise – create a simulated production line scenario where candidates must optimise workflow, identify bottlenecks and address production challenges. • Technical interview – assess candidates' technical skills in operating machinery and interpreting technical drawings. • Psychometric test – assess candidates' hand-eye coordination and attention to detail.
Retail Sales Associate Possible skills test: Interpersonal skills, Sales Techniques, Conflict Management	• Roleplay - have candidates interact with mock customers for interpersonal skills and how they would deal with difficult customers. • Simulation exercise – give a scenario and have candidates walk through making recommendations. • Psychometric test – assess candidates' multi-tasking abilities such as answering phone calls and responding to multiple enquiries at the same time.

*This list of skills assessment is not exhaustive. It is important that you select the required skills for the job role and assess them accordingly.

What are psychometric tests?

Designed to assess abilities, potential, personality, and intelligence, psychometric tests are a standardised method of assessing an individual's mental capability, personality traits and specific aptitudes. Typically administered under controlled conditions to provide insights into an individual's strengths, weaknesses, and overall suitability for a job role. Please refer to the annex for the list of psychometric tests available.

These skills-centric assessments allow HR and hiring managers to glean a deeper understanding into the candidate's problem-solving abilities and practical application of skills to real-world scenarios, and most importantly, offer a more accurate representation of the candidate's overall suitability for the job role. Investing in the development of this area can help to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of the hiring process, leading to better hiring decisions and long-term success for the organisation.

To drive the adoption of skills-first practices, HR will need to deepen their capabilities with the relevant skills, particularly in high growth skills[4] such as Organisation Strategy Development, Competency Framework Development and Talent Capability Assessment. Other skills that support skills identification and recruitment will also benefit HR greatly.

1   **Organisational Strategy Development** to influence business strategies to recognise the value of skills and integrate skills-based practices into the organisation's overall strategy.

2   **Job Analysis and Evaluation** to define job requirements and identify the skills needed for various roles. HR teams can refer to SSG's national skills frameworks and jobs-skills insights publications, for the recommended skills for their relevant employee segments.
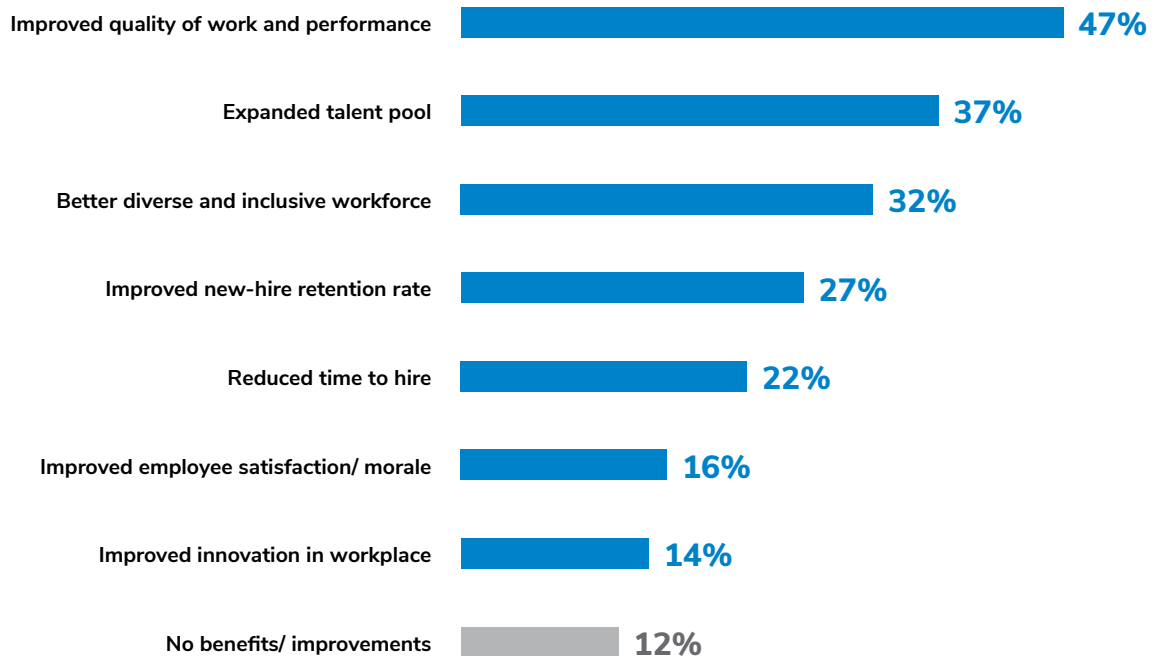
3   Once the skills in the job role are identified, HR teams are now ready to embark on **Competency Framework Development** to provide a clear outline of the competencies needed for various functions which guide the organisation's talent management processes, such as recruitment, learning and career development.

4   In recruitment, skills in **Selection Management** and **Talent Capability Assessment** will be important in skills-based hiring as HR develop selection strategies and talent assessment processes and identify channels and tools that prioritise recruiting and evaluating candidates based on their relevant skillsets.

[4] Based on Skills Demand for the Future Economy 2023/24, these skills are in high growth quadrants.

88% of organisations that adopted skills-based hiring reported tangible business benefits based on the survey by IHRP. These benefits include improved quality of work and performance, expanded talent pool and better diverse and inclusive workforce.

Benefits of Skills-Based Hiring

Benefit	Percentage
Improved quality of work and performance	47%
Expanded talent pool	37%
Better diverse and inclusive workforce	32%
Improved new-hire retention rate	27%
Reduced time to hire	22%
Improved employee satisfaction/ morale	16%
Improved innovation in workplace	14%
No benefits/ improvements	12%

Source: Skills-Based Landscape Approaches Survey, IHRP, 2024

Question: Since evaluating skills in hiring, I have seen benefits/improvements in my company. Please select the benefits/ improvements that applies (multi-select question).

Base (N): Those who indicated yes to consider skills in candidate screening/selection process (N=306)

INDUSTRY VOICES

BNL

LEE HSIN CHONG

Managing Director
BNL Group

BNL Group has undertaken a transformative journey to implement skills-based hiring (SBH) practices. By leveraging on the Skills Framework, we identified key skills necessary for job performance, including technical proficiencies, communication abilities, problem-solving aptitude, and adaptability to changing work environments. We hire for job roles that will require aptitude and a strong attitude for learning in the industry.

BNL partners Institutes of Higher Learning such as ITE and Republic Polytechnic to develop programmes and take part in work study diplomas that emphasises on training individuals with the skills required for the industry. The adoption of on-the-job-training (OJT) becomes our default to ensure that our workforce is equipped with the skills necessary to perform, instead of academic qualification.

Since the adoption of skills-based hiring practices, our company has witnessed **a notable 15% increase in productivity, attributed to the recruitment of individuals with the requisite skills and potential for growth**. We also noticed **stronger cohesion** within the company, as everyone is pushing each other to pursue their interests. Through SBH, everyone is hired based on their willingness to learn and adapt, which is a core value of BNL and we believe this will be the bedrock of our company as we evolve for the future.

SHARON TEO

CEO
Inspire-Tech

inspiretech

As a SME, Inspire-Tech faces limitations in our hiring approach to find the "perfect" candidate. Seeking candidates based on specific qualifications and experiences restricted our access to a diverse talent pool due to resource constraints and a smaller employer brand.

Fostering a culture that values open-mindedness, managers favoured applicants demonstrating enthusiasm for learning, flexibility, and resilience. By providing tailored on-the-job training and participation in a career conversion initiative, Inspire-Tech facilitated the candidate's smooth transition, leading to remarkable achievements in the new position. Additionally, hiring managers were taught to implement open-ended inquiries and real-time tasks to assess candidates' capabilities.

Embracing skills-based hiring has helped enhance Inspire-Tech's employer brand. We were able to attract talent from outside the tech industry, expanding our talent pool. Our new hires are also eager to learn with positive mindset, boosting satisfaction, team dynamics and retention rates. Notably, **our new hires turnover reduced by 75%** which helped to significantly reduce onboarding costs.

For HR Professionals

1

IHRP Skills Badges

IHRP Skills Badges are digital badges that allow you to keep, manage, collect, and share your competency in specific HR topics on online platforms like LinkedIn. They also allow potential employers to authenticate your skills instantly and securely. Enchance your skills and get badged in these emerging HR topics. Each speciality area is aligned with competencies in IHRP's Body of Competencies (BoC) and Skills Framework of HR.

Read more at:
www.ihrp.sg/skillsbadges

2

IHRP Body of Competencies

The IHRP Body of Competencies (BoC) outlines the competency standards required for HR professionals to be future-focused, ready to deliver impactful employee experiences and create sustainable value for the organisation. IHRP regularly monitors the trends in the HR landscape to identify opportunities to enhance and refine the IHRP BoC and certification programmes.

Read more at:
www.ihrp.sg/boc

3

Skills Framework for HR

The Skills Framework for HR identifies Sector Information, Occupations and Job Roles within the industry, and Existing and Emerging skills required for skills and facilitating mastery.

Read more at:
www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/hr

For Enterprises

1

Skills-Based Hiring Handbook for Tech Roles

The Handbook on Skills-Based Hiring (SBH) for Tech Roles provides practical solutions for organisations to attract, hire, and retain talent with the right skills for the job. The handbook is designed to support HR professionals, talent acquisition teams, hiring managers, and organisational leaders in their efforts to attract, assess, and hire junior to mid-level professionals based on their skills and competencies. Whether you represent a budding start-up, a mid-sized company, or a large enterprise, this handbook offers practical guidance and actionable steps to implement skills-based hiring practices.

Read more at:
www.ihrp.sg/playbook/#tech-roles

2

Skills Framework

Skills Framework provides key sector information, occupation/job roles, and the required existing and emerging skills. It is also developed with the objectives to build deep skills for a lean workforce, enhance business competitiveness and support employment and employability.

Read more at:
www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework

3

Jobs Transformation Maps (JTMs)

To support employers in their job transformation efforts, Workforce Singapore (WSG) has worked with government agencies and the industry to develop Jobs Transformation Maps (JTMs) to provide detailed insights on the impact of technology and automation on the industry and workforce. The JTMs identify the key technologies that are driving change, the impact on individual job roles, as well as the pathways for employers to transform jobs and for workers to acquire requisite skills as existing job roles evolve and new job roles emerge.

The JTMs serve as a useful compass for employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs), to prepare themselves for the future of work as technology becomes more pervasive in their sectors.

Read more at:
www.wsg.gov.sg/home/employers-industry-partners/jobs-transformation-maps

EMBRACING "PLUG, TRAIN AND PLAY" FOR EXISTING EMPLOYEES

A skills-first model further requires organisations to be committed to regularly upskilling and reskilling their workforce. This requires the implementation of procedures and policies to encourage employees to keep improving themselves and foster a culture of continuous learning that will propel the organisation towards longer-term success.

Employers therefore must move away from the traditionally preferred "plug and play" mindset towards a "plug, train and play" model by advocating workplace learning and being involved in building skills of their workforce.

According to IHRP's survey, there is a glaring gap in the organisational support for learning between large employers and those with smaller workforce sizes. Only 6 out of 10 SMEs plan for their workforce's skills development needs as part of learning and development (L&D), compared to nearly 9 out of 10 bigger organisations.

Planning for Skills as Part of L&D

Non-Profit	88%
Large Local Companies	88%
Multi-National Corporation	87%
Public Sector	85%
Small & Medium Enterprises	60%

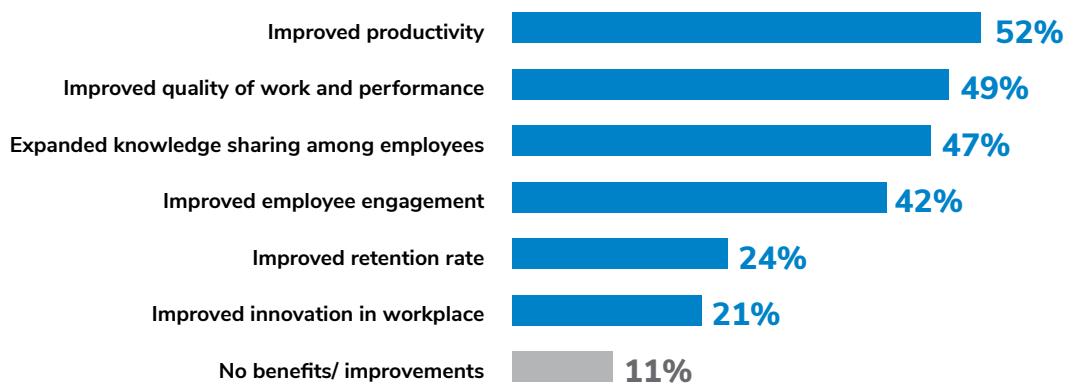*Source: Skills-Based Landscape Approaches Survey, IHRP, 2024*

Question: My company plans for skills development as part of L&D (single/forced-choice question).

Base (N): Those who indicated yes to plan for skills development as part of L&D (N=253)

Incorporating skills as part of learning and development in organisations can bring about numerous benefits. The top benefits indicated by organisations who incorporate skills into L&D programmes are improved productivity (52%), improved quality of work and performance (49%) and expanded knowledge sharing among employees (47%). The integration of workplace learning with a skills-first strategy here not only enhances individual capabilities but also fosters a more collaborative workplace culture, making it a win-win for both employees and managers.

Benefits of Incorporating Skills into L&D

Improved productivity	52%
Improved quality of work and performance	49%
Expanded knowledge sharing among employees	47%
Improved employee engagement	42%
Improved retention rate	24%
Improved innovation in workplace	21%
No benefits/ improvements	11%

Source: Skills-Based Landscape Approaches Survey, IHRP, 2024

Question: Since incorporating skills development in L&D, I have seen benefits/improvements in my company.
Please select the benefits/improvements that applies (multi-select question).

Base (N): Those who indicated yes to plan for skills development as part of L&D (N=253)

INDUSTRY VOICES

CHRISTINE CHAN (IHRP-SP)

Chief Human Resource Officer, Nudgyt Pte Ltd

In recognising the dynamic nature of our industry and the need for our workforce to stay agile and competitive, our HR department, made a strategic decision to invest significantly in skills development as a core component of our Learning and Development initiatives ensuring that our employees are well-equipped to navigate the evolving demands of their roles.

Since focusing on skills upgrading for our employees, we **witnessed a noteworthy 20% increase in productivity,** a testament to the direct impact of honing our employees' capabilities. Additionally, there has been a commendable **15% increase in overall work performance,** highlighting the tangible outcomes of our commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

With the certification boost from IHRP, it has helped the HR team to have a better understanding of contemporary HR practices. This has not only enriched the team's skillsets but has also opened avenues for collaboration and knowledge exchange. The network built through the certification has proven invaluable, presenting opportunities for cross-industry learning and collaboration, further enriching the value of the work we do at Nudgyt.

Nudgyt, an AI-driven company, is committed to upskilling and reskilling our employees to ensure that we meet the changing requirements of the landscape. AI is poised to become a collaborator and coworker for employees in the workforce today. And that means that work styles, philosophies and processes will have to change from the ground up. This entails a new mandate for HR teams today to guide the people function toward creating an AI-infused organisation for the future.

Learning-related skills such as Learning Framework Development, Strategy, Programme Management will enable HR to drive a learning culture that aligns skills development to business goals through the implementation of varied learning and development (L&D) initiatives and programmes to facilitate employees' skill growth.

When asked why skills were not incorporated as part of learning in the organisation, 75% of the organisations cited the lack of a structured L&D programme and framework in the company. This finding is consistent with our IHRP Human Capital Diagnostic Tool (HCDT) databank where the L&D process is scored as one of the lowest human capital processes among the eleven processes across all industries and company types, especially so in SMEs.

HR Process by HCDT	Overall N=1977	MNC N=335	LLC N=208	Non-Profit N=98	SME N=1336
	Average HCDT Score				
Talent Attraction	2.47	2.98	2.69	2.59	2.30
Operations & Technology	2.40	2.99	2.89	2.73	2.15
Employee Engagement & Comms	2.36	2.97	2.75	2.69	2.13
Internationalisation	2.31	2.84	2.43	2.00	2.01
Strategic Workforce Planning	2.31	2.84	2.68	2.63	2.09
Performance Management	2.28	2.86	2.67	2.57	2.06
Organisation Culture	2.23	2.80	2.57	2.47	2.02
Learning & Development	**2.13**	**2.63**	**2.54**	**2.49**	**1.92**
Compensation & Benefits	2.11	2.85	2.68	2.56	1.80
Employee Value Proposition	1.73	2.30	2.09	1.92	1.52
Talent Management & Succession Planning	1.73	2.34	2.20	1.85	1.49
Overall HCDT Score	**2.17**	**2.76**	**2.57**	**2.45**	**1.95**

Source: HCDT Databank, Dec 2023 – includes both Navigator and Professional as well as repeated assessments.

This suggests organisations may not have clear processes in place to identify, assess and address skill gaps effectively. Without a well-defined L&D framework, organisations may struggle to align learning initiatives with strategic objectives. Consequently, employees may miss out on opportunities for growth and development, hindering their ability to adapt to evolving job requirements in today's landscape. Left unaddressed, this will only widen the gap between these organisations and their competitors.

In order to maintain and enhance the talent pipeline, HR and business leaders must prioritise a skills-first approach to ensure that their workforce remains competitive, starting with implementing a robust L&D framework. Good practices include formal internal programmes, such as structured training (delivered in-house or by external providers), functional job rotations, job redesign, and career pathing for employees defined by the skills needed at each stage of the career progression.

Keeping up to date on industry changes is also a key component of the skills planning process. Jobs-skills related publications provide insights into future skills requirements, policy changes and upcoming industry forecasts which offer a valuable resource for HR and business leaders. By factoring in these insights, organisations can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving skills landscape and proactively prepare for future challenges and stay ahead of the curve. To further ensure that the team and individual capabilities are matched, acknowledged, and rewarded with organisational accomplishments, HR professionals should also make a commitment to integrate skills inside the organisational performance management matrix.

FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

1	IHRP Jobs-Skills Insights	A publication in collaboration with SkillsFuture Singapore that showcases the in-demand skills that HR professionals should strive to have such as data analytics and AI application.	Read more at: www.ihrp.sg/research-insights
2	Ministry of Manpower HR Industry Transformation Plan	The HR Industry Transformation Plan provides a five-year roadmap to strengthen the HR profession and practices in Singapore, which are critical for businesses to stay competitive and develop a future-ready workforce.	Read more at: www.mom.gov.sg/employment-practices/hr-industry-transformation-plan

FOR ENTERPRISES

1	Human Capital Diagnostic Tool (HCDT)	HCDT by IHRP offers easy insights into a organisation's human capital health with a simple yet comprehensive human capital assessment. Designed for organisations of all sizes, it considers your unique business priorities and outlines an actionable road map to workforce and business success. HCDT assess 11 human capital process in which one of them is learning and development.	Read more at: www.ihrp.sg/hcdt/about
2	Job Redesign Center of Excellence (JRCoE)	JRCoE serve as a one-stop centre to equip enterprises with the capability to embark on their business and workforce transformation journey through job redesign. It will develop industry-relevant JR expertise and resources across its network of HR Professionals to accelerate enterprise transformation. While embarking on skills development, organisations should take note on the changing roles of the job and redesign it accordingly.	Read more at: www.ihrp.sg/jrcoe
3	National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning	The National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE), led by Nanyang Polytechnic, was set up in 2018 with the aim of helping organisations (especially SMEs) retain and build competencies through workplace learning to support business growth and strategies. With domain expertise adapting Swiss and German methodologies, NACE supports organisations' adoption of best-in-class practices for workplace learning. Services from NACE include training programmes and consultancy services in workplace learning.	Read more at: www.nace.edu.sg
4	Skills Intelligence Platform Tools	Skills profiling services, such as JobKred's Lithium platform, are AI-powered analytical tools that can help employers (a) track their workforce skills against what their job roles require, (b) propose training solutions relevant to the identified skills gaps, and (c) chart out each worker's potential career pathways within the company based on his/her skills. Tapping on global labour market data and recognised skills taxonomies, these platforms can help employers track the key metrics about their talent in a more proactive, more cost-effective, and less labour-intensive manner.	Interested SMEs can register here.
5	SkillsFuture Skills Demand for the Future Economy	An annual publication that highlights the priority skills and jobs in selected high-growth areas to help citizens understand the value of skills to their jobs and their future career opportunities.	Read more at: www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skillsreport
6	SkillsFuture Jobs-Skills Insights	A publication that spotlights high-tempo jobs and skills changes within specific sectors or economies to keep citizens and enterprises updated on fast-moving jobs and skills.	Read more at: www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/jobs-skills/sfjsi
7	Career Conversion Programmes (CCPs)	Enterprises in Singapore can tap on CCPs to reskill workers to take on new/redesigned job roles with good long-term prospects and opportunities. Under the Job Redesign (JR) Reskilling modality, enterprises can send existing employees for reskilling to take on new or redesigned job roles aligned with Industry Transformation Maps/Jobs Transformation Maps.	Read more at: www.wsg.gov.sg/home/employers-industry-partners/workforce-development-job-redesign/career-conversion-programmes-employers

INDUSTRY VOICES

ST Logistics

TAN WONG TONG

Chief Human Resource Officer,
ST Logistics Group

In our journey to upskill and reskill our workforce to be future-ready, there is a need for a skills profiler system to identify and address skills gap efficiently through the built-in intervention tools like the AI enabled function which is able to recommend the best-fit training solutions from external training providers. We worked with JobKred on this personalisation approach to learning to ensure that the workforce remains agile and adaptable in this changing landscape and at the same time possess both technical and critical core skills referencing the Skills Framework.

Our foresight in investing in technology has given ST Logistics Group a competitive advantage in workforce development. Armed with the system's AI functionality, our employees can upskill and reskill with ease. They can also position themselves to perform at their optimal level within the workplace from the intervention actions. This has **translated into enhanced productivity, enabling our employees to exceed our client's expectations** and pursue new projects with confidence.

Additionally, ST Logistics Group is also able to facilitate seamless matching of staff for internal postings based on precise skills requirements through the system's AI enabled recommendation functionality. This ensures that each position is filled with the best-suited candidate possessing the required competencies for the job role. By investing in the continuous development of our workforce, we not only ensure business success but also nurture a pipeline of capable leaders equipped with the right skills and competencies to drive ST Logistics Group forward.

SOON ENG-SING

Vice President, Talent,
Development, DEI,
Singtel

Singtel

Singtel's Business Unit, Corporate Transformation & Shared Services (CTSS), embarked on a robust digital transformation journey aimed at enhancing operational efficiencies and bolstering financial performance. Employing a three-pronged strategy, we invested in cutting-edge technologies, elevated customer experience, and prioritised equipping employees with new skills and competencies to foster agility and resilience.

Through an intensive 8 months training programme focused on upskilling of digital literacy and competency, which included a blend of e-learning and classroom sessions complemented by live projects, employees honed their skills. Culminating in a showcase of team projects to internal judges, this training instilled confidence and competence among participating employees, and cultivated growth mindset among staff, encouraging them to embrace ongoing learning of emerging digital skillsets.

This reskilling initiative not only empowered CTSS to advance its transformation agenda but also nurtured internal talent development. Notably, several reskilled employees transitioned into next-generation roles, **excelling in areas such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Data Analytics, and Data Visualisation.** Their successful integration into these pivotal roles underscores the efficacy of the reskilling programme in driving skills transformation and relevancy.

A CALL TO ACTION

There is no greater time for HR professionals to step up and be the advocate for a skills-first workplace. Building a skills-first workplace requires a concerted effort and close collaboration between business leaders and HR professionals. Business leaders bring a strategic vision and deep understanding of organisational objectives, while HR professionals possess the expertise in talent management and development. By working together, these two critical stakeholders can align organisational goals with talent strategies, ensuring that skills development initiatives are tailored to meet the evolving needs of the business.

Skills being the new "currency" of the workforce will propel organisations who prioritise skills development as the core of the business. By working together hand in hand, business leaders and HR professionals can lay the foundation for a skills-first workplace to achieve sustained productivity and growth in the dynamic landscape today.

1

IHRP Certification

The IHRP certification is a national industry-recognised certification in Singapore. Developed through extensive consultations and benchmarked against international standards, the IHRP certification is an industry-endorsed mark of quality that acknowledges a mastery of future-ready competencies.

2

SkillsFuture HR Courses

Gain skills through HR-related courses that are eligible for SkillsFuture Credit. With the recent Budget 2024 announcement, Singaporeans above 40 years old will receive a $4,000 SkillsFuture Credit to be used for selected courses. There is also up to $3,000 monthly SkillsFuture Mid-Career Training Allowance for up to 24 months, for selected full-time courses.

3

Career Conversion Programme (CCP) for Human Capital Professionals

The CCP seeks to equip mid-career individuals and existing HR professionals with emerging and in-demand skills that are required of the HR profession. Trainees placed under the CCP will undergo skills conversion, covering at least two of the four Emerging Skills and Competencies (ESCs) aligned to the IHRP Body of Competencies: HR Data Analytics and Visualisation, Strategic Workforce Planning, Knowledge in HR Technology and Change Management. This will be facilitated through On-the-Job training and a work-based project.
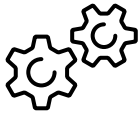
With SNEF

With NTUC LHub

ANNEX: LIST OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS FOR USE

Types of Tests	Function	Examples	Solution Providers
Technical Skills / Knowledge Tests Testing for: Role/Job specific	Useful for jobs that require specialised skills in order to perform well in the role, and when candidates need to be able to use this skills/ knowledge from day one on the job.	• Programming coding • Language proficiency • Copywriting • Web designing	HackerRank, LeetCode, Kenexa
Cognitive Ability Tests Testing for: Potential to perform, learn fast on the job	Cognitive ability tests are a proxy of the candidate's level of intelligence. These can be used for any job level to evaluate the candidates' general ability to learn things quickly on the job.	• Logical reasoning • Verbal reasoning • Quantitative reasoning	AON, SHL, Hogan, Pymetrics
Personality Tests Testing for: Behavioural preference	Designed to measure the candidate's behavioural tendencies and are sometimes used as a proxy to measure behavioural competencies, cultural fit, and Emotional Intelligence (EI).	The most common test is the Big Five model of personality (Openness to Change, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism /Emotional Stability). A caveat to using such tests is that there is no 'right' personality. Rather, specific traits are likely to help one perform better in certain jobs (e.g. high Extroversion for sales-related roles).	AON, Person, Hive Vue, Hogan, PSI, SHL, Saville Assessment
Situational Judgement Tests (SJT) Testing for: Role/Job specific	SJTs ask candidates what their likely response would be given specific work problems or critical situations. Candidates select the best response option, or rank/ rate the effectiveness of each option.	SJTs tend to be customised for a specific role or organisation to measure the candidate's fit for the role/organisation. Hence, some design work may be required before such tests can be used.	AON, PSI, SHL, Saville Assessment

This list of psychometric tests is not exhaustive. It is important that you do your research and request the vendor for technical manuals to verify if the tests are sufficiently robust, and able to suit your needs.

METHODOLOGY

From December 2023 to January 2024, the Skills-Based Landscape Approaches survey by IHRP gathered 317 responses. The survey was designed to gather comprehensive data regarding skills-based approaches in the areas of Talent Acquisition, Learning & Development and Performance Management. 100% of the respondents are HR employees in based in Singapore.
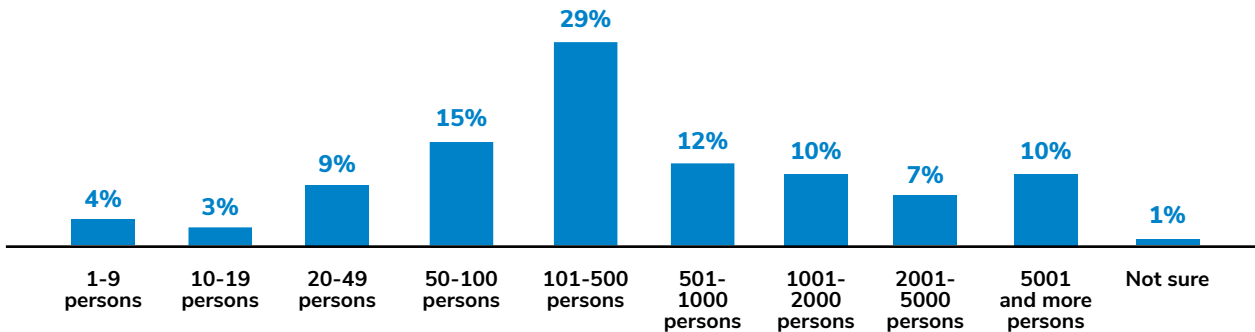
Company Type Breakdown
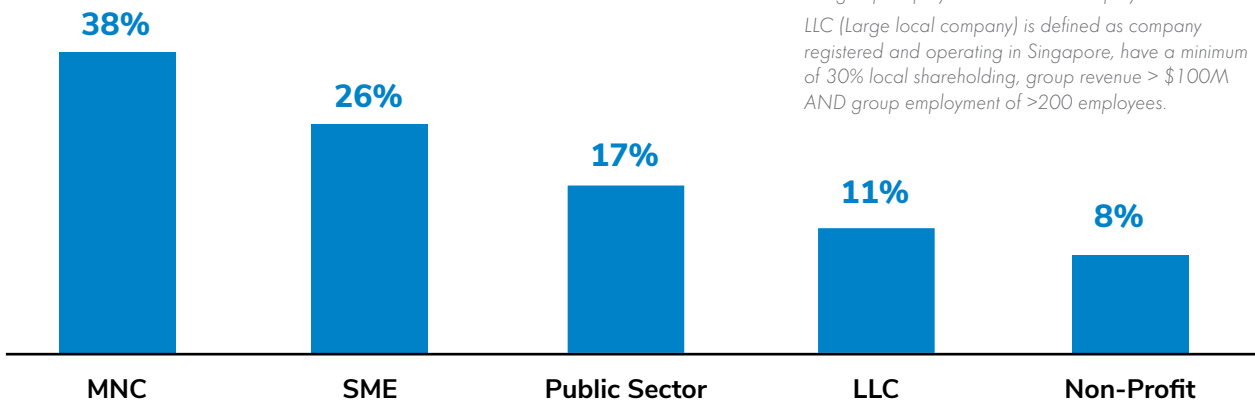
Legend:

SME (Small medium enterprise) is defined as a company registered and operating in Singapore, have a minimum of 30% local shareholding, group revenue of ≤$100M OR group employee size of ≤200 employees.

LLC (Large local company) is defined as company registered and operating in Singapore, have a minimum of 30% local shareholding, group revenue > $100M AND group employment of >200 employees.

MNC	SME	Public Sector	LLC	Non-Profit
38%	26%	17%	11%	8%

Question: Please select the type of organisation you currently work in (single/forced choice question)
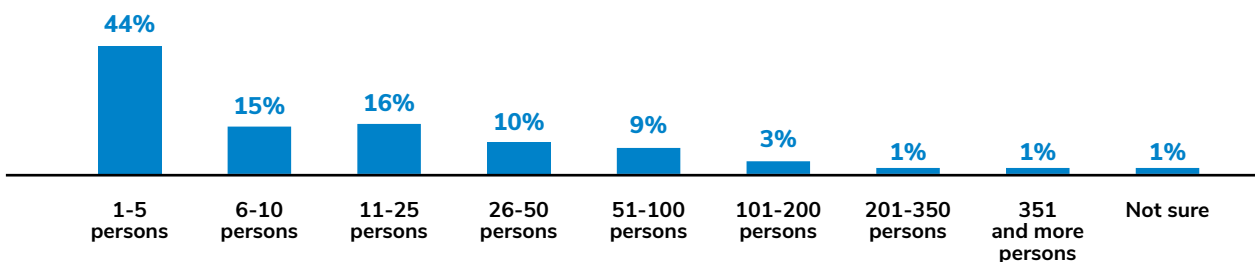*Base (N): All respondents (N=317)*

Employee Size Breakdown

1-9 persons	10-19 persons	20-49 persons	50-100 persons	101-500 persons	501-1000 persons	1001-2000 persons	2001-5000 persons	5001 and more persons	Not sure
4%	3%	9%	15%	29%	12%	10%	7%	10%	1%

Question: Please select the total number of full-time employees your organisation has based in Singapore (single/forced choice question).
Base (N): All respondents (N=317)

HR Size Breakdown

1-5 persons	6-10 persons	11-25 persons	26-50 persons	51-100 persons	101-200 persons	201-350 persons	351 and more persons	Not sure
44%	15%	16%	10%	9%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Question: Please select the size of the HR team your organisation has based in Singapore (single/forced choice question).
Base (N): All respondents (N=317)

SKILLS DESCRIPTION

Skill Title	Skill Description
Competency Framework Development	Design and develop competency frameworks within organisation, ensuring that human resource (HR) programmes are aligned to support their application across organisation levels and functions.
Job Analysis and Evaluation	Define and evaluate job requirements and expectations against specific metrics, structures, or systems.
Learning and Development Programme Management	Establish and implement learning and development programmes and channels to facilitate employees' growth and capability building.
Learning and Development Strategy	Drive a learning and development culture with strategies to build the organisation's workforce capability.
Learning Framework Development	Design and maintain a framework for identifying and meeting the learning needs of students, staff, professionals, and the public.
Organisational Strategy Development	Influence the organisation's business strategies from the perspective of human resource (HR) and workforce capability.
Selection Management	Facilitate the development and implementation of selection strategies and processes to recruit suitable candidates for the organisation.
Talent Capability Assessment	Develop talent assessment processes with assessment tools to evaluate employees' capabilities.

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SkillsFuture Singapore uses labour market data and collaborates with industry partners to curate insights on jobs and skills matters.

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Design Partner

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