



What You Need to Know About a Skills Matrix Tool to Make Informed Decisions

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“A company’s employees are its greatest asset and your people are your product.”

— Richard Branson

Nearly every business claims “our people are our most important asset.” It’s certainly true that positive business results rely on strong workforce performances. But with so many essential skills spread across so many employees, how can management know which employees have the skills they need to succeed and for the company to thrive?



Many companies use a skills matrix, a tool that maps required job skills to the proficiencies of employees who need them, to find their answers. What is a skills matrix used for? And how does it help? What do you need to know about skills tools?

When to Use a Skills Matrix

When leaders need to understand which required skills are available in their workforce today, a skills matrix delivers an at-a-glance view of that information. Leaders can then drill down for details about which individuals, teams, leaders, geographies, or projects have the skills they need to advance the business goal – and who and where skills need to be developed.

What is a skills matrix used for? It can help inform decisions about these and other business questions:

- When one (or many) of my employees is out of work due to illness or a pandemic, who has the skills to step in?
- Which employees should we retain in the upcoming merger or acquisition?
- Do we need to reskill or upskill some of our employees? If so, which ones? And exactly what skills do they need to acquire to improve the performance of our business?
- Who are our strongest leaders?
- Do our current employees have the skills they need to deliver an innovative project?
- What is the best training to develop the skills our employees need?
- Are our employees current on their required certifications?

How it Benefits Your Organization

At its core, a skills matrix visualizes data. In this case, it’s data about employees’ skills. By using a data-driven process to identify, assess, and develop skills – and people – everyone wins.

Here are just a few benefits of using a skills matrix to inform business decisions:

- **Reduced bias:** Identify individuals with specialized skills who might otherwise have been overlooked.
- **Focus:** Home in on those specific skills that are most important to the initiative.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Focus training and development resources on the people and the skills who will advance the mission – whether near-term or in the future.
- **Results:** Track the progress of individuals and teams over time (and identify which training is most effective).
- **Strengthened Teams:** Build and develop teams based on a clear picture of each person’s skills and qualifications.
- **Confidence:** Make important business decisions with the confidence that you have the current information you need about the ability of your workforce.

Skills Matrix Tools

Ideally, your employee skills matrix contains rich data across current and past employees. And the skills tool you use is flexible enough to show a variety of “cuts” (i.e. views) of that data.

That’s tough to do if your skills tool is a spreadsheet such as Excel. Often the person who creates the spreadsheet is knowledgeable enough to add helpful formulas across worksheets to collect and present the data you’re looking for. However, even with skills matrix training, it’s easy for spreadsheets to get corrupted, duplicated (creating version control challenges), or out of date when the original creator is no longer solely responsible for this company data set.

Most organizations need a skills tool that multiple stakeholders can access reliably. It needs to keep up with large and growing data sets – and changing queries over time. A competency management system, such as [Avilar’s WebMentor Skills™](#), can centralize your data, support multiple users and produce skills reports whenever you need them.

If you’re looking for a skills or competency management system to serve as your skills tool, be sure to ask about reports. In our experience working with hundreds of clients over many years, you’ll probably want both out-of-the-box reports and the ability to configure your skills reports for custom data sets. Be sure your system flexibly configures skills reports so you can include the data and fields that are important to your business decisions.

About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. Formed in 1997, Avilar was a pioneer with its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.

[Contact us](#) to find out how Avilar’s [WebMentor Skills™](#) can support your skills development program.