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Using Skills Analysis Tools for Successful Upskilling

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Faster than ever, the world is shifting and shaping how people work, exposing and creating deep skill divides across industries and around the world. As a result, business and HR leaders are scrambling to “upskill” employees.

Upskilling – where employees learn new skills to progress within their current role or career path – provides a new set of competencies that *complement* an existing skillset. The term is sometimes used to cover reskilling, too, where employees learn new skills that *replace* existing, often outdated skillsets.



Business leaders are pushing to upskill their employees. Here is why it’s imperative they do it now, how to do it, and why you must use the *right* skills analysis tools.

Why Upskilling is Happening Now

Many blame the pandemic for creating so many work-life changes. Masks. Vaccines and policies. Remote and hybrid work environments. Contactless ordering, payments, and pickups. Zoom, Teams, and Google Meet. And so much more! Yet [Forbes](#) offers a different take, saying “The Covid-19 pandemic didn’t kick off the dramatic changes we’ve seen in work, business, and life so much as it let them out of the bottle.”

Regardless of whether the pandemic was a cause or a catalyst for work shifts, **here are a few reasons that businesses are turning to upskilling training now:**

- **Market changes:**
 - It’s clear that even the smallest companies are participating in a global marketplace, with supplies, partners and customers scattered across the world. Companies wanting to keep up need to make sure that employees know how to navigate the digital world on behalf of their business. Upskilling training can close your organization’s skills gaps around the global online realities of ordering, customer service, meeting facilitation, team and employee management, marketing, sales, and more.
- **Great resignation:**
 - Starting in early 2021, waves of employees voluntarily resigned from their jobs across the U.S. and beyond. A shortage of workers sparked employers to re-prioritize the employees they had. Many are turning to upskilling as a way to fill

job openings with current employees.

Training and development can also improve your employee engagement, helping to retain employees staying in their current roles.

- **Talent shortage:**

- Unemployment is low, with more job openings than qualified applicants. Workers have a choice about who to work for and many candidates are searching for employers willing to train them. Upskilling training is one way your organization can stand out. It shows that you invest in your employees and that you care about their future – enhancing your company’s reputation as an employer of choice.

- **Non-traditional workers:**

- To broaden the pool of job candidates, HR leaders and recruiters are revising job descriptions and requirements to welcome [workers without college degrees](#), those entering the workforce out of military service, and [relaunchers](#) stepping back into the workforce after years away. Upskilling training can support your new employees in preparing for today’s work environment and giving them confidence to contribute in their new roles.



How to Upskill Employees for Today, Tomorrow, and the Future

When upskilling employees, you’ll want to balance near-term and longer-term skills requirements. You’ll also want to set up a plan that adapts to the unknown skills needs of the future.

Here’s a three-pronged approach to upskilling employees:

- **Meet immediate demands:**

- Most companies have a “hit list” of immediate skills needs. They know they don’t have enough people with the right skills to do all of the high priority work. Start with this list. Upskill your employees who are in those jobs today. Look for employees and job candidates with adjacent skills and provide upskilling training for them, as well. Keep going until you’ve closed the most urgent skills gaps.

- **Start addressing anticipated skill needs.**
 - Every company, and every job, requires both durable and perishable skills. Durable skills are those that are still relevant seven years or more from now, such as effective communication and design thinking. Perishable skills need to be updated every two or three years and include technology programming skills and skills related to specific software applications. As you start to see a diminished need for perishable skills, be sure you and your employees are replacing them with what's next. Similarly, if retirement or resignations threaten your future pool of essential skills, start upskilling other people to step in – before your experienced employees leave the organization.
- **Reinforce a culture of learning.**
 - No one really knows what skills your workforce will need three, five, or 10 years from now. To ensure that your workforce and your company thrive, set up and reinforce a [culture of continuous learning](#). Upskilling should simply be part of the mix of how employees learn – and continue to learn – on their jobs.

What Skills Analysis Tools Can Do to Make or Break Upskilling


To get upskilling right, you must have visibility into the skills of your workforce, workgroups, and individual employees across your company. A skills analysis is simply an evaluation of an individual's ability to perform a specific skill or set of skills.

As part of your learning culture, make a skills analysis a routine part of how employees and managers decide what to learn next and how to pursue targeted career paths. In return, your **skills analysis tools will strengthen your upskilling training by creating:**

- **Visibility:**
 - You'll have a data-based view of how your individuals, groups, and workforce is doing. At any time, you can view strengths and gaps to inform your next steps.
- **Alignment:**
 - To thrive, your workforce needs a solid mix of hard skills and soft skills. Good skills analysis tools will support assessments of both – including levels of

proficiency for each. As *Training Industry Magazine's* [2022 Trend's Report](#) points out, "For the most accurate evaluation, assessments should mirror the real-world environment and be relevant to the learner's job role. For instance, if you're testing an





employee on using an accounting software, the assessment should evaluate how the employee would use the software.” Flexible skills assessments can help align the training with the kind of skill each learner needs to develop.

- **Training Insights:**

- By collecting and analyzing skills and competency data sets, leaders can gain insights that will inform learning decisions. Over time, skills data can highlight which upskill training is most – and least – effective in building desired skills, so leaders can decide whether and how to supplement current training.

- **Metrics:**

- To track how well individuals and groups are progressing toward stated goals.

- **Spotlights:**

- Skills and competency data can help to identify employees who have – or could have – the skills required to take on a different role, whether the role is a promotion, a move to a different team, or onboarding for a succession plan.

Upskilling motivates employees and strengthens individuals, groups, and companies. And identifying the **right** skills analysis tools is vital to the success of your upskilling program.

Are you interested in upskilling your workforce and finding the right tools to do so? [Contact us](#) to find out how our team and Avilar’s [WebMentor Skills™](#) competency management system and [WebMentor LMS™](#) could help.

About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce planning and development with 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.