

2024 Global Learning & Skills Trends Report

Top Trends for the
Future of Work

 **udemy** business



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The Skills-Based Economy

The Skills-Based Economy

A single factor could ultimately determine whether a company can execute on its business strategy and deliver on its goals: skills. Do your employees have the skills they need to drive personal and business growth? More and more companies are starting to understand the value of the skills-based economy, and, as a result, they are evolving to become skills-based organizations. The question is: Are you ready?

The following trends are core to the future of work. Organizations and their leaders must:

1. Understand how to navigate the skills landscape and why it is essential to assess, identify, develop, and validate the skills their teams have, don't have, and need, in order to remain innovative and competitive

2. Adapt to the rise of AI, including how generative AI and automation are disrupting the way we work as well as their role in supporting the move to a skills-based approach

3. Develop strong leaders who can lead through change and build resilience across their teams

In the Udemy [2024 Global Learning & Skills Trends Report](#), we delve into these three key areas for leaders to focus on so that they can embrace them as part of their current and future workplace strategy.



2.1 /

Navigating the Skills Landscape

/ Bridging the Gap, Driving Innovation, and Leading From the Front

2.1 /

Navigating the Skills Landscape

Bridging the Gap, Driving Innovation, and Leading From the Front

To succeed, organizations must embrace the opportunity presented by a skills-based approach.

Focusing on the skills required to perform a job — versus the way those skills were acquired — creates not only a more equitable workplace but also opens up new avenues for employee growth, talent mobility, and overall business scalability.

However, in order to do this, leaders will need to think differently about the

employee lifecycle, from how they recruit to how they engage, reward, develop, and manage talent. For example, in a skills-based organization, formal qualifications or degrees may be applicable for some job functions, but in others the focus and weighting is centered more on the skills and experiences an individual can demonstrate. In other words, it is a shift from “We need people who can fill these jobs” to **“We need people who have these skills.”**



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Today, advances in technology are changing the demand for skills at an accelerated pace.

HBR

The same shift could be true from the perspective of organizational structure. For instance, there might be less focus on functional and hierarchical departments and more focus on pods or groups of teams who have the skills needed to complete specific projects.

Technology is driving this fundamental change in how organizations manage talent and structure work. Three out of five business executives say new technologies — such as AI and automation — will be

a primary driver of their organization adopting a skills-based approach, according to Deloitte. Another element driving transformation at a speed never seen before is “the exponential rate at which technology is changing,” per Udemy Business customer Eric Dingler, Chief Learning Officer of Deloitte US. Organizations that remain innovative and position themselves to thrive in the future are those that build a skills-based infrastructure to keep up with the pace of change.

64M

On the Udemy platform, we have seen an **increase in skills learning**, with course enrollments and learners growing year-over-year. There are now more than 64M learners on our platform.

85%

of HR executives say they are planning or considering redesigning the way work is organized so that skills can be flexibly ported across work over the next three years, per Deloitte.



Gartner estimates that the number of skills needed for a single job is increasing by 10% year-over-year, and more than 30% of the skills needed three years ago will soon be irrelevant.

We see proof of the growth of skills required and the need to learn more skills every day via the Udemy platform.

With nearly 10 million new global learners over the last year, spanning 134 million course enrollments, the demand for skills has never been higher. Learners and organizations know that the way to keep up with the ongoing changes in talent and technology is to be agile and adaptive, and, ultimately, to keep pace with the competition.

To make a skills-based approach successful, organizations and individuals alike need access to a wide range of skills.

This includes practical business skills that can be applied on the job (sometimes referred to as role-based skills), professional or business skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership, and technical skills that can be validated.

When you don't have the right skills, you can't get where you need to go. Organizations that don't have the ability to develop their employees today are falling behind.

How Companies Are Evolving to Operate as Skills-Based Organizations

From:

Competencies based on formal qualifications alone and a mentality of: "We need people who can fill these jobs"

Organizational structure based on functional hierarchy with jobs attached and with work organized across functional silos

Limited to no learning and development technology infrastructure and limited interoperability to support an organization-wide skills strategy

Technology and access to "qualified" candidates are the barriers

Nice-to-have competencies for job clarity

Organizational competency framework updated once every few years

To:

A skills-based focus derived from learned knowledge and experiences, competencies, and a shift to: "We need people who have these skills"

Organizational fluidity with projects that can be delivered by leveraging a skills portfolio with work organized across skills groups

Integrated learning and development technology stack to support a skills strategy with interoperability into the broader tech environment

Practices, processes, and organizational inertia are the barriers

Must-have skills for organizational scalability

Skills framework that is constantly evolving and being adapted

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AI is at the heart of the skills-based infrastructure.

Brenda Sugrue

Chief Learning Officer at [EY](#)

Companies cannot hire themselves out of trouble.

New waves of highly skilled workers aren't coming. Instead, we need to do more with the talent we have. By 2030, there will be a talent shortage of more than 85 million people, [according to Korn Ferry](#). The only path is to upskill and reskill with a continued focus on broadening the skillsets of your workforce.

Easier said than done. The skills landscape is complex and ever-changing, making it challenging to understand what skills employees already have, what gaps exist with the skills they need — and more

important still, how to address these gaps. The [World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report 2023](#) found that 6 in 10 employees will require training before 2027, and half of those individuals don't have access to adequate resources to make that happen. Add to this, [Deloitte](#) found that only 5% of executives believe they are investing enough to help their teams learn the new skills needed to keep up with the changing world of work. This has the potential to create significant problems for many companies and leaders that will only grow with time.

While there are no perfect solutions, technology is better enabling us to gain the insights required to identify existing skills and skills gaps. “AI is at the heart of the skills-based infrastructure,” according to [Brenda Sugrue, EY's Chief Learning Officer](#), who sees the shift to an AI-enabled skills approach as the key to allowing organizations to leverage talent across teams more effectively and move at the speed of change. Better integrated tech stacks across functions are also making a more comprehensive, skills-based organizational approach a reality.

6 in 10

employees will require training before 2027

[World Economic Forum](#)



Udemy has seen

10M

IT certification preparation enrollments across our platform in the past 12 months, across both business and individual learners.

Among business learners on our enterprise application, the top certification is the Professional Cloud DevOps Engineer certification for Google Cloud, growing

1,454%

year-over-year.



Once the skills gap has been assessed and identified, the next step is skills development and validation.

Many leaders are currently faced with the challenge of not being able to systematically and effectively assess and validate their teams' mastery of skills in line with industry norms and standards. This is where recognized skills validation in the form of assessments, certifications, and badges plays a key role. At Udemy, we help companies and individuals tap into hundreds of certification preparation courses and skills signaling through accredited third-party badging — meeting the needs of both acquiring new skills and demonstrating skills mastery.

In fact, year-over-year we have seen significant growth in learning geared toward certification preparation. Udemy has seen 10 million IT certification preparation enrollments across our platform in the past

12 months, across both business and individual learners. Many of these certifications and badges validate technical skills which are essential to supporting key business trends such as DevOps, continued cloud adoption, modern programming, and cybersecurity. Among business learners on our enterprise application, the top certification is the Professional Cloud DevOps Engineer certification for Google Cloud, growing 1,454% year-over-year.

An approach of continuous skills development and skills validation benefits individuals and their companies alike. Employees recognize and are eager to acquire new skills, with 77% of global workers saying they are ready to learn new skills or completely retrain. For many of these

employees, their careers now span longer than in the past, which is another reason they need to frequently reinvent themselves — and their skillsets.

It is also essential for organizations, learning leaders, and employees to surface and measure outcomes of this type of skills-based learning. By gaining insights into skills that are being learned as well as understanding which skills are required to address gaps, learning programs can more readily support strategic organizational goals. In turn, employees can apply for projects and take on opportunities that they were potentially not seen as “qualified for” before, advancing their careers or even changing their career paths.

2.2 /

Adapting to the Rise of Generative AI

/ How AI Is Both Disrupting How We Work and Enabling the Skills-Based Organization

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Adapting to the Rise of Generative AI

How AI Is Both Disrupting How We Work and Enabling the Skills-Based Organization

The age of automation has come. AI — and more specifically generative AI — is revolutionizing not only how we think about work but how we do work.

McKinsey estimates that as much as 30% of current work hours in the US economy could be automated by 2030, due in large part to generative AI, which has the potential to at least partially automate as many as 300 million jobs, according to Goldman Sachs. However, at the same

time PricewaterhouseCoopers reports that, “AI, robotics and other forms of smart automation have the potential to bring great economic benefits, contributing up to \$15 trillion to global GDP by 2030.” History reinforces this message of duality, revealing that, as some types of work and jobs become obsolete, new types of work and jobs are created. Ideally, these are more meaningful and creative forms of employment, improving the human work experience, rather than replacing it.



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[McKinsey](#)

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[PricewaterhouseCoopers](#)

In the end, nearly every job is likely to be affected by these new tools, with 82% of the global leaders Microsoft surveyed saying that their employees will need new skills to be prepared for the growth of generative AI.

Business leaders must develop the ability to stay ahead by helping their employees develop the new skills needed to leverage AI to their benefit and advantage.

The effect of AI has already been disruptive to workforces, and more significant disruption is coming. Yet, disruption has some positive effects. Technology has always helped — and even pushed — people to think and work differently. It has allowed them

to reshape what they work on and how they work. Technology will continue to help companies evolve toward taking a skills-based approach, more thoughtfully scaling core people processes around hiring, workforce planning, and developing and improving internal mobility.

AI is enabling employees to work more effectively on tasks requiring more conceptual thinking. By automating repetitive, time-consuming, and routine

tasks, employees can then spend their time focused on more creative and strategic work. To do this well, however, organizations have to accelerate their understanding of the skills they need to keep pace with the rate of technology change. [HBR](#) cites pharmaceutical giant Novartis as a case in point; they have “implemented an AI-powered internal talent marketplace that predicts, matches, and offers roles and projects related to employees’ skills and goals.”



Organizations have been deploying **upskilling and reskilling strategies** more aggressively and consistently over the past few years.

Employee development is still a core reason for this change, but the need to ensure the business stays ahead of its competitors and leverages the AI revolution are becoming even more important reasons to solidify a skills strategy. According to a recent [HBR study](#), however, upskilling alone won't be enough: "In the coming decades millions of workers may need to be entirely reskilled – a fundamental and profoundly complex societal challenge that will require workers not only to acquire new skills but to use them to change

occupations." In the case of generative AI, employees must have the skills required to leverage and work with this new technology effectively. There has been tremendous growth in AI-related skills learning on Udemy Business in the past year – growing at nearly 60% year-over-year. The US-based consumption of ChatGPT learning [surged 5,226%](#) in Q1 2023 alone, showing the tremendous appetite learners have – as well as the imperative they feel – to acquire these skills.

Growth in AI-related skills learning

60%

Growth in total consumption of AI-related skills year-over-year

Surge in US consumption of ChatGPT learning

5,226%

Surge in consumption of ChatGPT in the US in Q1 2023

“

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[HBR](#)



The key to successful adoption of AI in the workplace is to take a collaborative intelligence approach.

This is where the combined power of human and artificial intelligence come together to supercharge learning and outcomes. For example, AI has the potential to automate the identification and mapping of skills needed to skills available in your organization through intelligent skills gap analysis. You would then leverage a “human in the loop” to verify that these skills map to your organizational objectives and to activate the skills in the workplace. Similarly, AI can help an individual identify the skills they should learn next. But then, the application of that learning and the acquisition of the skills take place through

both technology and human interaction, leveraging different learning modalities from adaptive learning to microlearning, cohort learning, and even coaching.

Combining artificial and human intelligence, along with providing more personalized learning experiences, can help teams develop skills more effectively while also positively impacting the business. AI-supported learning was essential to [Udemy customer Capital One](#) in deciding to roll out our enterprise solution to its entire company. “The breadth of course options, AI-driven recommendations, and community

course ratings were all very popular with associates and provided both guidance and reassurance that they were enrolling in highly rated, in-demand courses,” according to Eric Lawson, Senior Director of Technology and Learning.

With these tremendous opportunities, it cannot be forgotten that there is also intense disruption — disruption in employee roles, in how work gets done, and in the nature of work itself. Change management therefore is essential, which means that leaders who can help teams navigate change and build resilience are more important than ever.



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Eric Lawson

Senior Director of Technology and Learning at [Capital One](#)

2.3 /

Developing Strong Leaders

/ Preparing Leaders for Today and the Future

2.3 /

Developing Strong Leaders

Preparing Leaders for Today and the Future

Changes in how we work are going to require changes in how we lead. The traditional profile of the leader who allowed organizations to deliver consistency in their business processes is being replaced by the leader who is the ultimate learner — who can help teams to adapt, innovate, work horizontally, and engage partners. As technology accelerates the pace of change, we will have to support leaders as they develop the new skills they need to stay in front of that change.

There has been no shortage of change in the workplace in recent years, thanks to the shift to hybrid and remote work, the rise of AI and automation, a challenging macroeconomic environment, and drastic swings in the talent marketplace. High turnover and declines in employee well-being have taken their toll, with [Gallup](#) finding that more than half of global employees are struggling with burnout, daily negative emotions, and a sense that their organization cares little about their well-being.



Organizations must invest in their leaders and leaders in turn must invest in their teams, helping them navigate all of these changes while staying productive and avoiding mental and physical burnout.

More than that, they have to support their teams to emerge better than they were, with new skills, a higher level of engagement and commitment, and the resilience and agility they need to tackle the next big challenge and excel.

177%

Increase in learning of **coaching skills** year-over-year

150%

Increase in learning of **team-building skills** year-over-year

136%

Increase in learning of **empathy skills** year-over-year

101%

Increase in learning of **resilience skills** year-over-year

Leaders are embracing a new set of skills to manage all of this. A ground-breaking study carried out by The Conference Board and Udemy Business identified the “4 C’s,” or the four critical skills for highly successful modern leaders:



1. Connecting: Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence, including empathy, compassion, and self-awareness



3. Creating an Inclusive Culture: Fostering an inclusive environment



2. Coaching: Effective coaching and feedback skills



4. Collaborating Through Technology: Leveraging technology for connection and collaboration

This focus on the “4 C’s” is further supported by the surge in learning of similar leadership topics on Udemy Business.

Essential leadership topics that have shown particular growth year-over-year include communication, management fundamentals, emotional intelligence, and digital transformation. Coaching has surged 177% year-over-year, team-building 150%, empathy 136%, and resilience 101%.

\$8.8T

According to [Gallup](#), disengaged employees cost the world \$8.8 trillion in lost productivity in 2022 alone.

76%

In a [Glassdoor survey](#) 76% of job seekers considered a diverse workforce an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers.

Equipping leaders with these skills extends far beyond the C-suite.

Entry-level and frontline managers are key players who are inspiring their teams every day. If they fail, there is a cost. It often leads to increased employee attrition and also results in decreased overall employee morale. According to [Gallup](#), disengaged employees cost the world \$8.8 trillion in lost productivity in 2022 alone.

As the workforce enters a period of intense disruption due to the forces of generative AI, automation, and technological innovation, leaders need to lead with even more purpose, vision, strategy, and empathy. They must ensure that teams have access to — and engage with — development opportunities for reskilling, and they must continually rethink their approach to a constantly

evolving skills landscape. A sense of purpose through work is a leading driver of performance and productivity, and effective leadership helps teams both connect with that purpose and maintain that connection through periods of instability, [according to McKinsey](#).

We've seen that one of the 4 C's is creating an inclusive culture, making it more essential than ever to meet employees where they are. Employees are not only looking for opportunities to develop their skills. In a [Glassdoor survey](#), 76% of job seekers considered a diverse workforce an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers. There is a moral imperative to meeting these needs, but doing so also

helps create a sense of belonging that engages employees in their work and supports organizations in becoming more innovative and profitable. But leaders must do more than simply make gestures in support of diversity. If leaders' behaviors don't support an inclusive team culture, employees know it, and organizations won't see the full benefits of a diverse workforce. [Udemy's Leading Up podcast](#) highlighted Stefanie Johnson, Director of the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University, who discussed the proven value of a more diverse workforce and also affirmed that, "in more nuanced studies, you only see this benefit of diversity when you have inclusion."



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An Integrated Skills Framework

/ A Path to Keep Moving Forward

An Integrated Skills Framework

A Path to Keep Moving Forward

It is a difficult task to navigate the transition to a skills-based approach. The interdependencies are complex. In fact, [Deloitte](#) found that 9 out of 10 executives are looking to use skills as a way to define work, deploy talent, and manage careers, but only 1 in 5 are adopting a skills-based approach to a meaningful extent. It is

clear that the “why” is well understood but the “how” remains a difficult knot to untie. According to [Eric Dinger](#) of Deloitte, making this shift offers “a once in a generation opportunity.” So, the question becomes, **how can organizations make the transition?**

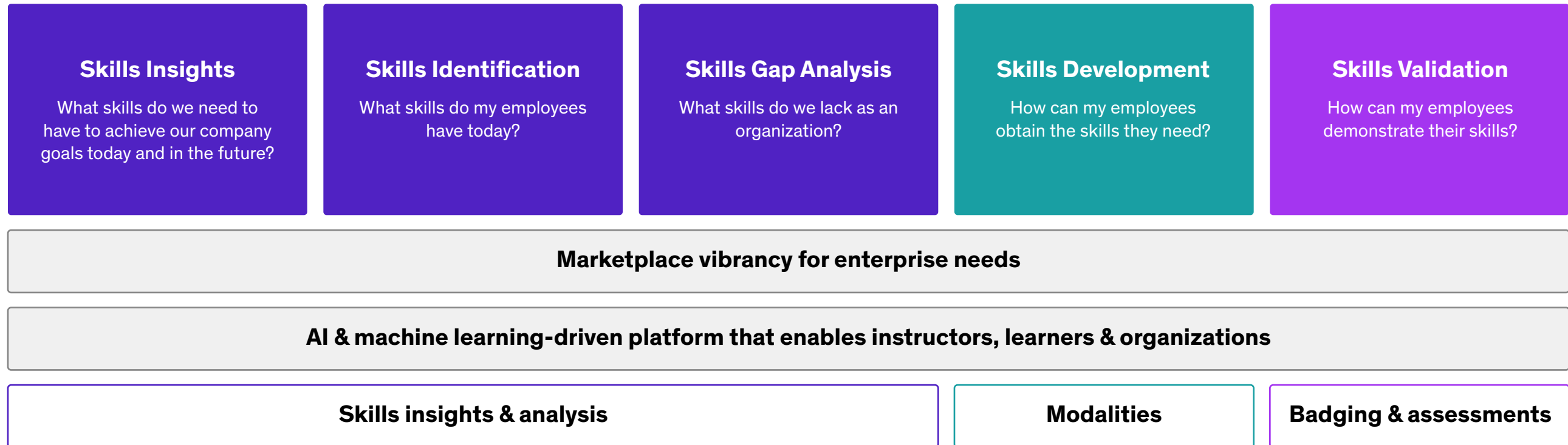


At Udemy, we believe making a **successful transition to a skills-based future means establishing a framework that drives skills insights, acquisition, and validation in a meaningful way that leads to business results.**

To help companies complete the transition to a skills-based model and keep pace with innovation, Udemy has introduced the Integrated Skills Framework. The framework provides a way for leaders to understand the fundamental components of a skills-based approach and gain key understanding into how to move it forward in their organizations. You may already have some of these elements in place independently, and others you may still be evolving. Whatever your maturity as a skills-based organization, our goal is for the Integrated Skills Framework to serve as a guide.



The Integrated Skills Framework



5 elements to help guide organizations to a skills-based approach

There are 5 key elements to the Integrated Skills Framework

Skills Insights: This is where the focus is on gathering the insights necessary to assess the internal skills landscape in your own organization: What skills does your team need in order to achieve current and company goals? What skills are emerging and likely to be critical as the industry transforms? What do you need to solve with your skills strategy to deliver on your business strategy — both currently and in the future? Here, UdeMy provides proprietary insights and an informed perspective to help your organization execute on its goals. We also partner with your organization to provide skills guidance and recommend learning content that aligns to the needs of individual teams.

Skills Identification: This is the process of identifying which skills your organization has and which it needs — in other words, establishing the supply and demand. There is a broad spectrum of skills that can be

identified: from technical skills to soft skills, and from established skills to skills that your teams have the potential to or need to develop.

Skills Gap Analysis: Based on the insights gained through skills analysis and skills identification, you will be able to make strategic decisions about which skills are most needed across your organization and understand where you have gaps. This may be different per function, group, or even by country or region. Organizations can be better prepared for future change when they take this analysis a step further and work to predict future gaps. This also helps when building career paths for your teams.

Skills Development: This includes upskilling and reskilling to develop key skills and bridge gaps. UdeMy's enterprise learning solution can provide access to all learners in

your organization, through multiple delivery modalities (self-service, on-demand, and cohort-based) and tailored learning paths, including specialized content for leadership development and technical roles.

Skills Validation: By validating the skills that have been developed, employees demonstrate that they know how to use the skills they have acquired and leaders demonstrate the value of learning and development programs in support of company strategy. UdeMy supports industry-recognized credentials for skills validation, including badges, technical assessments, labs, and courseware. UdeMy has worked with 1EdTech to bring the Open Badges standard to its platform. By utilizing the Open Badges standard, organizations can verify certifications and skills obtained by learners through leading digital credential platforms such as Credly and Accredible.

How Udeemy Empowers a Skills-Based Approach

Udeemy contributes to each of the core elements of the Integrated Skills Framework. Some we own and drive, others we integrate into, and some we work with customers to develop. Udeemy's platform has AI and machine learning built in so that learners, instructors, and organizations can all take advantage of these evolving technologies. From surfacing personalized and granular learning capabilities to enabling learners, instructors, and organizations to engage with learning more effectively and efficiently through automation, our machine learning capabilities also allow us to surface timely insights and analysis, and to identify trends that will help L&D leaders plan for the future. All of this is built upon a vibrant marketplace model that ensures that Udeemy content is current — allowing customers to take courses in in-demand topics to meet enterprise needs and keep up with the pace of change. Finally, we deliver learning through multiple modalities to ensure that access to skills is convenient and easy. Through Udeemy, employees can prepare for certification and badging, and take assessments to help validate the skills they have learned so they can put their skills into practice and showcase their progress.



CONCLUSION

Organizations seeking a strategy for success that can help them today and in the future stand only to gain from adopting a skills-based approach to learning. But this won't be possible if organizations don't also embrace the opportunity presented by generative AI and focus their attention on developing their leaders to manage through change and build resilience.

You can learn more about how Udemy can be a strategic partner in helping you transition to or continue on your path as a skills-based organization.

[Learn more about Udemy Business.](#)

Hear from our customers on how they are thriving with Udemy.

[Find our customers' stories here.](#)

DATA METHODOLOGY

For this report, we analyzed data from thousands of our customers around the world. We calculated total consumption by Udemy Business learners across all course topics for the year from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023. We calculated the percentage growth in consumption compared to the year from July 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022. The new learner and course enrollment data on the Udemy platform (individual and business learners) was calculated over the same time frame. Adjusted time frames were used for some data pulls (particularly data around ChatGPT usage) given that some topics only emerged in the post period.



[See the complete skills data and unlock key insights here.](#)

ABOUT UDEMY BUSINESS

Udemy's mission is to transform lives through learning by providing flexible, effective skills development to empower organizations and individuals.

Udemy Business enables employers to offer on-demand learning for all employees, immersive learning for tech teams and cohort learning for leaders. With our complete learning solution and strategic partnership, we provide relevant learning at scale so organizations can build agile workforces and achieve critical business outcomes.

Learn more at business.udemy.com