

# Future skills gap analysis and why your business needs it

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In light of increasing technological advancements, employers must identify future skills in order to provide a flexible and agile workplace. A skills gap analysis can help you determine the most valuable skills for your company and establish a plan for staff development.



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Regardless of the size or number of employees in a company, a skills gap analysis is necessary to identify gaps within the organisation. It looks at the gap between employees' existing talents and the skills required to do their jobs.

Once a company identifies the necessary but unfilled talents, it may fill any present and future skill shortages. If it is determined that a certain individual or department lacks the necessary capabilities, an organisation can either implement coaching or training, or acquire people who already have the necessary skills.

## Most valuable soft skills

Though the skills necessary vary based on the company, department, or employee, several are universally valuable, such as:

- **Creativity:** Artificial intelligence and machine learning are automating many administrative processes, freeing up human employees to focus on creative problem-solving. As a result, creativity is a critical skill for future-proofing businesses.

- **Persuasion:** Possessing a great product or idea is a start, but you still need clients to purchase it. Persuasion is a crucial technique for ensuring the marketability of your ideas and products.
- **Collaboration:** Digital transformation is creating more complex and global projects, which makes collaboration an essential tool for success. Employees must be able to work in a collaborative environment with both in-person and remote team members.
- **Adaptability:** Businesses are undergoing rapid technological transformation; therefore, flexible employees are important. You need teams that can adapt to and thrive in a fast changing business environment without sacrificing efficiency.
- **Time management:** Time management is a tool that will remain relevant regardless of what the future holds. Employees that have mastered time management are important to the success of a business, both now and in the future.



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## Most valuable hard skills

As the workplace grows more connected and digitally advanced, your employees will require hard skills such as:

- **Cloud computing:** Cloud computing is becoming a mainstay in many companies, so more and more leaders are looking for engineers with skills in this area
- **Artificial intelligence:** Artificial intelligence for business is growing and changing. Employees with skills in artificial intelligence are a vital asset to a business looking to make the transition or implemented more AI-enabled business tools
- **AV production:** Videos are dominating consumer internet traffic, and marketing leaders are in search of employees with skills in audio/visual production to elevate their marketing effort
- **Sales leadership:** Sales leadership is always an in-demand skill, regardless of how technology changes business in the future
- **Translation:** The shift toward a global, collaborative workplace requires teams from many different cultural and language backgrounds to work together. Having employees fluent in two or more languages helps to break down these barriers
- **UX design:** User experience is a valuable part of the overall customer experience and a key to building a loyal customer base. More and more businesses are searching for employees with a background in UX design to ensure they're delivering the best experience possible

- **Mobile application development:** The shift to mobile-first platforms created a demand for employees with mobile application development skills to create and maintain apps that deliver a seamless customer experience
- **Analytical reasoning:** Businesses collect massive amounts of data, but it's only useful if it can be analysed for trends and insights to inform decisions. Businesses are searching for employees who can analyse data and use to formulate data-driven strategies



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### Closing the gap

Conducting a skills gap analysis starts with identifying the skills that are valuable to your company and what skills may be necessary for success in the future. Businesses can gain insights from conducting a survey of team members and discussing valuable skills with human resources managers. From there, they can assign a numerical scale to the skills.

The next step is determining the skills that the current employees possess. This can be done with tools like:

- Assessments and surveys
- Employee interviews
- Feedback from performance reviews
- Questionnaires

Once there's a list of valuable skills and the skills that current employees have, a table or graph will help to identify the missing skills between them. Training, coaching, certifications, professional events, and mentorship can help nurture employees and close the gap.

Though completing a skills gap analysis is a time-consuming process, it is critical for a company's long-term success. Once it's understood what the vital skills are that are missing, businesses will be able to adjust and strategise to put their employees and company in a good position to succeed.

### ABOUT ZUKO MDWABA

Zuko Mdwaba is Area Vice President at Salesforce South Africa.

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