

LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS



How To Build Future-Fit Leaders Through Coaching

skillsoft®



Developing future-fit leaders is an essential way for organizations to remain agile, innovative, and competitive in an ever-changing business landscape. It enables them to respond to emerging challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and build a sustainable leadership pipeline for long-term success.

The business landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by technological advancements, globalization, and shifting market dynamics. Future-fit leaders possess the skills and mindset to embrace change, drive innovation, and navigate uncertainties effectively. They can help organizations stay ahead of the curve and respond to emerging trends and challenges.

FUTURE-FIT LEADERS CAN MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS IN MANY WAYS, INCLUDING:

- The ability to think strategically, anticipate future needs and opportunities, and make informed decisions in complex and ambiguous situations
- Ensuring a pipeline of capable and skilled individuals who can step into key leadership roles as your organization grows or experiences leadership transitions
- Fostering a culture of innovation by embracing new ideas, challenging the status quo, and driving a culture of experimentation
- Inspiring and motivating employees during times of uncertainty, helping them adapt to new ways of working, and mitigating resistance to change
- Promoting an inclusive work environment that encourages participation, fosters creativity, and leverages the strengths of individuals from different backgrounds
- Enabling a positive work environment where employees feel valued, supported, and motivated – contributing to higher job satisfaction, increased retention rates, and a competitive advantage in attracting top talent

We need leaders now, more than ever. And one of the most impactful ways to empower future-fit leaders is through a coaching program.

Coaching supports your team as they work to achieve their goals, maximize their potential, and enhance their performance. It is no longer reserved exclusively for the c-suite. In fact, coaching helps in the development of all employees, from individual contributors to executives. It is a flexible and adaptable process that can be tailored to the specific needs and objectives of each team member.

TOP LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN FUTURE-FIT LEADERS

Developing and nurturing key leadership competencies will help organizations cultivate a strong pipeline of leaders who can drive innovation, adapt to disruption, and guide their teams to sustainable success. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), eight of the top ten skills that will be required at work in 2030 are coachable personal and interpersonal skills.

While your organization may have its own idea of the specific competencies required to lead in your industry and organizational context, here are some leadership competencies that most future-fit leaders share:

ANALYTICAL THINKING

When faced with complex issues, analytical thinking skills enable individuals to break them down into smaller, manageable components, analyzing each part individually before putting everything back together. It is not about having all the answers immediately, but rather honing your skills to approach problems and situations with a deeper level of understanding and insight. Analytical thinkers are able to evaluate information critically, question assumptions, and consider alternative perspectives — not to mention look for evidence and logical reasoning to support or challenge ideas.

CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is an essential skill for both personal and professional growth. It encourages curiosity, exploration, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. By embracing creative thinking, individuals can unlock their potential to make meaningful contributions within your organization.

RESILIENCE, FLEXIBILITY, AND AGILITY

The term “agile” in the context of the workforce refers to the ability to adapt, learn, and respond quickly and effectively to changing circumstances and demands. Future-fit workers need to be resilient, flexible, and agile because the modern working landscape is constantly evolving and becoming more dynamic. They must learn to foster an environment that promotes innovation and growth and become adept at anticipating trends, identifying emerging opportunities, and developing strategies to position your organization for long-term success.

MOTIVATION AND SELF- AWARENESS

Self-awareness is a foundation for personal and professional development. It allows individuals to understand themselves better, make conscious choices, and continuously grow and improve. By cultivating self-awareness, professionals can navigate their careers more effectively, maximize their potential, and find greater fulfillment in their professional endeavors. They can become motivated to actively seek out opportunities for upskilling and reskilling to keep pace with industry advancements.

CURIOSITY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Future-fit workers are curious. They take ownership of their work, identify opportunities, and take initiative to drive positive change. They can be coached to ask questions and seek to understand the underlying reasons behind things. To be curious about how things work, why certain events happen, and what the connections are between different pieces of information.

DEPENDABILITY AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Dependability builds trust, opens doors to new opportunities, and enhances individuals' reputation in the workplace. Being dependable not only benefits the individual, but it also contributes to a positive and efficient work environment. Attention to detail also contributes to efficiency, accuracy, and overall success in a rapidly evolving business landscape. Ensuring that your team is consistently accurate, error-free, and meets the highest standards is critical to success in the future of work.



EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Empathy is the ability to understand someone else's feelings. Workers who can demonstrate empathy tend to be effective in an environment where conflicting views are being expressed; they work to foster a culture of teamwork, actively seek diverse perspectives, and effectively influence and inspire others to achieve common goals. Empathy and active listening are leadership skills that enable individuals to understand and manage emotions effectively, build positive relationships, and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics.

LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

True leaders exhibit a high degree of self-confidence and can make decisions effectively. They embrace innovation, quickly adjust strategy, and thrive in an ambiguous and dynamic environment. They take risks to develop new skills — analyzing complex information, making informed decisions, and prioritizing initiatives that drive sustainable growth.



Your coaching program should endeavor to develop and nurture these core competencies.



Designing a coaching program to build effective leaders at every level requires careful planning and consideration of various factors – including employee perception. And while everyone approaches this differently, here are some effective ways to kick off your program.

1. Define the Program Objectives: Determine what outcomes you want to achieve, such as developing specific leadership competencies, enhancing performance, or supporting career transitions.

2. Assess Current Leadership Capabilities: Analyze skill gaps and areas for improvement. These insights should help you to determine the target audience for your coaching program. This could include high-potential leaders, newly promoted managers, or individuals identified for succession planning, supporting career transitions.

3. Determine the Scope and Duration of the Program: Consider whether it will be a short-term intervention or a longer-term developmental initiative. Determine the frequency and duration of coaching sessions and the overall program timeline. Looking for buy-in from your executive team? Think about building out a small pilot program to prove out the effectiveness of your coaching program.

4. Develop Coaching Framework: Provide coaches and participants with a consistent and structured approach. Include guidelines for confidentiality, goal setting, progress tracking, and evaluation.

5. Create Individual Development Plans: Collaborate with participants to identify their specific goals, areas for development, and desired outcomes. Ensure alignment between individual development plans and organizational goals.

6. Match Coaches with Participants: Match coaches with participants based on their expertise, experience, and compatibility.

7. Evaluate and Measure Program Effectiveness: Collect feedback from participants, coaches, and relevant stakeholders. Measure outcomes and compare them to the program objectives. Use the evaluation results to make improvements and adjustments for future iterations.

8. Monitor and Track Progress: Provide regular feedback and support to ensure accountability and progress toward your goals.

Proactive coaching can improve your employees' confidence and skill, allowing them to approach new tasks with a positive and enthusiastic outlook.

[Learn how to design a coaching program at scale, today.](#)



EMBEDDING FUTURE-FIT LEADERSHIP INTO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Remember that embedding future-fit leadership into organizational culture is an ongoing process. It requires a consistent and sustained effort to create an environment where future-fit leadership principles are valued, practiced, and integrated into daily operations and decision-making. To do this, you can:

Develop and communicate a set of values that align with future-fit leadership principles, such as analytical and creative thinking, resilience, self-awareness, and active listening. Ensure these values are consistently communicated throughout the organization and integrated into various aspects of decision-making and operations.

Encourage leaders at all levels in your organization to exemplify future-fit leadership behaviors and mindset. This will set the tone and expectation for others to follow.

Create a culture that values continuous learning and growth. Encourage employees to seek out new knowledge, acquire new skills, and experiment with innovative approaches. Establish platforms for knowledge sharing, such as internal communities of practice or mentorship programs.

Foster inclusion and diversity. Future-fit leaders need to be able to understand and navigate diverse cultures, markets, and customer segments. Encourage diversity in hiring, create inclusive policies and practices, and provide training on unconscious bias and cultural competence.

Look for ways to embed ethical practices and corporate social responsibility into your organizational culture. Develop and communicate ethical guidelines to ensure leaders uphold and promote ethical behavior. Encourage responsible decision-making that considers the social, environmental, and long-term impacts of actions.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Over the years, Skillsoft has developed a Learning Maturity Framework (LMF) to help organizations optimize their learning culture and advance their learning strategies – producing better business outcomes.

We've learned that maturing a learning culture requires orchestration of culture, people, and resources. And by focusing on specific benchmarks intended to help optimize learning and development, your organization can reach higher levels of learning engagement, and in turn, impact its learning strategy and business outcomes.

As your organization evolves through the framework, your learning culture becomes more adaptive and your strategies become more agile – until you have successfully optimized your investment in your team.

The end goal? A learning culture that contributes to the success of your team and your business.

Looking to build a coaching program in your organization? [Get started today.](#)



SIX INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Through research and decades of hands-on experience, Skillsoft has identified six indicators that impact an organization's ability to optimize the investment and growth of their people.

1

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Leaders focused on the success of their people, transformation through operational efficiencies

2

LEARNING GOVERNANCE

Formal governance structures enable consistent engagement and group ownership

3

LEARNER EXPERIENCE/ ECOSYSTEM

UX compels employees to explore; technologies are viewed as valuable, time-saving tools

4

ALIGNMENT AND CURATION STRATEGY

Shift from training people to creating environments that encourage self-development

5

PROMOTION AND ADOPTION

Managers are learning evangelists, data insights drive personalized recommendations to learners

6

VALUE MEASUREMENT

Data used to determine business impact, the key performance indicator of success.

ABOUT SKILLSOFT

Skillsoft (NYSE: SKIL) delivers transformative learning experiences that propel organizations and people to grow together. The Company partners with enterprise organizations and serves a global community of learners to prepare today's employees for tomorrow's economy. With Skillsoft, customers gain access to blended, multimodal learning experiences that do more than build skills, they grow a more capable, adaptive, and engaged workforce. Through a portfolio of best-in-class content, a platform that is personalized and connected to customer needs, world-class tech and a broad ecosystem of partners, Skillsoft drives continuous growth and performance for employees and their organizations by overcoming critical skill gaps and unlocking human potential. Learn more at www.skillsoft.com.