

# Toolkit for building an L&D rightskilling strategy

Rightskilling is a targeted approach for empowering employees with the specific skills they need to add more business value in their current roles. It involves identifying skills gaps from a strategic business perspective, focusing on areas like risk, safety, compliance, and revenue. Next, learning experiences are tailored to individuals who can apply these new skills immediately.

By investing in rightskilling, you can increase your workforce’s effectiveness and boost business value. How will you know it’s working? By measuring KPIs like increased sales, decreased employee turnover, and better customer retention.

This toolkit will help you get started on your rightskilling strategy.

## 1 Choose your starting point

An effective strategy starts with knowing your current situation. Is your organisation transitioning to a skills-based training model?

- If yes, jump to the **Skills data** section
- If no, but you still want to be prepared for skills transformation, head to the **Skills data** section
- If you’re not sure, start with **Searching for skills-based clues**

## 2 Searching for skills-based clues

Not all organisations are shifting their focus from competencies to skills. Or that transition might be in progress but hasn’t involved the Learning & Development (L&D) team yet. If you’re not sure where your organisation is in the process, here are some places to start:

- Speak with HR, Talent Acquisition, or Strategic Workforce Planning

Name:

Business area:

Result:

- Review job postings or descriptions at your company to determine if they are using skills-based hiring practices

Job posting:

Samples of skills-based language:

Note: this might not be definitive evidence that your company is transitioning to a skills-focused strategy, but it can be a clue.

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## Skills data

Your company may already be capturing skills information. Ensuring you adhere to the privacy laws of your country and the policies of your organisation, investigate the following for skills data or a skills taxonomy:

HRIS:

Data available:

Talent Marketplace:

Data available:

Learning Management System (LMS) or Learning Experience Platform (LXP):

Data available:

People Analytics Software:

Data available:

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## Know your business

No matter what your company decides as a skills strategy, it is critical to identify which Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of your business can be most influenced by training initiatives. Some sources may include:

If your company is publicly traded, shareholder meetings and communications:

Data:

Corporate Intranet:

Data:

Performance Management Software:

Data:

Programme Management Office (PMO):

Data:

CRM:

Data:

## 5 Find your allies

Transformation to a skills-based organisation extends beyond L&D. This is why you should build your internal network for collaboration and information sharing. Here are some other departments it could help to connect with:

Strategic Workforce Planning:  
Name, title and contact details:

Talent Acquisition:  
Name, title and contact details:

Human Resources:  
Name, title and contact details:

IT:  
Name, title and contact details:

Compensation and Benefits:  
Name, title and contact details:

Succession Planning:  
Name, title and contact details:

Leadership Development:  
Name, title and contact details:

Performance Management:  
Name, title and contact details:

## 6 Governance

Transitioning to a skills-focused strategy is a collective exercise. Once you have your allies in place, you will need to establish a governance strategy to ensure everyone is clear on roles and responsibilities. This should include:

- Who owns the skills taxonomy?
- Who owns skills measurement?
- Who owns the measurement of ROI?
- Who is responsible for deciding which skills gaps are critical?

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## Find a business priority

Now that you know a) where skills data is at your organisation, b) the KPIs for your company, and c) who is in your network as part of the skills-based transformation, the next step is to identify a business priority that will require new skills. It could be something like a new product roll-out or the adoption of AI technology. This will be fertile ground for you to test a rightskilling initiative hypothesis and gain champions from the business.

Business priority to target:

Skill gaps:

Use the following equation to determine if it is more cost-effective to hire or develop skills identified as gaps:

$$(\text{Time} + \text{Cost Invested}) - \text{Anticipated ROI} = \text{True L\&D Cost}$$

**VS. Cost of doing nothing**

**VS. Cost of hiring**

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## Precision

Rightskilling is about being precise. Once you know which skill you intend to target, work with your allies to identify how many individuals need that skill and which employee segment will likely have the adjacent skills. This will become your target audience. Remember, this is done together and not just within L&D.

Outlining the following can help:

- How many people require the skill
- List of adjacent skills
- If skills are not tracked, what roles might already have these adjacent skills? If skills are already tracked, who has the adjacent skills?
- What is the target skill level and how will you track it?

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## Seed-to-fruit learning experience

Now that you know your target skill and audience, your team can do the work they are best at – learning experience design. That said, be sure to apply a “seed-to-fruit” approach to skills development. This means thinking beyond content and codifying every interaction and exercise required to develop proficiency. For example:

- Coaching
- Simulations
- Job shadowing
- Facilitation
- Feedback

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## Capture the data

With this first rightskilling strategy, you are developing the prototype for how future skills will be grown at your organisation. Therefore, you want to ensure you are tracking everything from a time, cost, and return on investment perspective (in addition to the usual L&D metrics like evaluations, performance measurement, and behaviour tracking). Include everything from SME reviews, project management, Q&A, internal communications, translation costs, etc.

All of this data puts you into a position to be precise about your rightskilling strategy when the number of targeted skills increases in number and velocity.



### ABOUT NILESNOLEN

NilesNolen is a boutique agency providing advisory services to enterprise CLOs, Edtech vendors in start-up and scale-up, as well as investors. Based in Toronto and Madrid and with decades of experiences in the industry, NilesNolen is well-positioned to help navigate through the positive disruption and revolution of corporate education and developing skills and talent to meet business needs.



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