

SHRM MENA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO MASTERCLASS

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WORK — PEOPLE, SKILLS & INNOVATION FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

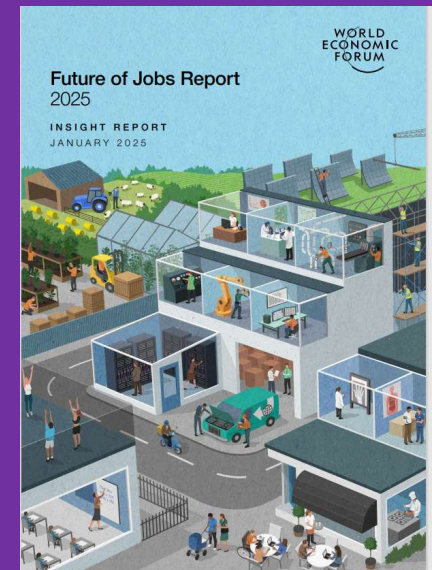
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Digital transformation & the future of work

- Workers can expect that two-fifths (39%) of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated within the next 5 years
- *Digital transformation isn't coming — it's here & it is reshaping jobs, skills, and organisational culture*



Masterclass objectives

- Understand digital transformation & its impact on work
- Explore digital readiness at organisational & individual levels
- Identify HR interventions to drive transformation





Two very different sectors but very similar digital adoption experiences

- **Legal tech:** lawyers adopt technology that automates document review, freeing them for higher-value advisory work; adoption is shaped by professional identity, behaviours & self-efficacy; adoption of legal tech creates new dependencies on other disciplines, new roles & tasks in law firms
- **Corporate R&D digitalisation:** laboratory automation reduces manual work, freeing scientists for higher value work; automation accelerates experimentation & increases volume of data generated, requiring openness to new workflows & upskilling to enhance data analytics capabilities; adoption creates new dependencies on other disciplines, new roles & tasks in corporate R&D
- In both law and R&D, **digital transformation is a people issue**

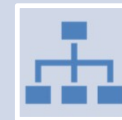


Impact of digitalisation on people & work



AI & automation

By 2030, 30% of workers could be potentially displaced by adoption of automation (McKinsey)



Roles & tasks

Redesign of jobs
Reduction in routine tasks
Focus shifts to strategic, creative & advisory work



Data & digital tools

Organisations with fully modernised, AI-led processes saw 2.4X greater productivity improvements than peers (Accenture)



Skills & capabilities

Digital & data literacy, collaboration skills
Continuous upskilling & reskilling



Hybrid & agile working

Work is increasingly cross-functional, project based & virtual



Collaboration & culture

Cross-function collaboration, agile teams, adaptive culture

Defining the skills citizens will need in the future world of work

To future-proof citizens' ability to work, they will require new skills—but which ones? A survey of 18,000 people in 15 countries suggests those that governments may wish to prioritize.

by Marco Dondi, Julia Klier, Frederic Panier, and Jörg Schubert

Exhibit 1

Our research identified 56 foundational skills that will help citizens thrive in the future of work.

56 DELTAS¹ across 13 skill groups and four categories

Cognitive		Interpersonal	
Critical thinking ● Structured problem solving ● Logical reasoning ● Understanding biases ● Seeking relevant information	Planning and ways of working ● Work-plan development ● Time management and prioritization ● Agile thinking	Mobilizing systems ● Role modeling ● Win-win negotiations ● Crafting an inspiring vision ● Organizational awareness	Developing relationships ● Empathy ● Inspiring trust ● Humility ● Sociability
Communication ● Storytelling and public speaking ● Asking the right questions ● Synthesizing messages ● Active listening	Mental flexibility ● Creativity and imagination ● Translating knowledge to different contexts ● Adopting a different perspective ● Adaptability ● Ability to learn	Teamwork effectiveness ● Fostering inclusiveness ● Motivating different personalities ● Resolving conflicts ● Collaboration ● Coaching ● Empowering	
Self-leadership		Digital	
Self-awareness and self-management ● Understanding own emotions and triggers ● Self-control and regulation ● Understanding own strengths ● Integrity ● Self-motivation and wellness ● Self-confidence		Digital fluency and citizenship ● Digital literacy ● Digital learning ● Digital collaboration ● Digital ethics	
Entrepreneurship ● Courage and risk-taking ● Driving change and innovation ● Energy, passion, and optimism ● Breaking orthodoxies		Software use and development ● Programming literacy ● Data analysis and statistics ● Computational and algorithmic thinking	
Goals achievement ● Ownership and decisiveness ● Achievement orientation ● Grit and persistence ● Coping with uncertainty ● Self-development		Understanding digital systems ● Data literacy ● Smart systems ● Cybersecurity literacy ● Tech translation and enablement	

¹Distinct elements of talent.

DELTA proficiency and outcomes

From here, we conducted two further pieces of research. First, we sought to gauge the level of proficiency in the 56 DELTAs among today's workers compared with the level we believe will be

required to future-proof citizens' ability to work. Second, we sought to gauge whether proficiency in these DELTAs was already associated with certain work-related outcomes.

Audience reflection

In your organisation:

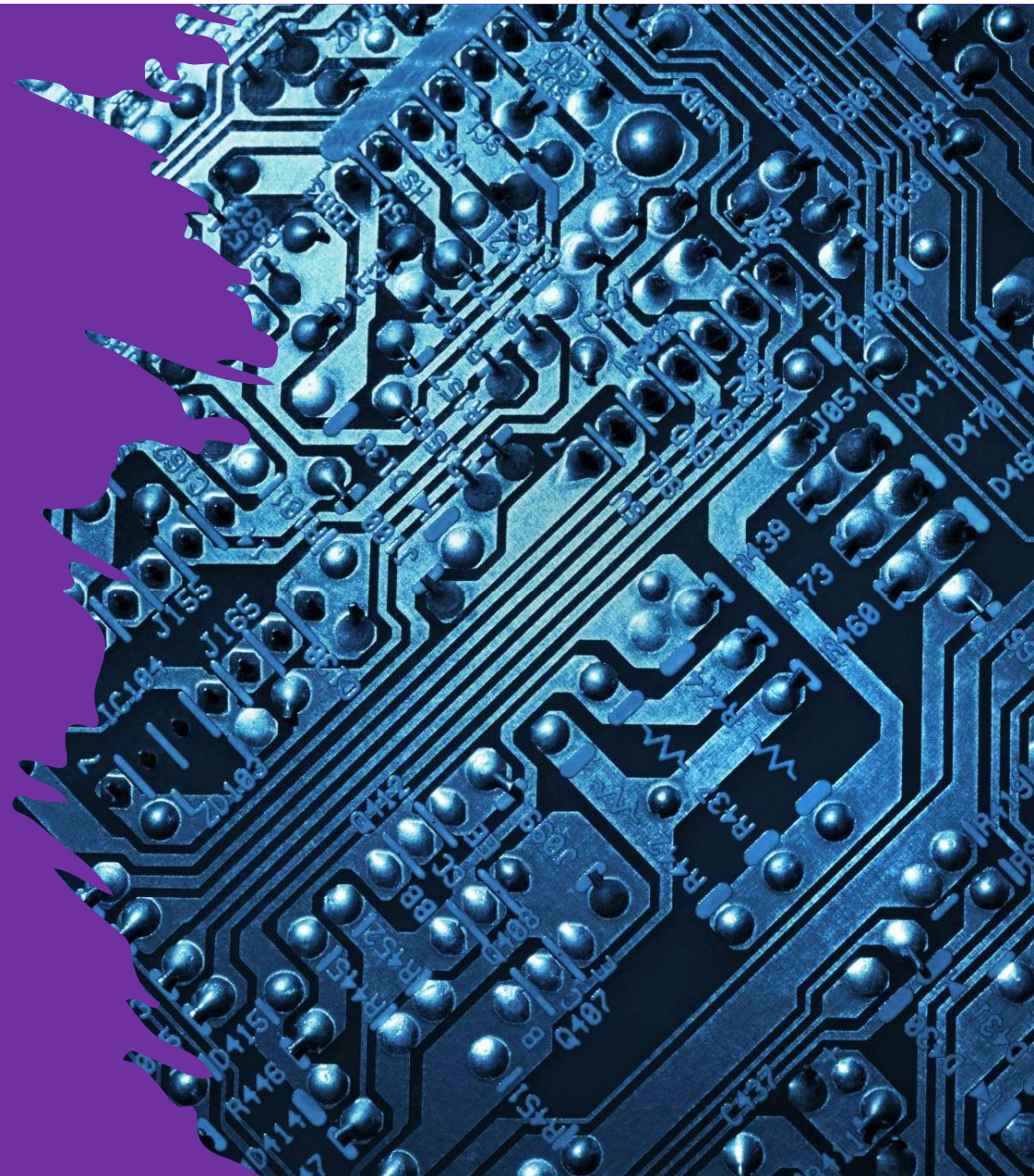
Which of these areas – roles, skills, culture – has been changed the most by digital technology in the last 3 years?

Where do you see the biggest challenge in leading change towards digital transformation?

What is digital transformation?

Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technology into all aspects of a business, fundamentally altering how it operates & delivers value to customers

- Enhanced efficiency & productivity
- Improved customer experience
- Data-driven decision-making
- Scaling & access to global markets



Digital transformation: the organisational & behavioural dimension

- **More than tools:** digital transformation is about more than software & tools, it's a holistic change in how work gets done
- **People first:** without engagement & capability-building, technology alone won't deliver results
- **HR as a strategic enabler:** supports adoption, builds skills, & fosters a culture for new ways of working

How ready is your organisation to adopt digital ways of working?

Organisational readiness for digital adoption

The extent to which an organisation possesses the necessary conditions, resources & capabilities to successfully implement & benefit from digital technologies

Strategic
alignment

Resources &
infrastructure

Capabilities &
skills

Culture &
mindset

Processes &
governance

Assessing organisational readiness for digital adoption



Is there leadership buy in & clarity about the topic?



Is there the willingness to react to digital trends fast enough & in an appropriate manner?



Has an appropriate organisational structure been set up?



Are there enough digitally experienced managers within the organization?



Are there barriers to innovation such as a missing innovation culture, budget restrictions & lack of organizational slack?

HR interventions for organisational readiness

- ✓ **Leadership signalling:** set a clear digital vision and act as role models by using new tools yourselves.
- ✓ **Incentives & recognition:** reward experimentation, even when it doesn't succeed, to reduce fear of failure.
- ✓ **Reallocation of time:** allow staff to dedicate a small proportion of work hours (e.g., "10% innovation time") for experimentation.
- ✓ **Temporary innovation units or taskforces:** concentrate innovation work in small, agile teams rather than spreading it thin across the organisation
- ✓ **Safe-to-fail environments:** create "sandbox" projects where teams can test new digital practices without threatening core operations.
- ✓ **Narratives & storytelling:** highlight success stories internally to build momentum and normalise digital adoption

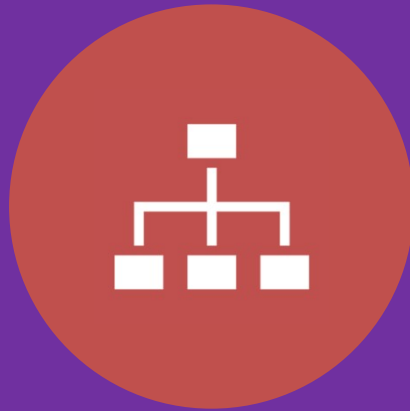
Group exercise:

Assess your organisation's digital readiness

- Evaluate readiness in strategy, culture & mindset
- Identify one strength & one gap
- How can you benefit from that strength? Address the gap?
- Share insights

Short break





SO, YOUR ORGANISATION
MAY BE READY.....



..... BUT WHAT ABOUT
YOUR STAFF?

How ready are your employees to adopt digital ways of working?

Individual readiness for digital adoption

The degree to which a person is psychologically, cognitively & behaviourally prepared to embrace & use new digital technologies

Attitudinal
readiness

Cognitive
readiness

Behavioural
readiness

Skills &
competencies

Support &
environment

A white humanoid robot is shown from the chest up, holding a smartphone in its right hand. The robot's head is turned slightly to the left, and its right arm is extended forward. The smartphone screen displays a blue background with a technical diagram of a mechanical part. The background is a blurred industrial setting with various mechanical components and structures.

Behavioural factors influence individual views about digitalisation

- Fear of job loss
- Concerns about the impact of digitalisation on roles, skills (deskilling) & the type of tasks they will perform
- Worries about the consequences of digitalisation for professional identity

Assessing individual readiness for digital adoption



Performance Expectancy
Belief that using the technology will improve job performance



Effort Expectancy
Perceived ease of use of the technology



Social Influence
Perception that important others think they should use the technology



Facilitating Conditions
Availability of organisational and technical support for use



Attitude Toward Use
Overall positive or negative feelings about using the technology



Self-Efficacy
Confidence in ability to use the technology without help



Anxiety
Feelings of unease or nervousness about using the technology

Strategic interventions to increase individual readiness

Leadership support: active promotion & support for digital initiatives; leading by example by demonstrating own proficiency & enthusiasm for digital technologies

Clear communication: communicate benefits of adopting digital technologies, streamlining processes, improving efficiency & creating opportunities for personal growth and development

User-friendly tools: invest in digital tools & platforms that make it easy for employees to adapt & integrate new technologies into their workflows

Technical support & resources: provide adequate support & resources to help employees overcome any initial challenges or barriers





HR interventions to increase individual readiness



Upskilling & reskilling: provide comprehensive training programmes on digital literacy, data science & specific technologies & their applications; provide virtual learning environment & resources



Mentoring & digital champion networks – designate individuals to guide, support & model digital adoption for others



Communities of practice & peer-to-peer learning: encourage staff to share their experiences & insights with their colleagues



Experimentation & learning: provide time & opportunity for experimentation to try out new digital tools and solutions

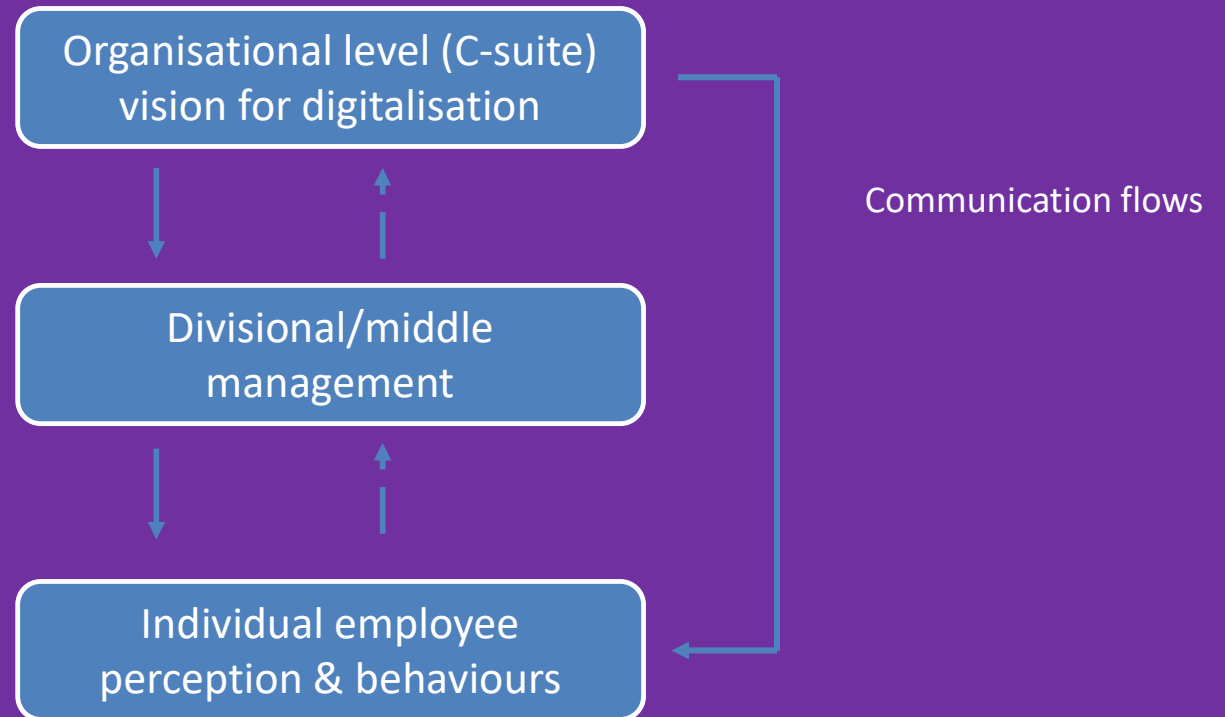
Group exercise: Map employee readiness

- Assess the skills, mindset & behaviours of individuals within your organisation
- Identify one challenge
- Propose one intervention

How aligned is your organisation & your employees?

Digital adoption is a multi-level process

Aligning C Suite vision & individual adoption is crucial



Perceptions about readiness often differ

What senior management believes....

- Employees are open, confident & ready for digital transformation.
- Employees already have strong digital skills & can adapt without major upskilling
- Organisational structures & culture already support innovation, with few barriers

What employees believe....

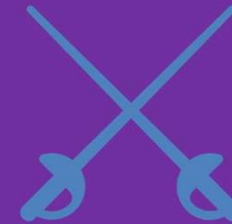
- Many feel uncertain, anxious & less personally prepared for digital change
- They see skills gaps, feel underprepared & want more training and support
- They experience rigid hierarchies, time/resource constraints & fear of failure as real barriers

Perception gaps are critical because shared mental models play a significant role in effectively guiding & executing digital transformation initiatives

Alignment matters



Alignment ensures structures, culture & strategy support employee skills and behaviours



Misalignment has impact on:

Pace of adoption: how quickly the innovation or change is implemented (fast vs. slow)

Character of adoption: nature of organisational response (positive vs. negative, low vs. high tension, supportive vs. resistant staff, risk of staff exit)

HR interventions for alignment



Coherence between strategy and employee development – Ensure employees have the skills, knowledge, and mindset to support the digital strategy



Co-design adoption journeys – Involve employees in shaping the rollout of new tools and processes to increase engagement and buy-in



Pilots combining systems + people – Test both technology and organisational practices together to identify challenges early



Align incentives – Link rewards and recognition to adoption behaviours and collaborative performance



Provide organizational slack – allows employees time & space for experimentation & learning



Bottom-up communication – Capture employee feedback, voice, and ideas to inform design, implementation, and continuous improvement.



Top-down communication – Provide clear strategic direction, goals, and expectations from leadership

Audience reflection

- Identify one digital initiative in your organisation that is well-aligned with its goals or strategy. Consider why it works well - what factors have contributed to this alignment?
- Identify one digital initiative that is less well aligned with your organization's goals or strategy. Consider what has contributed to the misalignment - process, communication, resources, or priorities?
- List 2-3 practical steps that you could take to improve alignment of digital initiatives

Next steps

Key takeaways

- Digital transformation is here & it's primarily a people challenge
- Digital transformation is changing roles & tasks; skills & capabilities; collaboration & culture
- Successful digital transformation = Organisational readiness + Individual readiness + Multi-level alignment

Addressing the people challenge

- ✓ **Upskill for digital** – build workforce-wide digital capabilities by supporting employee-led learning
- ✓ **Nurture talent for transformation** – attract & retain digital & innovation skills
- ✓ **Lead culture change** – enhance organisational & individual readiness for digital transformation
- ✓ **Align people and strategy** – co-design the adoption journey through user-led design, bottom-up communication & tackling fear of failure



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