

# RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

CRF members gathered in person on 21<sup>st</sup> March and online on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 to explore CRF's research on reskilling. We heard from experts and practitioners about the business case for reskilling, what approaches companies are taking to reskill their workforce, what results they are achieving and lessons they are learning along the way. These Post Meeting Notes summarise the insights from the event and link to further resources.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

**Reskilling is about more than just learning – ultimately its impact is measured by readiness for success in a new position.** It requires a combination of learning, developmental experiences, support and having the opportunity to put new skills into practice.



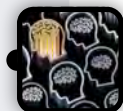
02

The speed of change in skills, the emergence of fields such as AI, cloud and data that are transforming every sector of the economy, the shrinking working age population and shortage of key skills across markets mean that **reskilling is becoming an essential element of an effective people strategy.**



03

**There is a strong business case for reskilling,** based on avoiding restructuring and recruitment costs, and increasing employee retention, motivation and commitment.



04

**It's important to have good, clean skills data, both in terms of what you have today and what your future requirements are likely to be.** There are many technology solutions that can help build your organisation's skills profile and infer what you have based on data already available in your HR systems.



05

**Reskilling needs to start with the business strategy and strategic workforce plan** – this will help determine which skills are the most future-critical, establish priorities and determine where to focus resources to effectively execute the strategy.



06

**It's essential to view reskilling as a change management process, and to apply the principles of behaviour change.** Ongoing communication, in particular with employees and the managers who support their career development, is key.



07

**Reskilling may require a shift in management mindset, based on openness to moving talent around rather than hoarding,** being prepared to hire and support people who are not yet the finished article, and a commitment to carving out time for people to learn.



08

**Reskilling requires HR to act in a joined-up way.** The HR teams responsible for talent identification and deployment, learning and assessment need to be aligned and pulling in the same direction.



09

**Successful reskilling programmes are not just an HR initiative – they have the sponsorship and active support of business leaders.** HR leaders need to consider how to make a positive case for reskilling with their business stakeholders so they see the potential value and are prepared to play a leading role in supporting these initiatives.



## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

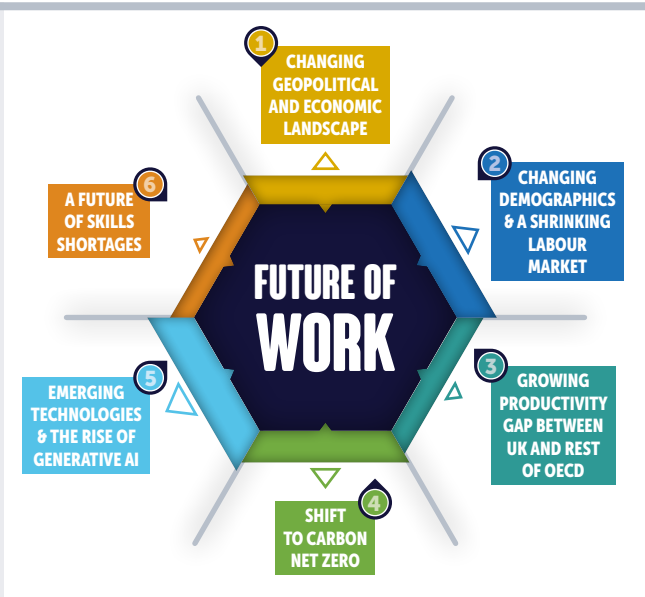
### INTRODUCTION TO RESKILLING

CRF Research Director Gillian Pillans provided an overview of CRF research on reskilling.

**DEFINITION**  
Reskilling is supporting workers to learn new skills to transition to a new or different role. The outcome is readiness to succeed in a new position.

#### WHY FOCUS ON RESKILLING?

The World Economic Forum's 2023 *Future of Jobs Report* estimates that 44% of worker's skills will be disrupted in the next five years. Organisations therefore need to be prepared for skills shortages and be future ready through adopting adaptable and resilient talent strategies. CRF research highlighted the following factors as particularly important in shaping the future of work:



CRF research showed a strong business case for reskilling, with the cost of redundancy and rehiring usually greater than the cost of retraining and redeploying. 70% of CRF survey respondents also said they either already have a reskilling programme underway or have plans to roll one out in the next few years.

Reskilling is also an important part of the social contract between employers and employees, as well as a way for organisations to demonstrate their strong social purpose through supporting the long-term employability of their people.

Two key prerequisites for reskilling are:

- 1. Acknowledge that you can't do everything at once and your investment should be targeted. The foundation for this is a workforce plan which informs your priorities.
- 2. Have good data on the skills you have today, and the skills you need in the future.



**GILLIAN PILLANS** is Research Director and the author of over 30 CRF research reports on a wide range of strategic HR topics including HR and business strategy, leadership development, talent management, organisation development and learning. Gillian has worked as a senior HR practitioner and OD specialist for several organisations including Swiss Re, Vodafone and BAA. Prior to her HR career, she was a management consultant with Deloitte Consulting and is also a qualified solicitor.

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#### WATCH THE ONLINE EVENT HERE: RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### BUILDING A SKILLS ENGINE FOR THE HUMAN ECONOMY



**MATT SIGELMAN** is President of [The Burning Glass Institute](#) and a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. Named by *Forbes* to its Future of Work 50, Matt has dedicated his career to unlocking new avenues for mobility, opportunity, and equity through skills. The Burning Glass Institute advances data-driven research and practice on the future of work and learning. Previously, as CEO of Lightcast, Matt and his team invented the field of real-time labour market data, a breakthrough innovation that transformed the way employers, education institutions, policy makers, and workers understand, plan for, and connect. He writes widely on the job market, has testified before Congress, and is consulted frequently by public officials and global media.

- ✉ EMAIL
- 📄 SLIDES

Matt Sigelman began by emphasising that skills form the DNA of an organisation, and that businesses are therefore right in paying increasing focus on skills. However, this focus should be driven by the business strategy (not by investments in technology that capture skills data).

#### SKILLS ARE CHANGING

- ➕ Now is a critical moment to consider skills as an instrument of strategy. 2023 research by the Burning Glass Institute and BCG found that the average occupation has seen 37% of skills replaced over the last five years. This fast pace of change is driven by a range of skills, not just tech skills.
- ➕ Jobs increasingly require new skills across a range of domains, challenging workers' ability to learn them as they go (e.g. data science skills aren't just for data scientists).
- ➕ Jobs are being redefined as they start to absorb emerging technologies. For example, we may still call people 'mechanical engineers', but the skills required to do this role have radically changed.
- ➕ Research identifies five emerging skills which are transforming every sector: AI/ML, cloud computing, product management, social media, and data analysis. These skills are not niche; they are present in one in eight jobs across Europe.

#### IMPACT OF GENERATIVE AI

- ➕ Emerging technologies like GenAI are fundamentally disrupting roles. This disruption could create new opportunities (e.g. the number of bank teller roles actually grew after ATMs were introduced as ATMs drove heightened demand for banking). Therefore, organisations need to be smart about where they might see displacement.
- ➕ Gen AI will change the skills workers need – either to stay relevant in their current jobs or to bridge the gap to jobs at lower risk of becoming irrelevant. Therefore, everyone needs a learning strategy.

Below are three key steps to building a thriving workforce in the human economy:

#### 1 IDENTIFY THE TALENT TO EXECUTE THE STRATEGY

- Know the contours of your current talent base – it is essential to know where talent in your organisation is located and how it maps against growing roles. However, organisations do not usually have good knowledge of their workforce's skills. Consider what proxies you could use to obtain skills data.
- Benchmark your requirements against best-in-class peers.
- Assess your future readiness through identifying comparative strengths and gaps to enable better prioritisation. Prioritisation allows us to make practical decisions about what skills we actually need, and is also an opportunity to make your workforce more valuable through skills arbitrage.

#### 2 DEVELOP A SKILLS STRATEGY FOR INVESTING IN TALENT

- There are specific skills in every role that make people more valuable, versatile and future ready. Identify and invest in the specific skills that advance careers and make workers more valuable, which also has an added benefit of increasing retention.

#### 3 GROW THE PIE BY TAPPING HIDDEN TALENT

- There is no one skill that is durable, high value and quick to build. Through recognising this, organisations can make smart decisions about where to focus and how to 'grow the pie'.
- Often the best talent is already inside the organisation. Consider which talent pools already have some of the required skills and how pathways and learning can be aligned to fill these gaps. The pathways may not currently be obvious.
- Organisations can measure and track outcomes from learning programmes to hold investments to account.



## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

- Build your own talent supply chain through translating and connecting strategic workforce plans to talent acquisition and training. Ensure you are signposting the relevant roles so employees know where the opportunities are.
- This approach can help you unlock diverse talent through focusing on pools that may not have all the skills required, but have sufficient adjacent skillsets.

### A PARADIGM OF PRODUCTIVITY

Historically, we have focused on improving productivity through driving down the cost of inputs (such as investing in automation). However, by investing in skills we grow productivity through making workers and their outputs worth more. What are the skills that make people more valuable to themselves and to your organisation, and how can you invest in these?

**Q Job design as a capability is becoming more important for the HR function. How would you advise HR Professionals to gain a better understanding of this area?**

**A** *First, we need to do what HR has always done – partner with the business to determine what we need. Rather than approaching this as an order taker, HR needs to proactively consider external data concerning how peers are defining the most bleeding edge roles. Then discuss what you think you need, how much it costs, and create a plan that balances future readiness and budget. Recognise that this is really an optimisation conversation – you can't have everything, so you need to step back and consider what are truly the capabilities that make people successful in a role?*

**Q How do we quantify human capital?**

**A** *Understanding skills is an important part of determining human capital. Starting with a skill level view, consider the workforce you have and how much this is worth in the market. This also allows you to make a business case around investment. Growth of human capital accruing over time is a smart metric for organisations to measure.*

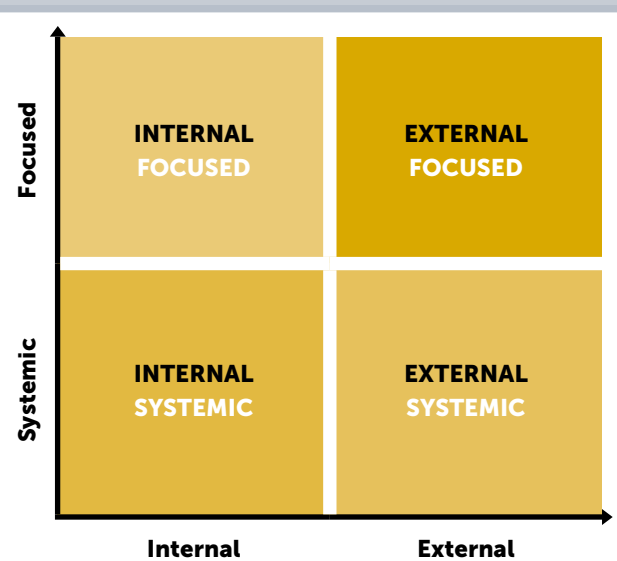
## INTRODUCING THE CRF RESKILLING MODEL

Gillian Pillans emphasised the importance of starting the reskilling process by ensuring you have a clear view of the skills that are essential to executing the business strategy and the Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP). This should be a dialogue between HR and executive leadership, occurring as part of the broader business strategy conversation. Key questions that should be explored as part of the SWP process include:

- Which skills are particularly important for the future of the organisation? Of these, which are especially difficult to hire or develop?
- Which skills are new or growing, and which skills might reduce?
- Where are skills adjacencies within the organisation?



CRF research identified two main areas of distinction in reskilling strategies, which are synthesised in the matrix below:

## CRF RESKILLING MATRIX





## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Reskilling strategies can be **focused** and/or **systemic**:

-  **Focused** on specific job roles, segments, skills or locations. This means providing reskilling programmes, redeployment or outplacement programmes targeted at individuals directly affected. This helps to ensure long-term employability and retention, minimise restructuring costs, and balance supply and demand in the workforce.
-  **Systemic**, preparing people more broadly for the future of work. This means giving people access to tools / support to manage their own development and enables continued development. Organisations should communicate the business strategy to employees, as well as what it means in terms of future skills.

Reskilling strategies can also be **internal** or **external**:



-  **Internal**: helping people prepare to be redeployed within the organisation.
-  **External**: helping people prepare for jobs outside the organisation. This could include generic outplacement or training people for specific roles (e.g. Deliveroo has retrained riders for roles in the rail industry) or working in partnership with other organisations across the supply chain or ecosystem.

### RESKILLING CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS




#### 1 A DEVELOPMENTAL CULTURE

-  Investments in new technologies are unlikely to meet their objectives unless the organisation supports continuous learning.
-  CRF research highlighted that one of the biggest reskilling barriers is managers not giving sufficient time and space for people to reskill. Organisations should consider how to structure people's time in order to free up space for development.
-  Promote management behaviours that support internal mobility and avoid hoarding of talent.
-  It's also important to provide information to managers about opportunities within the organisation.


#### 2 COMMUNICATIONS AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

-  Reskilling is in essence a change programme; organisations should apply behaviour change principles to their reskilling approaches. CRF's survey highlighted that this is a key gap, with only 16% of organisations communicating with their workforce how the skill profile is likely to change over the next 3-5 years.
-  This communication should include signposting employees towards available development opportunities, reducing the friction that makes it difficult for employees to access these programmes.

#### 3 ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

-  There has been an explosion in recent years of the technology available to support talent strategies. This is a fast-moving space, with the boundaries between different types of technology becoming blurred. Organisations need to decide whether they want to: a) have the best available tool available for each area, or b) focus on a more integrated solution.
-  It is also important to consider the employee experience and how to make the technology accessible. However, our research suggested that employee engagement with technology is low (42% said usage rates for tools were lower than expected).
-  Strong skills taxonomies and processes need to underpin the technology and talent philosophies and people policies may need to be updated.

#### 4 JOINED UP PRACTICE IN HR

-  The best examples of reskilling CRF identified in their research were where organisations had a joined-up, systemic view that linked together business strategy, workforce planning, talent processes, learning and on-the-job development. All of HR needs to be aligned around objectives and planned actions.

#### Summary of lessons learned:

-  Be targeted and focused. Be business-led in choosing where to reskill (which parts of the business? Which skill areas?)
-  Focus on areas where there is a strong crossover between current and future skills. This may be in surprising places. A minimum crossover of around 40% is typically a minimum requirement.
-  Turn open jobs into reskilling opportunities, for example through redesigning jobs as a series of projects that can be used developmentally.
-  Update your skills data – the quality of skills information is the second highest barrier organisations are facing in reskilling.
-  Incorporate reskilling into business plans – can we make sure that targets for reskilling are embedded into our business objectives?

## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### RICOH CASE STUDY



## RESKILLING OUR PEOPLE FOR A DIGITAL WORLD



**BEV CUNNINGHAM** has over 15 years operating at C-level in Global organisations, and prides bringing energy, dynamism and a sharp focus to all she does. Bev's background is in HR with a particular emphasis on Strategic Workforce Planning, Talent Development and Employee Engagement. Her experience spans sectors including IT Services, Technology, FMCG and Manufacturing. Her achievements are based on having a clear vision – creating the right culture and leadership style enables people to grow and develop as the organisation transforms, helping to ensure they remain relevant, engaged and successful.

SLIDES

**RICOH**  
imagine. change.

**Ricoh** is a global organisation with an annual revenue of €3.6bn and nearly 16,000 employees. A key value of the organisation is the desire to empower people to find fulfilment through work. Whilst Ricoh has a long history as an established printing company, they are currently transitioning to becoming a digital services company, offering services in five core pillars: digital workspace, cloud and infrastructure services, cybersecurity, digital experience and business process management.

In summary, Ricoh is transforming from a product business to a services business. This has involved transitioning from a workforce trained to deliver best-in-class in-house products, to employees responding to client problems and being aware of their role in Ricoh's value chain. A key part of this transition is employees being self-motivated to develop skills.

### THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ACTION

As part of their business transformation, Ricoh experienced increased demand for specialist IT Services and reduced demand for product specialists. The business therefore had to decide where to invest – in restructuring (which had a high cost and risked losing top talent) or in reskilling their workforce and creating internal mobility to flow talent to where it was needed.

There was additionally demand to create digital capability across the business, without losing their unique selling point of highly customer-centric service. With this in mind, Ricoh created iPeople 2.0, which combined all their technology platforms and helped to create a consistent service across all entities and a seamless employee experience. They also implemented the following three programmes.

### SCALA DIGITAL RESKILLING PROGRAMME




- 1 This was designed to take employees on a journey from an office-based world to a new digital world.
- 2 In order to enrol their best talent on the programme, all engineers could apply for the programme, after which they conducted extensive assessments. Out of 4,000 engineers across the business, 1,000 applied and 300 were selected.
- 3 The programme included creating a springboard for future development, enabling people to focus in specific technical areas, and then putting the learning into practice (e.g. through project work on temporary placements).
- 4 As the engineers' time was managed in a very structured way, taking time out to reskill could be disruptive. Change management and communications (such as taking time to sit down with line managers and explain the reasoning behind reskilling, as well as all of HR working in tandem) was therefore critical. Ricoh additionally created a resourcing pool to backfill certain roles if resourcing was likely to be a big problem.
- 5 People who were not suitable were invited to join another learning programme and could receive extensive feedback on their application.
- 6 Ricoh have now run three cohorts, and are soon to run a fourth. Each delegate has completed over 400 hours of learning and completed 350 new placement hours.

### MAIDEN CROSS-SKILLING PROGRAMME

- 1 Based on the rationale of providing employees who were not part of Scala with an opportunity to learn and grow.
- 2 Focused on providing individuals with skills that are adjacent to their current work.
- 3 Created workers with hybrid skills who could work in different scenarios, depending on the need of the business.

## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### POWER SKILLS INITIATIVE

- 
 Fosters self-motivation among employees, empowering them to develop PowerSkills (the skills Ricoh believes form the bedrock of success in today's dynamic professional landscape, combining capabilities such as resilience, creative thinking, and emotional intelligence with technical proficiencies in areas like data, AI and digital literacy).
- 
 Uses AI to create customised learning opportunities.
- 
 Ran 'PowerSkills' initiatives for leaders and executives, who had previously been left out of learning initiatives.

The overall process was underpinned by good quality data and facilitated a shift from a workforce who only passively engage with learning to a workforce that drive their own growth and learning. Ricoh are now building a business case for a talent marketplace, allowing every employee to create their own profile and connecting them with recommended jobs and projects.

#### Where there are any challenges in getting buy-in from the senior executive team?

**A** *There was good buy-in from the senior team as they had been involved in the overall transformation and were aware of the costs of choosing between redundancy and investing in reskilling. The resistance we experienced was more from the middle of the organisation as it was counter-intuitive for middle managers to have many of their team be retrained and move to other roles.*

## RIGHTSKILLING: THE PROMISE AND PITFALLS OF SKILLS-BASED APPROACHES



**AMANDA NOLEN** is recognised as a global expert in skills and learning strategy and technology. Through her boutique consultancy [NilesNolen](#) she helps companies including Google, HSBC and Novartis to deliver business results by shifting to skills-based organisations, while advising startups and scale-ups on their own strategy, go-to-market, positioning and more. She is venture partner and LP at Emerge Education, faculty at IE University, a regular speaker at events such as WebSummit and Learning Technologies, and the author of a popular LinkedIn course on the *Future of Workplace Learning*.

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Amanda Nolen outlined the following trends and recommendations regarding skills-based organisations:

- 
**The rapidly changing skills environment** provides opportunities for organisations to drive positive value.
- 
**The C-suite wants to talk about learning.** LinkedIn research showed that 9 out of 10 global executives plan to either increase or maintain their investment in L&D (including upskilling and reskilling).
- 
**The business case for learning is clear.** Learning is a key driver of talent retention and attraction; people want to work for companies that invest in their growth. However, you need to be able to speak the language of business and link your initiatives to business priorities. Use data to make a compelling case to business leaders of how you will:
  - Make money
  - Save money
  - Mitigate risk
- 
**Skills-based organisation get results.** They are 107% more likely to place talent effectively and 79% more likely to have a positive workforce experience. However, organisations can only achieve these results by putting their skills data 'to work'. For example, a skills taxonomy should be a dynamic system that underpins all skills-driven activity – not just an inventory. Also consider skills adjacencies and how careers can move laterally, as well as vertically.








## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH








-  **Communication and motivation are key to a skills-approach.** Communicate the benefits to your employees and consider investing in coaching. Learning new skills could be part of employees' objectives, which they are accordingly rewarded for.
-  **More and more technology is coming to the market** that can help organisations with identifying, inferring and taking action related to skills. (e.g. Techwolf, Eightfold, Beamery, Gloat etc). Professionals can keep up to date through horizon scanning and listening to what experts in the space are saying.
-  **A skills-approach can help break down existing HR siloes.** Currently, talent and L&D often have competing budgets and priorities, with little clarity on which function is responsible for different overlapping areas.

### RIGHTSKILLING

“ Amanda introduced the concept of ‘rightskilling’. Employees may be wary of the term ‘reskilling’ due to fear of job losses or a misunderstanding that reskilling means they are not doing their current job well. Instead, rightskilling offers a more targeted approach focused on the skills required for business as usual as well. This includes:

-  Considering the supply chain of future skills. Often, by the time organisations decide they need particular skills, it is too late to build them. However, there are ways (such SWP, talking to business leaders and looking at external research) that HR can proactively identify future skills.
-  Deciding who has responsibility for skills within an organisation. Consider creating a Chief Skills Officer role with end-to-end responsibility for skills.
-  Take into account all the skills an employee has, not just the ones they use in their current job. ”

### COMMON PITFALLS

-  **Bad user experience with tech**, such as clunky platforms that are not embedded in the flow of work.
-  **Skills lost in translation.** Data often does not translate well from one system to another. Ensure your vendors are honest with you about how data will translate, ideally bringing them all together and asking them how data will flow from one system to another.
-  **Not knowing your overall strategic direction before buying technology.** It may be better to invest limited resources in first ensuring the direction is clear, rather than in the shiniest new tools.
-  **Content consumption itself does not skill people**, though the vast majority of investment in L&D is in content. Giving people access to a learning platform is not enough – instead organisations need to build learning approaches that incorporate opportunities to practice skills, receive feedback and coaching etc.
-  **Insufficient communication**, including a lack of guidance to employees on where they should focus. Whilst employees may say they have insufficient time to spend on rightskilling, if you explain to them the benefits (e.g. earn more, gain a promotion etc.), they are more likely to find time.
-  **Beware bad vendors** – not all vendors are created equal.
-  **Don't boil the ocean** – start small, develop a Minimum Viable Product and build out from there.

#### Q How important is it to have a centralised technology system?

A *Look at what you already have and remember that nobody is starting from scratch. Consider what people are actually using (which might surprise you). Ultimately, it is best decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on where your organisation is today.*



## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### STANDARD CHARTERED CASE STUDY RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



**ANDY MACLEAN** joined [Standard Chartered](#) in 2019 as Global Head, Organisation and People Capability. His portfolio includes learning and development, leadership, culture, employee listening, organisation design, and people analytics. He has also been Head of HR for all Global Support Functions since 2022. Previously, Andy spent six years as a management consultant with McKinsey & Co. – where he focused on post-merger integration, and 25 years in the British Army. Andy is a member of the Board of Trustees for [RE:ACT](#) Disaster Response, a disaster relief charity that leverages the unique skills of military veterans and former emergency service personnel.

Andy MacLean outlined how [Standard Chartered](#) – the multinational bank with 90,000 employees – is currently on a multi-year journey towards becoming a skills-based organisation. He outlined how the transition involves three incremental phases:

#### 1 BUILD THE LEARNING HABIT

- Focused on creating a 'buzz' around learning and the journey to being a skills-based organisation. This included investing in a new LXP (linked to their future skills).
- Adopted a broad focus as there was not sufficient time to first precisely define current skills and the skills gap.
- Overall, this resulted in employees almost doubling their time spent on L&D activities.

#### 2 NURTURING THE PRIORITY ROLES

- Identified priority roles, sunsetting roles and the skills adjacencies between the two, so that they could target people for skills journeys. In total they targeted 2,000 people, 84% of whom moved into a new role.
- Focused on generating business sponsorship. For example, they were clear that they would only launch a skills journey if it would be personally sponsored by an executive, there

would be enough senior leaders to act as mentors, and sufficient project opportunities for employees to get live experience were created.

- Skills journeys were very experiential – the bank encouraged people to not just learn from resources, but to also practice applying them (e.g. brain training games, digital simulations, applying learning on the job).

#### 3 EMBED LEARNING AND SKILLS INTO THE BANK'S DNA

- The Bank is now emphasising that skills will be the currency for work going forwards, rather than just jobs. However, this is not easy and requires a lot of time and effort.
- They are also focusing on unlocking productivity through better matching skills to the work required by the business strategy.

#### ENABLING FACTORS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO BECOMING A SKILLS BASED ORGANISATION

- The Bank now has four job archetypes, with varying degrees of flexibility around how much of their time they spend on fixed vs gig work.
- Placed confidence in employee skills self-assessment. This approach opens the door to having conversations on how to validate skills.
- Have five separate best-in-class technology systems. They are currently investigating how these can be linked up better and/or streamlined.
- Mindsets are the biggest challenge. This includes business leaders, who struggled to see the value of the journey initially, but supported it once they saw the productivity gains.

#### Q How can you create more long-term thinking around skills?

**A** *This is not easy. Whilst there is no lack of appetite for longer-term thinking in the business, it can be hard to action. It takes time and curated conversations with some of the most senior leaders, where HR can play a key role. Additionally, people are far less likely to cite a lack of time once the business case is clear.*

## RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### Q&A WITH VIRGIN MEDIA O2 PUTTING A SKILLS-FOCUSED TALENT STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE



in LINKEDIN



**MEL GLOYN** has for the past 18 months, as Director of People Capability, has repositioned **VMO2** from a traditional role-based organisation, to one which operates with agility, self-sufficiency, and a skills-centred configuration in an evolving and complex industry. She pioneered the use of EdTech AI to craft an ecosystem which provides responsive skills, mobility, and workforce practices; designed to enhance employee experience and promote a 'leaner and simplified' culture of learning. Her approach to organisational and capability development not only addresses current workforce skills gaps, but also anticipates evolving industry and technological demands, positioning the organisation for proactive growth and adaptability within a competitive skills market.

The summary of Mel Gloyn and Gillian Pillans' conversation is summarised below.

**Q** What was the business question you were asked to solve?

**A** We required new skillsets to support the merging of two businesses and our transition from a legacy telco to a technology company. Not only were these skillsets that we didn't have, but they were also skills that we could not really find in the UK. We therefore needed to build them.

**Q** Was there a specific business case discussion round the imperative to do this?

**A** We were dependent on contingent workers and were spending a lot of money on this to help us become a cloud-based organisation. Ultimately, we needed to get the skills to become sustainable as an organisation, decide what roles and areas of the business that includes, and determine how quickly we needed to get there.

**Q** What were the steps you undertook to understand the skills you already have as an organisation?

**A** We were merging two organisations with different HR systems and also had very poor data (e.g. data on individual's skills, work history or accreditation). Ultimately, we needed to join those HR processes together and get data that we could utilise. Because data was so poor we used an outside provider (Tech Wolf) to infer skills and support us in creating a basic skills inventory. This took about three months. We then took the baseline directly to the individuals and asked what skills set they had. To help with this, we created a user-friendly survey utilising the taxonomy we had.

**Q** What was your communications approach?

**A** It was important to get to know all our stakeholders and really partner with them (not just update them with a couple of calls), explaining how what we were doing would help them. For individual employees, our approach was based on story telling and being transparent about how the business was changing and the need to adapt. We emphasised that we wanted to develop and retain them, and to do that we needed to know how to best invest in them.

**Q** What was the process behind deciding to take individual skills assessments at face value?

**A** We realised that we couldn't validate everybody and everything. We strategically decided which skills sets were particularly important and then worked with a provider to do a deep dive and assess those skills.

**Q** What are some of the results you've achieved so far?

**A** Whilst we have financial metrics we can share, our most important achievement was building credibility for further skills conversations with executives. There is now a waiting list of C-suite executives who want to talk to us about what we've done and do the same.

**Q** In terms of your own reskilling or upskilling journey – how did you upskill yourself?

**A** I had to get really literate with data, including understanding how to build a data warehouse and what that means, and understand the nuts and bolts of different use cases.

# RESKILLING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

## crf UPCOMING EVENTS

- 
**HR LEADERS BRIEFINGS**  
**Reskilling for Sustainable Growth**
- 
[16<sup>th</sup> May, 15.00 CET | In-Person, Amsterdam, The Netherlands](#)
- 
[23<sup>rd</sup> May, 15.30 CET | In-Person, Stockholm, Sweden](#)

Register Interest →

## crflearning ON DEMAND COURSE Strategic Workforce Planning

If you'd like to build your expertise in Strategic Workforce Planning and learn more about CRF's framework, access CRF Learning's On Demand Course [Strategic Workforce Planning](#).

## FURTHER READING

- CRF. 2024. **Reskilling for Sustainable Growth**. Research Report. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/research-reskilling-for-sustainable-growth>
- CRF. 2021. **Strategic Workforce Planning – Unlocking Future Capabilities**. Research Report. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/research-report-strategic-workforce-planning-unlocking-future-capabilities>
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PRE-EVENT MASTERCLASSES:

**Reskilling to Lead in a Real Time World** from [Achieve Breakthrough](#)



**Reskilling in the AI-evolution** from [Mercer](#)



**Digitally Enabling the Reskilling** from [Ricoh Europe](#)

Should you have been unable to attend the CRF Partner Masterclasses above on the morning of the event or would like to access the materials, please contact [Mette Stern](#), CRF Partner Engagement Manager.