# Getting Started with a Skills-Based People Strategy

Understanding your people and engaging them throughout their career journey enables you to respond to changing business needs. With the recognition that skills have become an imperative, the next step is determining a course of action. A skills-based approach with a focus on people is the critical starting point, with a few elements that must be in place for all companies, despite their unique challenges and needs:

### A skills data foundation.

Understanding of the skills and capabilities of your workforce. Essentially, this is your skills DNA, gleaned from your organization's unique private and public data.

### Reporting and analytics.

The ability to analyze and plan for build, buy, and borrow decisions to meet the skills needs of your organization.

### Technology to plan, execute, and analyze skills-based people strategies.

The ability to put plans into action to leverage technology and tools to upskill, reskill, redeploy, or hire talent, with a focus on developing talent—not just acquiring it.

# Attributes of an agile, skills-based people strategy.

A key component of understanding your organization's current climate is understanding if your culture supports a skills-first approach. Gathering this insight requires identifying what an agile, skills-first culture looks like, and then determining what's required to operate with a skills-first strategy across the enterprise. For example, are employees encouraged to take risks as they learn new things? Do managers have visibility into their teams' skills gaps?

A company will know it has an agile, skills-based strategy when it consistently and broadly demonstrates eight attributes:

### Connections across silos.

Cross-functional relationships spark curiosity and encourage the development of skills. Breaking down silos and bringing together diverse perspectives and a variety of expertise prompts new thinking and creates opportunity.

### Open and candid communication.

Transparency about current and future skills needs, the workforce's skills interests, and opportunities help employees stay motivated while optimizing skills across the business.

### Psychological safety.

Employees are supported and encouraged to explore, experiment, and learn new things. They feel safe to take risks—and to even fail—knowing they can iterate through applied learnings.

### Disciplined link of skills to business impact.

Knowledge of the skills that are needed and how they enable individual, team, and organizational decision-making.

### Continuous iteration and reflection.

Agility in the design, development, and evolution of solutions by tapping into different skills portfolios and perspectives.

### Leaders' responsibility for skills management.

People leaders become the enablers of a skills-based environment, and ensure skills are identified, developed, and deployed enterprise-wide.

### Strong, shared cultural values.

All employees align with the company's single set of values.

### Easy access to skills-based opportunities.

Employees know how to gain the experiences they need in order to pursue their interests and make decisions about their career.

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