

# *Becoming a skills- based organisation:*

10 steps your company can take

# Agenda

Welcome & introduction

Why skills matter – What is a skills-based organisation?

Overview of the 10 steps

Interactive discussion – Prioritising steps

Connecting the dots

Close

## Meet our *Skills Specialists*

Our skills experts work with large organisations to identify end-to-end workforce development solutions that will maximise productivity and organisational growth.



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## A global leader in *skills development*

With almost 150 years' experience, City & Guilds is the trusted global leader in vocational education and skills development, empowering individuals and organisations to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Our industry aligned awards & assessments, leadership & management, skills training, and corporate learning & development solutions bridge the gap between education and employment enabling individuals to make a greater impact through the power of skills.

We believe that skills change lives, and through our commitment to fostering a culture of lifelong learning and innovation we:

- Enable individuals to acquire the practical knowledge, expertise and confidence to excel in their chosen careers
- Support organisations, and their workforce, to prepare for a successful future
- Drive economic growth



## Why *skills matter*

Skills are what people can learn, develop, apply and refine, to enhance their effectiveness and progression in their career.

These skills can be **technical** ('hard' skills) or they can be **durable** ('soft' skills). Skills can typically be assessed in some way.

When skills are combined with a person's knowledge, behaviours and values, they provide a holistic view of an employee's capabilities – what they can and do bring to an organisation.

## Why *skills matter...*

“Skills-based organisations are 79% more likely to provide a positive workforce experience and 63% more likely to achieve results.”\*



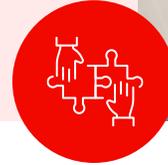
### Prioritise skills over job titles

Instead of relying on purely role-based structures, with limited entry routes and narrow career pathways, the organisation, and its managers and leaders, focus on what people can do and the skills they have as the basis for managing them, in line with business needs.



### Skills-based hiring

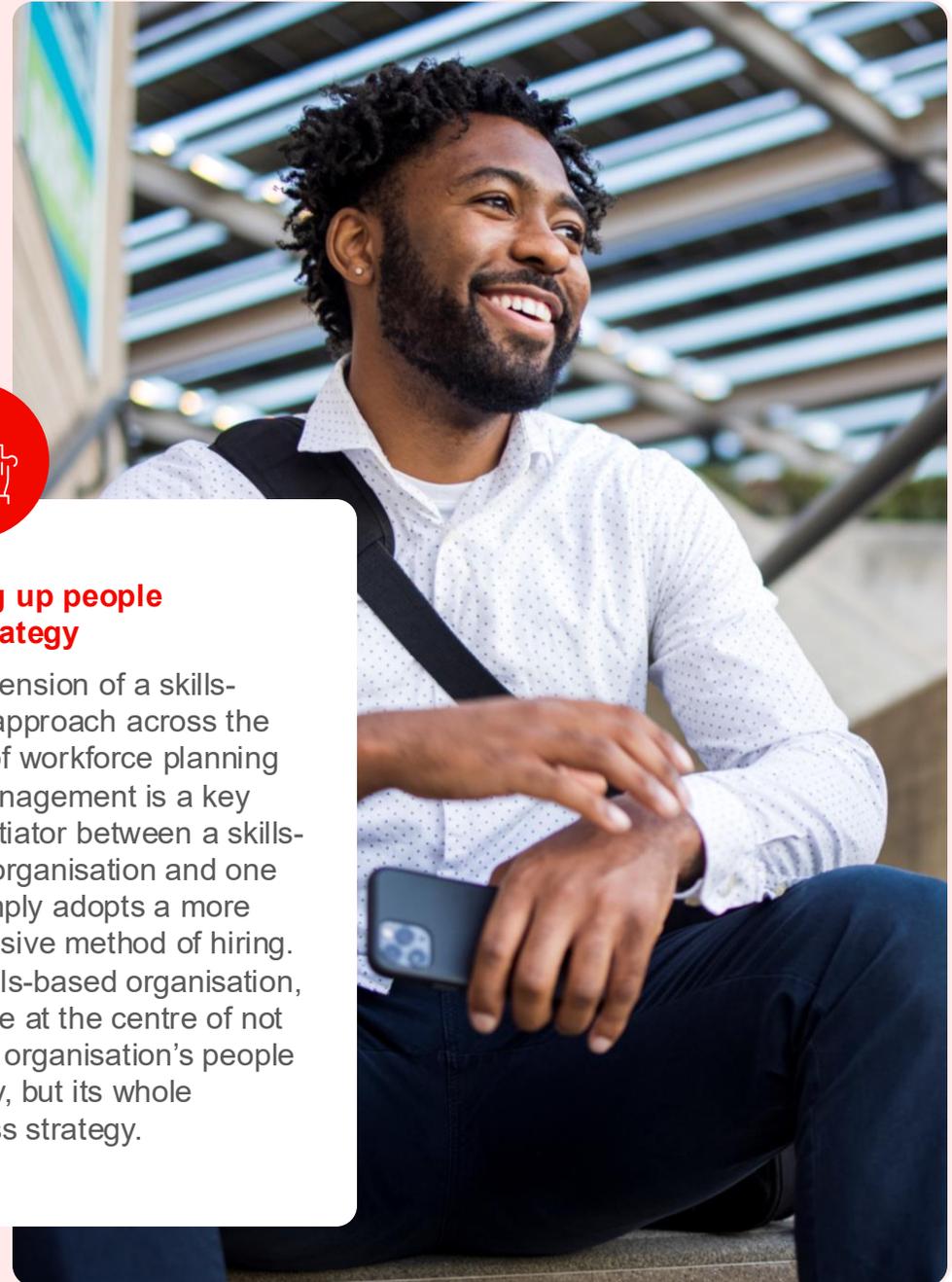
Focus on whether applicants can demonstrate they have the skills needed for a job. Organisations must determine what skills they need before advertising roles and consider how they will validate those skills in the recruitment process.



### Joining up people and strategy

The extension of a skills-based approach across the whole of workforce planning and management is a key differentiator between a skills-based organisation and one that simply adopts a more progressive method of hiring. In a skills-based organisation, skills are at the centre of not just the organisation's people strategy, but its whole business strategy.

\**Deloitte (2024) 'Becoming an AI-enabled, skills-based organization'*  
[deloitte.com/us/en/services/consulting/articles/ai-enabled-skills-based-organization.html](https://deloitte.com/us/en/services/consulting/articles/ai-enabled-skills-based-organization.html)





## Why consider becoming more *skills based*?

# 1

### **Increase organisational agility**

making it easier to pull together the right teams to capitalise swiftly on new opportunities

# 2

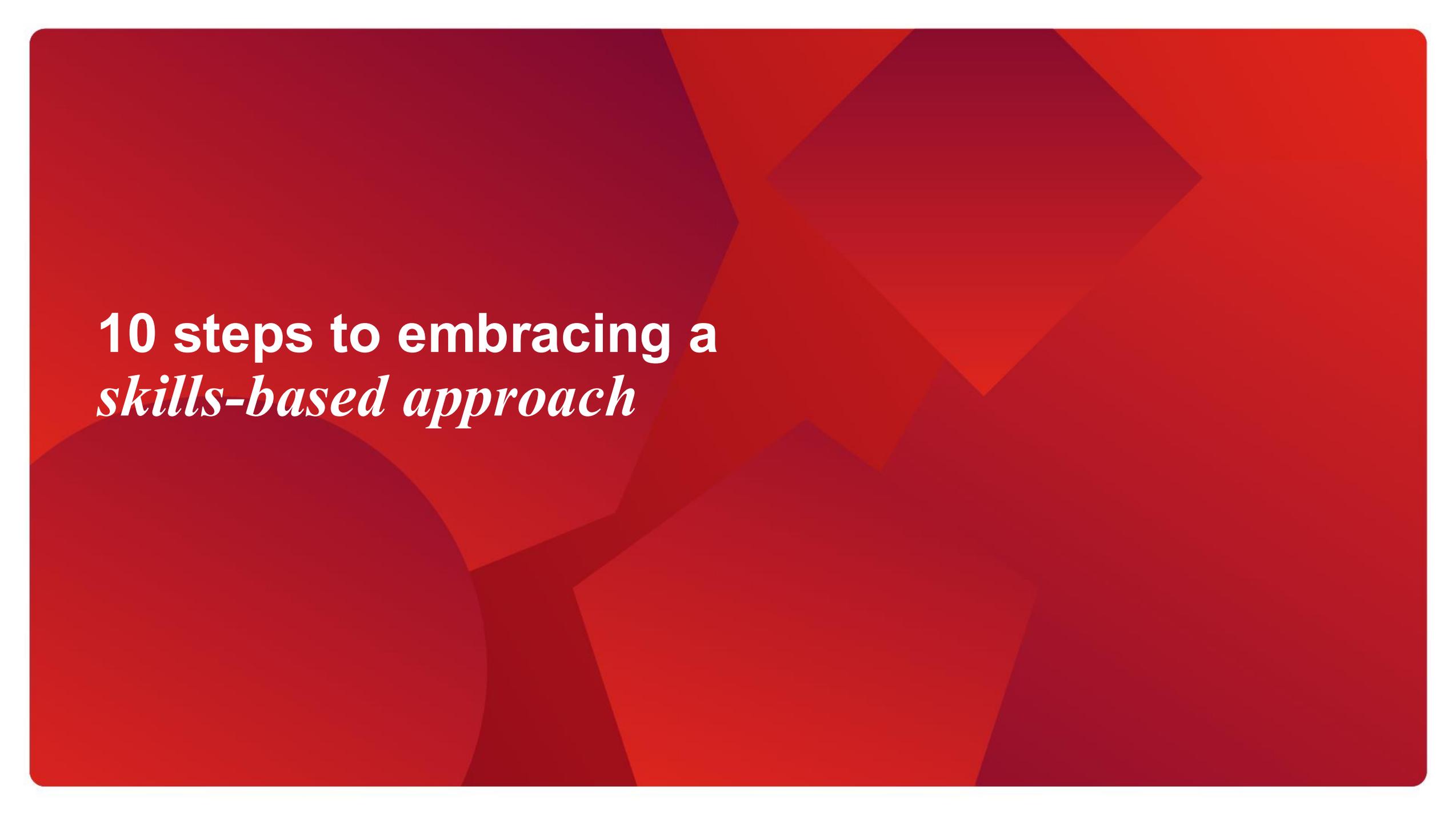
### **Respond more swiftly**

to defining changes like the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

# 3

### **The bottom line**

Skills-based organisations can provide a framework for improving productivity and driving growth



**10 steps to embracing a**  
*skills-based approach*

# 10 steps to embracing a *skills-based approach*

1. Ensure skills are on the leadership agenda
2. Establish what skills you need today and tomorrow
3. Get a skills baseline
4. Align skills needs with roles and functions
5. Review your existing training offer
6. Be transparent
7. Put skills to work quickly
8. Recognise learning
9. Connect different steps into a cohesive approach
10. Start small and think long-term



## Ensure skills are on the *leadership agenda*

- ✓ **Make skills a strategic leadership priority** - Leaders must champion a future-focused, skills-driven approach and create a culture that values continuous learning and adaptability.
- ✓ **Embed a skills mindset across all levels of management** - Managers need clarity on how skills link to strategy so they can support development, coach effectively, and enable flexible routes into roles.
- ✓ **Invest in strong leadership & management capability** - High-quality leadership is essential for communicating strategy, having meaningful career conversations, and driving a skills-based culture.





## Establish what skills you need *today and tomorrow*

- 1. Start with strategic and operational needs** - Becoming skills-based means understanding the work you do today and the work you need to deliver in the future. Skills analysis must link directly to organisational priorities, not just 'skills for skills' sake.
- 2. Identify the skills required for growth and resilience** - Use a structured approach (e.g., SWOT-style review) to determine which skills are essential for core business continuity and which are needed to seize new opportunities. Clear alignment prevents training spend from being rejected due to weak strategic relevance.
- 3. Ground skills planning in real work and real roles** - Engage employees, leaders, and customers to understand the technical, behavioural, and personal skills required. Use these insights to design targeted development, mentoring and coaching, ensuring people are equipped to meet future business demands.

## Get a *skills baseline*

- 1. Build a clear, practical view of current skills**  
You don't need a full taxonomy, start by systematically capturing skills in priority teams using job data, LMS insights, and role requirements.
- 2. Use standards and technology to accelerate accuracy**  
National frameworks (e.g. UK Standard Skills Classification) and AI-enabled tools support faster, dynamic skills mapping and keep data up to date.
- 3. Identify gaps through real-world engagement**  
Use surveys, focus groups and performance data to understand technical and behavioural skill gaps, ensuring development is relevant, accessible and targeted.

“Adopting a skills-based approach could introduce organizations to an untapped talent pool of workers who are STARS (skilled through alternative routes).” *McKinsey (2023)*





## *Align skills needs* with roles and functions

- 1. Define essential skills for each role** - Keep role profiles, recruitment, and career pathways clear by identifying the core technical and behavioural skills required, without over-engineering.
- 2. Use skill overlap to widen internal mobility** - Comparing skills across different roles reveals high-match opportunities, enabling reskilling and progression into harder-to-fill positions.
- 3. Integrate skills profiles into development & performance** - Link skills to learning pathways, performance reviews, and progression criteria to support managers, improve transparency and set people up for success.

'If you identify an 80% skills match between, for example, an administrator and an analyst role, you have a valuable opportunity: you can train the administrator – who already understands your business and aligns with your values – to step into the harder-to-fill analyst position.'

*Anthony Impey, MBE FCGI, CEO, Be the Business*



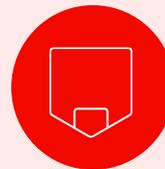
## *Review* your existing training offer



**Check alignment with required skills** - Assess whether current training covers the skills your organisation now needs and identify gaps based on strategic priorities.



**Tailor training to different learner groups** - Balance induction, apprenticeships, and concise 'bolt-on' modules for experienced staff, especially in fast-moving areas like digital, AI and leadership.



**Balance in-house learning with recognised credentials** - Ensure training keeps pace with change, includes robust assessment, and provides trusted, transferable qualifications that support progression and employer confidence.

## Be *transparent*

- 1. Clarify role expectations and future skills needs** - Use clear role profiles and open communication to show what skills are required now and what will be needed in the future.
- 2. Be honest about skills gaps and risks** - Explain how shifting skills demands may impact roles, enabling employees to make informed decisions about learning, reskilling and career planning.
- 3. Show commitment to upskilling and reskilling** - Be transparent about the support available, emphasising that reskilling is a normal path to progression and a shared win for employees and the organisation.

‘The idea of a skills-based organisation isn’t necessarily new. It’s been around in various forms for decades, often under different guises like competency frameworks, talent marketplaces or agile workforce planning. But while the concept isn’t new, the conditions for its success – tech, urgency and mindset – are aligning in a way that makes it feel fresh and actionable.’

*Caroline Taylor, The Oxford Group*





## Put skills to work *quickly*



**Enable immediate real-world application** - Applying new skills straight away strengthens learning, boosts confidence and increases motivation for future development.



**Use on-the-job application to measure impact** - Early use of new skills provides meaningful evidence of programme effectiveness and highlights any gaps training needs to address.



**Train strategically for emerging needs** - When demand is low or evolving, start with smaller groups who can apply skills immediately and become in-house experts before wider rollout.

## Recognise *learning*

- 1. Make learning a performance priority** - Treat learning as essential, not optional, embed it into performance management and reward structures.
- 2. Enable personalised development pathways** - Clear role-skill expectations allow employees to choose learning that supports upskilling, reskilling and internal mobility.
- 3. Track outcomes, not just attendance** - Measure impact through progression, skills gained and strategic gaps filled, reinforced by accredited programmes that benefit both employees and the organisation.



## Connect different steps into a *cohesive approach*

- 1. Join up all skills initiatives** - Link recruitment, performance, learning systems and feedback loops so skills become a consistent organising principle across the organisation.
- 2. Build shared understanding and behaviours** - Ensure hiring managers and line leaders understand and apply skills-based practices, supporting mobility, fair hiring and skills-led decision-making.
- 3. Make skills a common organisational 'currency'** - Reinforce the value of skills at every level so development, deployment and progression all align to a unified skills-based strategy.





## Start small and *think long-term*

- 1. Begin with focused pilot areas** - Target specific teams, functions or locations to test a skills-based approach in a manageable way. Early wins help build credibility, demonstrate value and secure wider buy-in.
- 2. Grow iteratively as needs evolve** - Skills, roles and business priorities shift over time. Pilots allow you to refine your approach, keep skills data current and adapt to new strategic needs without being overwhelmed.
- 3. Plan for a multi-year transformation** - Becoming fully skills-based is complex and resource-intensive. Use pilots, employee insight, expert partners and continuous learning to scale progressively and sustainably across the organisation.

Start small with pilot initiatives, use data for skills mapping, engage employees who are closer to the tasks and skills needed, partner with experts, be willing to let go and try new things.'

*Caroline Taylor, The Oxford Group*

## The *four most common reasons* staff training budget requests are rejected are:

- 1** Training requested doesn't address the key problems the business needs to address.
- 2** Training requested is not aligned with the priorities of other departments (Finance, Legal, HR, Technology, etc).
- 3** No clear alignment with the overall business strategy.
- 4** Low or no confidence in return on investment.



QUESTION:

**So, how do we overcome these challenges?**

## *In practice:* How Pret's joined-up approach demonstrates ROI

'When I hear L&D professionals saying that their work isn't valued by leaders, I think "why don't you show them?" It's part of our job to tell the business why what we deliver is so important.'

That's the view of Daksha Stancilas, Learning & Development Manager at Pret A Manger – and she has a host of KPIs on hand to support her.

**80% of Pret's General Managers started as team members, which clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the L&D offer, as does Pret's high retention rate.**

Those managers themselves then track the performance of their teams in shops, with access to data showing individual productivity and various KPI metrics.



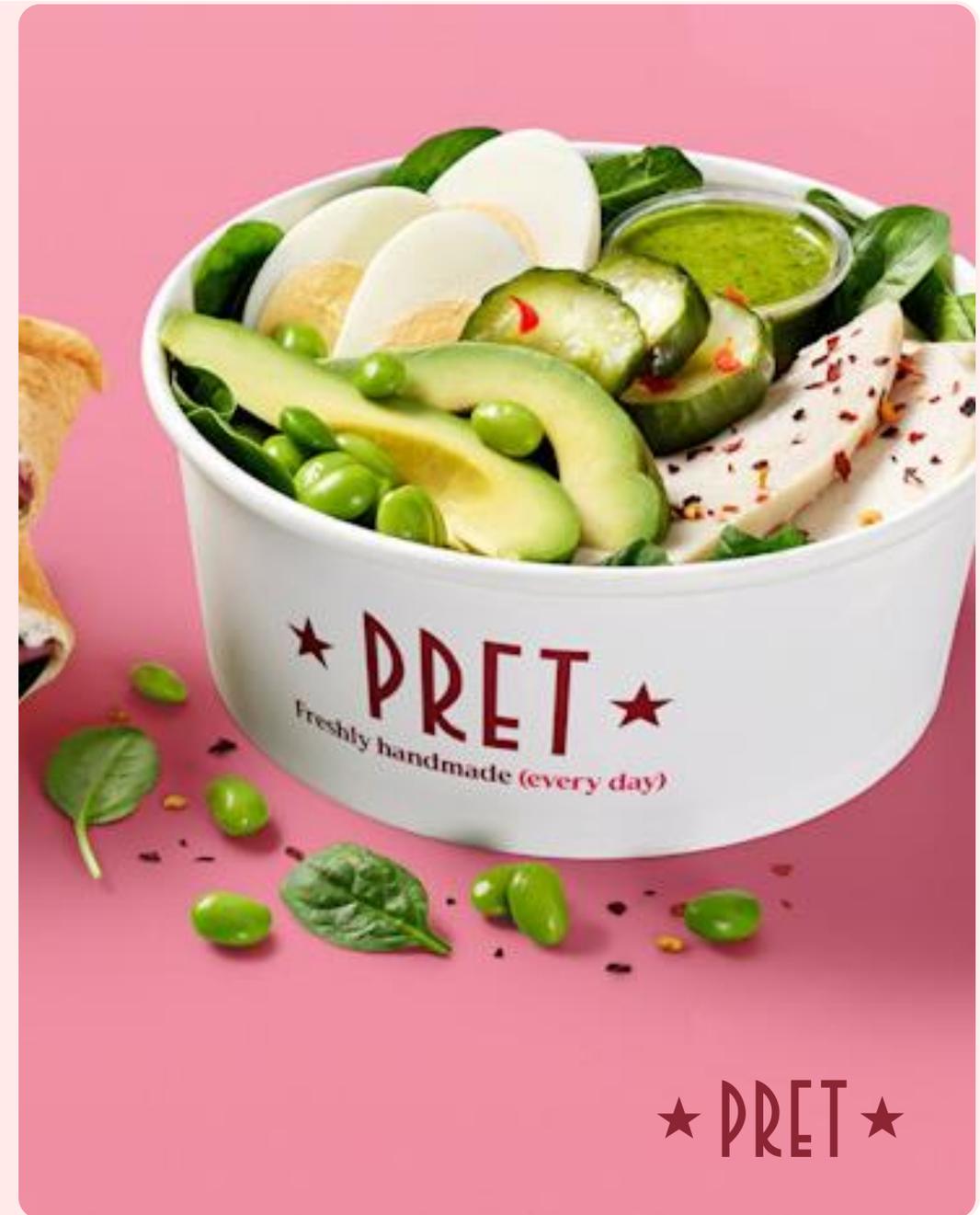
## *In practice:* How Pret's joined-up approach demonstrates ROI

If further support is required, the L&D team are available as subject matter experts to support with interventions. **At the centre, this combines to provide a clear picture of the total impact of barista training on speed of service, quality and customer satisfaction – exactly what Pret prides itself on.**

Daksha concludes:

**'We can clearly demonstrate that without key knowledge, behaviours and skills, our teams would not be set for success. The Pret Academy's role is key to ensuring our teams are ready.'**

*Daksha Stancilas,  
Learning & Development Manager at Pret A Manger*



★ PRET ★

# Table discussion

## *Prioritising* the steps

1. Ensure skills are on the leadership agenda
2. Establish what skills you need today and tomorrow
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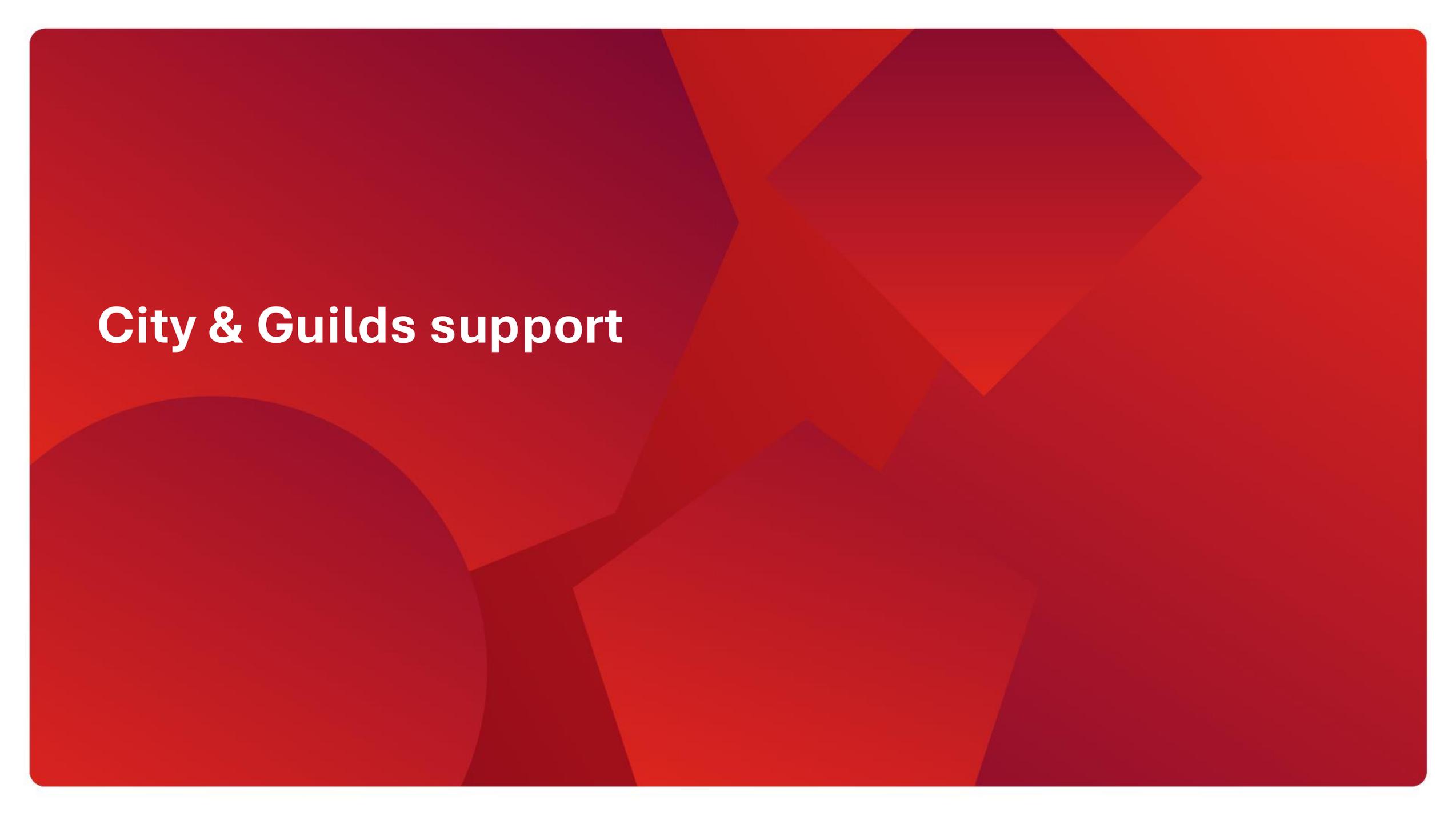
**Which of the 10 steps resonate most with your organisation?**



**What would be your next steps to becoming more skills based?**



**What are the greatest challenges?**



**City & Guilds support**

# How can City & Guilds *accelerate* your transition to becoming more *skills-based*?

City & Guilds has almost 150 years of experience to bring to our client partnerships. Outside of our qualification and apprenticeship offer we also work directly with employers to co-develop solutions to a wide range of skills challenges.

Some of our key strengths include:

## Leadership & Management

- ✓ L&M Capability building
- ✓ Skills recognition at all levels
- ✓ Ready to Run core skills workshops
- ✓ Powered by ILM and The Oxford Group

## Recognition and Credentialing

- ✓ City & Guilds / ILM Assured
- ✓ Micro-credentialing of skills
- ✓ Enabling of skills tracking and mapping
- ✓ Elevate your brand as a skills-based employer

## Tailored / Bespoke Training Programmes

- ✓ Co-development of robust training programmes
- ✓ Quality Assurance and Assessment
- ✓ Train the Trainer

## Qualifications & Apprenticeships

- ✓ Delivery support
- ✓ On-programme and EPA
- ✓ Provider sourcing
- ✓ Learning resources
- ✓ Industry alignment

## Skills Consultancy

- ✓ Measuring Impact and ROI
- ✓ Levy Optimisation
- ✓ L&D Strategy
- ✓ Taking ownership of training
- ✓ Assessment and QA

## Our partnerships *in action*



BRITISH AIRWAYS

Strategic Leader



**COSTA**  
COFFEE

Field Service Engineer  
Technical Training



**EVRI**

5 Core:  
Manager Essentials



*e-on*  
**next**

Limitless Leadership  
Programme



**PAPA JOHNS**  
Better Ingredients. Better Pizza.

Training General  
Manager Programme



**PILZ**  
THE SPIRIT OF SAFETY

Machinery Safety  
for Maintenance  
Technicians



**Novuna**

LEAP  
Leadership in Practice



  
THE ROYAL MINT<sup>®</sup>  
THE ORIGINAL MINT

The Royal Mint  
Management  
Framework





# Is it time to become a *skills-based organisation?*



1 practical guide.  
10 manageable steps  
your company can take.

For HR, L&D  
and Talent teams



# Join our *Employer Community*



## Monthly insights newsletter

- ✓ Policy announcements
- ✓ Upcoming events
- ✓ Skills insights



## Podcast series

- ✓ Voice for Skills - Employers

[Click here to listen](#)



## Upcoming events

- ✓ Monthly Employer L&D Events to share insights and ideas



## Keep in touch

- ✓ Email us to ensure you receive the latest updates or to arrange a **Skills Review**

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Q&A

Thank you for joining us

*We would like to say*

*Thank you*



## About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is the global skills partner, empowering people, organisations and economies to develop the skills they need for growth. With almost 150 years of trusted expertise, we support people into work, help them develop on the job and move into the next job.

We work with Governments, employers, training providers, colleges and industry stakeholders to design and deliver high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to meaningful career progression. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility and success. Our solutions span critical sectors including construction, engineering, transport, energy and electrical, serving over 1 million learners annually.

Through our comprehensive portfolio of brands and trusted global network, we set industry-wide standards for technical, behavioural and commercial skills to improve performance and productivity. We believe you can achieve your potential - and we're here to help make it happen.

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