



# Skills-First: Framework For Action

A Framework Supporting Enterprise Competitiveness,  
Individual Career Health and Inclusive Growth for Singapore

6

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# Contents

|                                                                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preface                                                                                             | 4  |
| 1. Foreword                                                                                         | 6  |
| 2. Why Skills-First Matters For Singapore Now                                                       | 12 |
| 3. Three Delta Shifts                                                                               | 17 |
| 4. Framework For Action                                                                             | 19 |
| 5. Best Practices Showcase                                                                          | 27 |
| Glossary                                                                                            | 57 |
| References                                                                                          | 58 |
| Authors                                                                                             | 59 |
| Editors                                                                                             | 61 |
| Acknowledgements                                                                                    | 62 |
| Annex A: Existing Initiatives Supporting Skills-First Practices                                     | 64 |
| Annex B: Research and Development: An Intelligence and Learning Agenda For Skills Value Realisation | 67 |
| Annex C: Singapore Skills-First Observatory: Monitoring of Skills-First Practices and Outcomes      | 68 |



Scan the QR code to access the infographics

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# Preface



**Ms Jasmin Lau**

Acting Minister for Manpower & Senior Minister of State,  
Ministry of Digital Development & Information

Eleven years ago, SkillsFuture began with a simple conviction: every Singaporean should be able to keep learning, growing and finding opportunities across their working life, anchored in the skills they build.

A decade on, that conviction has shaped how we invest in our people. Training participation among resident workers hit an all-time high of 54.8% in 2025. We developed Skills Frameworks, Jobs Transformation Maps, the SkillsFuture Credit, the Careers & Skills Passport, and a national Career Health movement. Few countries have invested as consistently in keeping their people's skills relevant.

But training is only half the story. Workers can acquire new capabilities, yet if employers still rely on qualifications, job titles or past experience as proxies for capability, those skills may go unrecognised and unused. A Skills-First approach offers a useful lens for considering how skills can play a more prominent role in the decisions that shape jobs and careers:

- When employers assess candidates, skills can provide a fuller picture of candidates' capabilities, alongside their qualifications and experience.
- When companies adopt a new technology, skills can help them redesign their existing roles and workflows, and how to best upskill, reskill and redeploy their existing workforce
- When an individual weighs whether to do a career pivot, skills can help make their transferable capabilities more visible and open up new possibilities.

Training creates capability. Skills-First practices could turn that capability into opportunity, closing the distance between skills and jobs. Workers who take stock of their career health and skill currency become more adaptable to new opportunities, and more resilient as roles evolved.

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This Framework by the Centre for Skills-First Practices at the Institute for Adult Learning brings together two years of research, stakeholder engagement and practical examples. It is a valuable contribution to our understanding of how skills can be better recognised, developed and used, and provides useful ideas for further discussion and experimentation.

The Framework identifies three proposed shifts and puts forward twelve pilot ideas for consideration and experimentation by interested stakeholders. It also proposes a Skills-First Observatory to strengthen the evidence base on the adoption of Skills-First practices and the outcomes for workers and enterprises.

I thank Ms Dilys Boey, Mr Mark Lee, Ms Caryn Lim, Ms Tan Hwee Bin and Professor Tan Tai Yong for shaping this Framework, and the Centre for Skills-First Practices at the Institute for Adult Learning for the research and the convening effort that made it possible. Thank you also to every employer, union leader, practitioner and individual who gave their time to the engagements. Your contributions are reflected throughout these pages.

Skills-First practices will open more doors for our workers and businesses in the next bound of workforce development. The work continues, and I look forward to it.



**Ms Jasmin Lau**

Acting Minister for Manpower & Senior Minister of State,  
Ministry of Digital Development & Information

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# 1 Foreword



**Mark Lee**

Chairman,  
Singapore Business Federation

Enterprise competitiveness has always depended on talent. What is changing is the speed at which business models, work processes and skill requirements evolve. Skills-First approaches enable firms to respond to these shifts with greater precision and agility. As technology and business models shift, firms need workforces that can learn continuously and respond quickly, and they need to recognise capabilities beyond relying on qualifications and job titles as proxies.

For the business community, the shift this Framework for Action asks for is to make Skills-First approaches a routine part of how firms operate. Firms need practical pathways to translate Skills-First principles into their human-capital practices. This could include structured adoption pathways covering workforce capability mapping, job and role redesign, skills-based recruitment and assessment, internal mobility, progression and recognition, and the measurement of skills utilisation and business outcomes. Such pathways, operationalised through the Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) as sectoral multipliers, would reduce the time and effort needed to identify and assemble solutions, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that may have less capacity and expertise to implement these changes on their own.

When implemented well, Skills-First approaches can help firms access broader talent pools, improve the match between people and work, strengthen retention and internal mobility, and build workforce capabilities more quickly as business needs change. The real test is not whether firms agree with Skills-First approaches in principle, but rather how to enable HR and organisational change fast enough and deploy this mindset quickly as a competitive advantage.





## **Tan Hwee Bin**

Vice President,  
Singapore National Employers Federation

As technology, business models and workforce expectations continue to change, employers need workforces that can learn, adapt and grow. A Skills-First approach matters because it helps employers look beyond qualifications and focus on capabilities. This broadens access to talent, strengthens workforce agility and helps businesses respond more effectively to changing needs.

Adopting a Skills-First approach begins with a shift in mindset. Employers need to recognise the value of Skills-First before meaningful and lasting change can take root. New approaches are more likely to gain traction when they solve real business challenges, are practical to implement, and deliver tangible outcomes.

We therefore support integrating a Skills-First approach into enterprise transformation and work redesign so that human capital development supports better business outcomes. We also support building Skills-First capability among SME owners and line managers, whose day-to-day decisions on hiring, deployment and development shape how skills are recognised and used.

Employers will stand to benefit greatly from a Skills-First approach that is pragmatic and aligned with business priorities. Thus, this Framework is designed with that reality in mind, offering practical pilot ideas that help employers adopt Skills-First practices with confidence. By working together, employers, workers, industry partners, education providers, and the Government can build competitive businesses and resilient, future-ready workforces.



## Caryn Lim

Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Job Security,  
National Trades Union Congress

Working lives are becoming longer and less predictable. As technology continues to reshape industries and jobs, many workers are likely to make multiple career transitions over their working lives. In this environment, continuous learning has become essential, but it must also lead to real outcomes. It should help workers secure better jobs, progress in their careers and earn better wages.

The Labour Movement believes that every worker should be supported to understand and articulate their skills, plan their next career move and prepare for change. Regular career and skills reviews help workers take stock of their strengths, identify new opportunities and make informed decisions throughout their careers. At the same time, it is important for workers to have access to timely career and skills information, as well as opportunities to upskill and acquire the skills they need to progress or move into new roles. This will help workers identify where the opportunities are, and more importantly, take concrete steps to prepare for them. These principles lie behind the Labour Movement's initiatives, such as the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) AI Career Coach (AICC), which allows workers to access AI-powered career and skills support at their convenience, as well as the nationwide career guidance services provided by NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i).

We support the Skills-First movement, and look forward to working with partners to further the proposals within the paper.





## **Tan Tai Yong**

President,  
Singapore University of Social Sciences

Learning has become a lifelong endeavour, and universities and education institutions now do far more than prepare people for their first job. We help build capability across careers that are longer and more dynamic than before, and we generate the evidence on which sound policy depends.

The contribution of research and education to this Framework is to build the people and the knowledge that sustain Skills-First over time. We support embedding Skills-First in the professionalisation of those whom it matters to, from HR and career coaches to adult educators and business advisers, and designing capability building around real company problems rather than standard curricula.

We also support a shared practitioner intelligence layer, so that what works compounds across the community instead of resetting with each practitioner, and we will help generate the evidence base, including through open national reporting on Skills-First adoption.

Sound policy depends on evidence, and effective implementation rests on knowing which interventions shift behaviour over time. Our responsibility is to translate evidence into practice, so that best practices are promulgated and shared.



## **Dilys Boey**

Chief Executive,  
Skills and Workforce Development Agency

Singapore has continually invested in workforce development. The SkillsFuture movement nurtures a culture of skills mastery and lifelong learning in our workforce. The Career Health initiative complements by engendering behavioural shifts towards regular assessments of one's career options and skills development needs. Our workforce development efforts are also aimed at enabling employers with capability and resources to redesign jobs as businesses transform and to adopt a Skills-First approach to developing a future-ready workforce. These foundations position us for the next phase to institutionalise skills as a currency that shapes hiring, job design and career progression.

The Skills and Workforce Development Agency (SWDA) supports a range of strategies that strengthen workforce resilience and competitiveness, including enabling the adoption of Skills-First practices. We will continue to refresh national jobs and skills blueprints, such as the Skills Framework 2.0 which serves as a comprehensive and dynamic national taxonomy linking skills, tasks and jobs. Further, the sectoral Jobs Transformation Maps outline how jobs within sectors will transform and provide recommended pathways for employers to redesign jobs and reskill their workforce to take on emerging and growth job roles.

We will support embedding Skills-First practices across workforce development practices. We will deepen collaborations with researchers to test current assumptions and bring new insights on the adoption and delivery of Skills-First practices.

The choices that shape a career lie with individuals, employers and other ecosystem partners. SWDA's task is to ensure that the public infrastructure of systems and incentives around these choices makes the Skills-First option the easiest one to take.



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## 2 Why Skills-First Matters for Singapore Now

Singapore's investments in workforce development over the past decade have created a strong foundation for the next phase of workforce transformation. Sustained investment through the SkillsFuture movement, the SkillsFuture Credit, Skills Frameworks, Jobs Transformation Maps, continuing education and training (CET), career guidance and the Careers & Skills Passport, has built one of the world's most comprehensive skills ecosystems. Individuals have greater access to learning than before, and enterprises can draw on an expanding range of workforce support, labour market intelligence and capability development initiatives. Together, these investments have strengthened Singapore's ability to respond to economic restructuring, demographic change and technological disruption.

The challenge today is of a different kind. Artificial intelligence, automation and new business models are reshaping work at a speed the labour market has not faced before. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 estimates that 22 per cent of jobs globally will be structurally transformed by 2030, and that almost 40 per cent of the skills workers rely on today will change over the same period (World Economic Forum, 2025). Workers now face more frequent career transitions and continual reskilling throughout longer working lives, while enterprises must redesign work, adopt new technologies, and build new capabilities to stay competitive.

As the pace of technological and business change accelerates, the time between identifying new business needs and building the capabilities required to meet them must shorten. This requires workforce decisions to evolve alongside enterprise transformation. While qualifications, job titles and prior experience remain important indicators of capability, they are no longer sufficient in a labour market characterised by rapidly changing jobs, tasks and increasingly non-linear career pathways. Workers are developing valuable skills through a wider range of learning and workplace experiences, while enterprises need greater visibility of available capabilities to inform workforce planning, job redesign and business transformation. Capability development must therefore be integrated into enterprise transformation, enabling work redesign, technology adoption and workforce development to progress together rather than as separate activities.

Against this backdrop, a Skills-First approach becomes increasingly important.

*Skills-First is an organising principle that places skills at the heart of the decisions that shape work and careers: how people are hired, how work is designed, how talent is deployed, how learning is facilitated, and how contribution is recognised and rewarded (Gog et al., 2025; Ong et al., 2025; Tay et al., 2025).*



It recognises demonstrated capability as a primary signal for these decisions, alongside qualifications and experience. Skills-First is also the enabler that turns intent into outcomes: for individuals, it is how career health is realised; for enterprises, it is how competitiveness and business-and-workforce transformation are achieved. Skills-First is a key lever that will help strengthen the link between skills development, workforce decisions and career outcomes.

Skills-First does not mean that qualifications cease to matter. Qualifications remain a trusted and valuable signal of knowledge, skills and competence, while Skills-First broadens the basis for workforce decisions by recognising demonstrated capability alongside qualifications. Neither is Skills-First exclusively about skills only. Other factors, such as attitudes, dispositions and how people work with others, also remain important in making sound workforce decisions.

Numerous studies from Singapore suggest that stronger enterprise and workforce outcomes depend not simply on acquiring skills, but on how individuals and enterprises translate skills into decisions and behaviours, and eventually translate these into enterprise and business outcomes.

For individuals, workers who actively engage in career-and-skills planning, and where necessary, access trusted career guidance (including those at workplaces) are more likely to navigate their career transitions successfully and achieve stronger career outcomes. Career resilience therefore depends not only on acquiring new skills, but also on individuals' ability to recognise, demonstrate and apply those skills as labour market conditions evolve (Toh, 2021; Sampson & Toh, 2024).

For organisations, those that invest in capability building across the entire workforce, rather than concentrating talent development opportunities on a small group of employees, are more likely to achieve stronger profitability, revenue growth and market performance (Sadik et al., 2025). These findings suggest that the next phase of enterprise-workforce transformation is beyond expanding access to learning but embedding skills into the career and business decisions of individuals and enterprises.

Acting on this evidence calls for complementary Skills-First practices by individuals and employers. Individuals can take steps to understand, build and demonstrate their skills (see Diagram 1a), while employers can redesign hiring, work, development and progression around skills (see Diagram 1b). Ecosystem partners can support both by de-risking early efforts, building trust, providing shared tools and infrastructure, and creating conditions where capabilities are better recognised, developed and matched to opportunity.

Diagram 1a: *Skills-First Practices for Individuals*

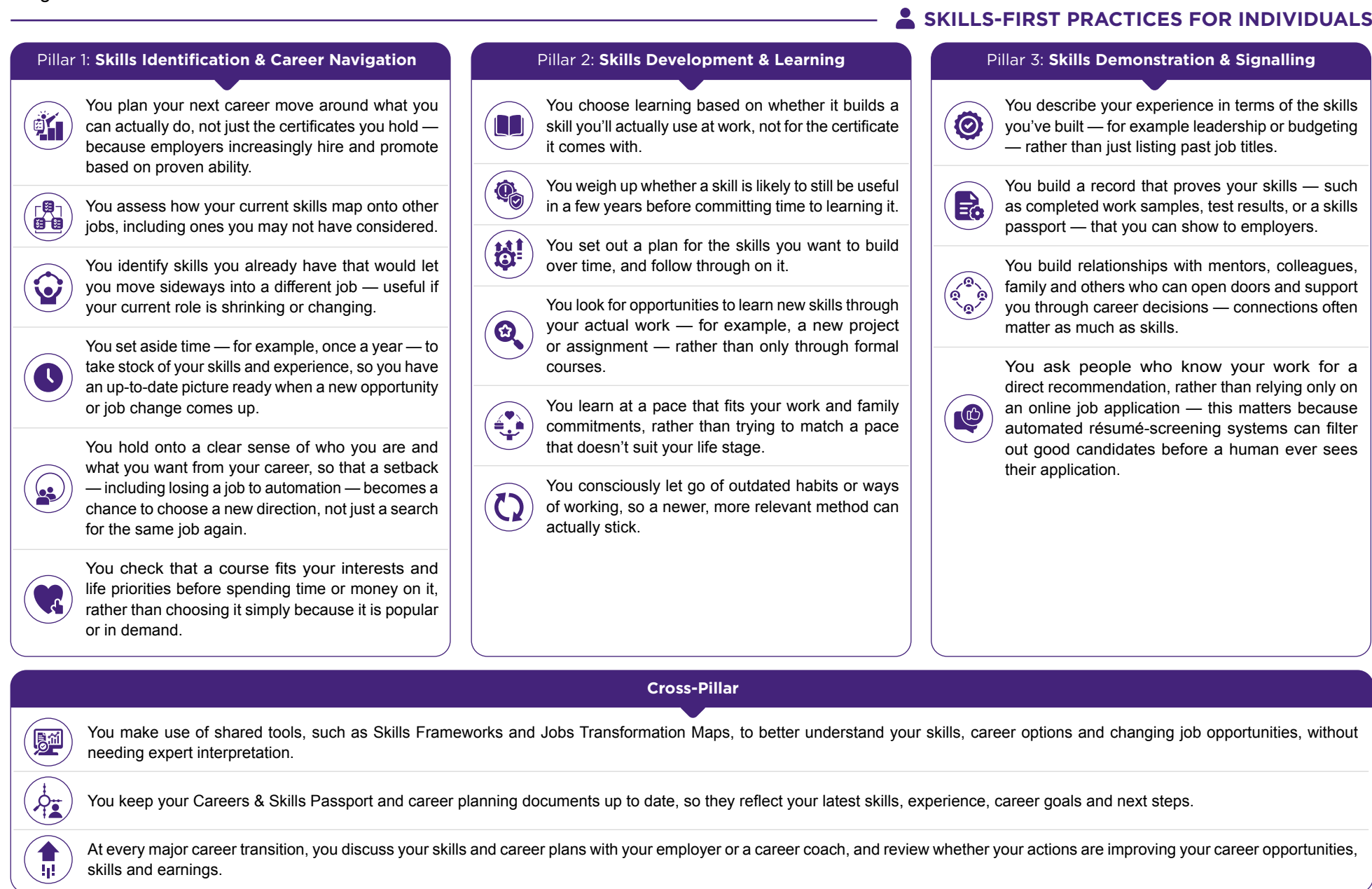
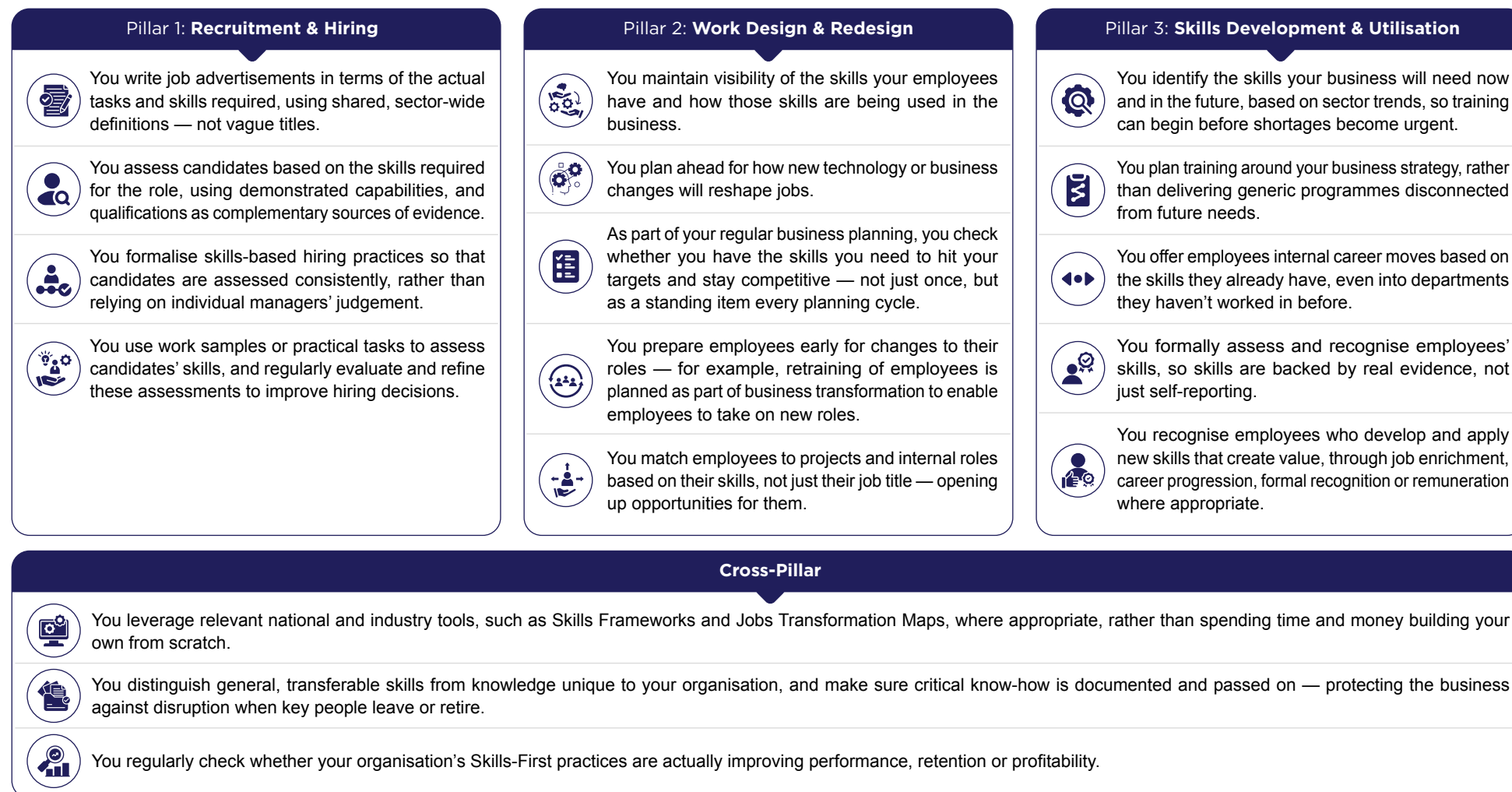


Diagram 1b: *Skills-First Practices for Employers*

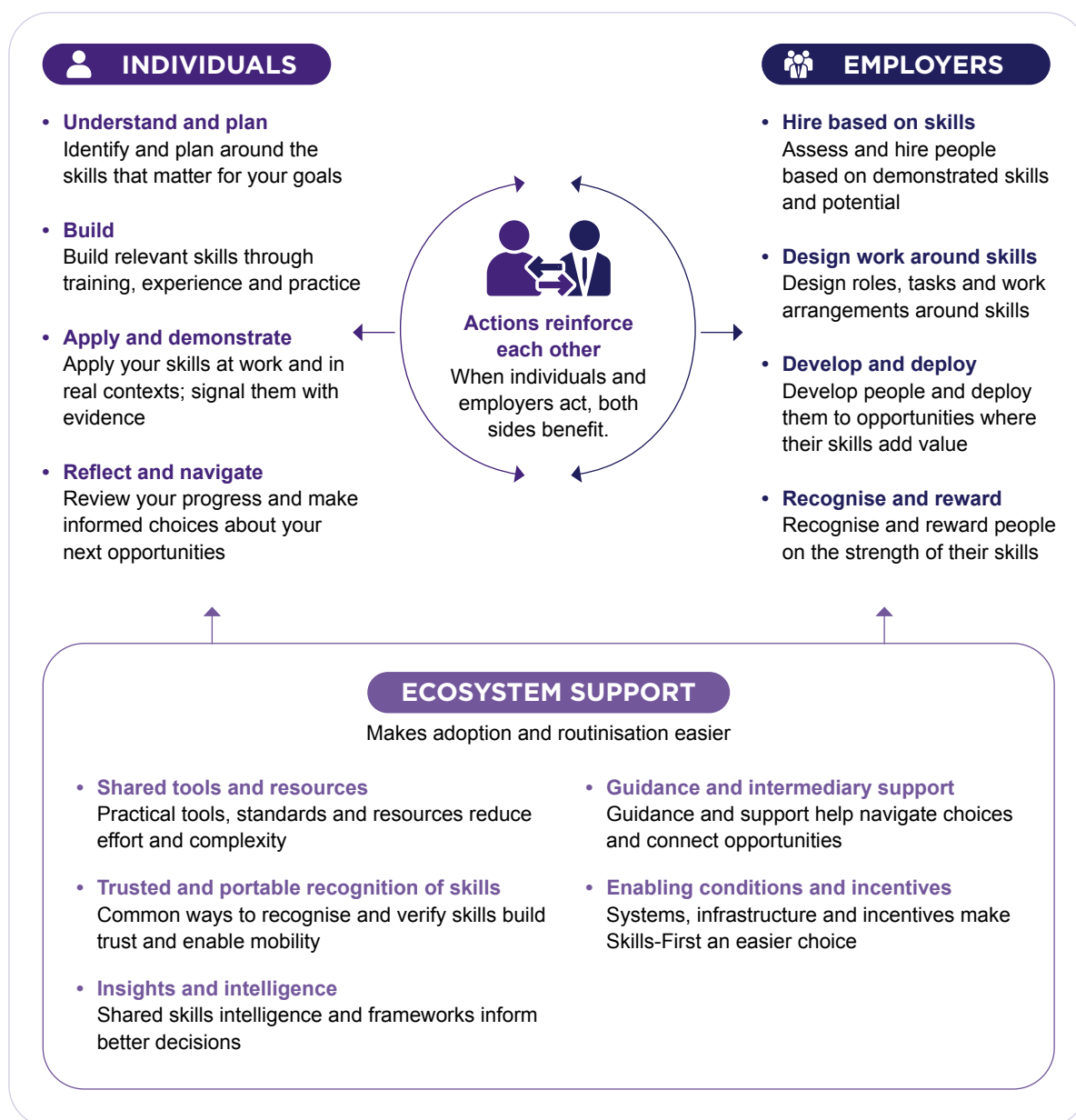
## SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYERS



These three levels of action—individual, enterprise and ecosystem—are mutually reinforcing (see Diagram 2). Individuals are more likely to invest in building and demonstrating their skills when employers recognise and reward them, while employers are better able to make Skills-First decisions when individuals can demonstrate the capabilities they need. Ecosystem partners strengthen this relationship by reducing barriers and enabling individuals and employers to act more effectively.

*Skills-First therefore depends on agency at every level: individuals and employers acting within their areas of influence, supported by an ecosystem that enables these actions to take root, connect and endure.*

Diagram 2: Reinforcing Action Across Individuals, Employers and the Ecosystem



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## 3 Three Delta Shifts

Drawing on numerous engagements, there was broad recognition that a Skills-First approach has the potential to strengthen workforce resilience, improve labour market matching and support business competitiveness. However, individuals and organisations make career and workforce decisions within the realities of competing priorities and immediate demands.

In this context, the Skills-First approach often depends on whether individuals and organisations have the capacity, opportunity and impetus to prioritise it. As a result, adoption remains uneven across the ecosystem.

The Framework for Action therefore sets out to change three things: what individuals and organisations can do about it, how the environment around them is shaped, and what the community shares and builds together.

Three mutually reinforcing shifts form the basis for the pilot ideas advocated by the Framework in the subsequent section.



## **First, a shift in behaviour, from one-off to routine.**

Skills-First practices today are not always sustained beyond the immediate objective. An employer runs one skills-based hire, a training provider maps skills for one programme, a firm redesigns one job, and the practice fades once the immediate effort is over. Part of the challenge is mindset: many workforce decisions continue to rely primarily on qualifications, job titles and prior experience, with skills considered only as a secondary factor rather than a routine lens for decision-making. Behavioural science explains why changing dominant practice is difficult. A behaviour repeated at a reliable trigger becomes automatic and low-effort over time, while a behaviour that has to be chosen afresh each time competes with everything else, thus, new behaviour formation requires deliberate efforts (Wood & Neal, 2007). The aim, therefore, is not just a Skills-First mindset, but to embed it in everyday routines so that Skills-First practices become the natural way work gets done in the flow of careers and business operations, rather than as a special effort made once.

## **Second, a shift in the environment, from opt-in to default.**

A routine holds far better when the environment carries it than when it rests on people choosing it every time. Skills-First practices should be embedded into the touchpoints that involve career and workforce decisions, including hiring processes, workforce planning, learning provision, and in how public funding is granted, such that it is in the default setting. This default setting can be enabled through policies, systems and infrastructure. Evidence is clear that individuals are far more likely to follow the default option than to actively choose an alternative, regardless of their stated intentions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). The individuals and firms with the most to gain from Skills-First practices may be the least likely to seek them out proactively. When Skills-First practices are integrated into the environment, adoption becomes more seamless for individuals and enterprises.

## **Third, a shift in capability, from isolated to shared.**

Best practices in Skills-First may already exist in certain parts of the ecosystem today, but they are confined to individual organisations or sectors. The aim is to build shared capability among those who support career and workforce decisions, including HR practitioners, career coaches, union leaders, adult educators, business advisers and line managers, so that there is widespread understanding of what good Skills-First practices look like and how to implement them. Good ideas can then be adapted and contextualised, rather than requiring each organisation to reinvent the wheel. Practices spread and endure when a community builds and shares that capability, so that each practitioner does not begin from scratch (Wenger, 1998). This is what turns isolated effort into a shared norm.

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# 4 Framework For Action

Singapore already stands on strong foundations (see Annex A for a summary of existing initiatives that support Skills-First practices, what they already enable, and how the proposed pilots build on these foundations). Building on them, this section imagines how the three shifts from Section 3 could take deeper hold: from one-off to routine, from opt-in to default, and from isolated to shared capability. It offers twelve pilot ideas that embed these shifts and indicate the actors who are well placed to take them forward. These pilot ideas serve as catalysts for the adoption of Skills-First practices to realise human potential and enterprise growth.

## Pilot Ideas to Advance Skills-First Practices

The 12 pilot ideas included here are synthesised from roundtable discussions, public-and-employers engagement sessions conducted as part of the Skills-First Working Paper Series, that led to the Framework for Action. These ideas build on existing foundations as much as possible. Feedback from the various engagement sessions highlighted the importance of testing these ideas with stakeholders, learning from implementation and refining them iteratively over time.

These ideas are not intended to be exhaustive. As Skills-First practices evolve, there will be opportunities to co-create and test new pilot ideas with individuals, enterprises and ecosystem partners, building on emerging needs, implementation experience and what works in practice. In this way, the skills ecosystem can continue to strengthen its practices through deeper collaboration, experimentation and shared learning.

The actors identified are similarly not exhaustive. Other ecosystem partners, including employment agencies and technology solution providers, will also play important enabling and contributing roles across the pilot ideas.

| Areas of Action <sup>1</sup> | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Government | IHLs & CET <sup>2</sup> Providers | Labour Movement <sup>3</sup> | TACs <sup>4</sup> , HR & Professional Bodies |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Enabling Employers           | <b>1 Emphasise Skills Screening and Assessment in Hiring</b><br>Support employers and recruitment intermediaries to adopt skills-based hiring by incorporating appropriate skills screening and assessment into recruitment processes. Complement this with practical tools, HR capability development and professional guidance, so that demonstrated capabilities are more visible and recognised in hiring decisions alongside qualifications, experience and other relevant considerations.                                                                                | ✧          | ✧                                 | ✧                            | ✦                                            |
|                              | <b>2 Embed Skills-First Practices into Enterprise Transformation</b><br>Embed Skills-First practices into enterprise transformation, workplace innovation, work redesign and relevant business grant initiatives, so that workforce capability development is integral to business transformation. Organisations should identify required capabilities, enable employees to build and demonstrate them through real-work projects, and recognise demonstrated skills through mechanisms such as the Careers & Skills Passport to support deployment, progression and mobility. | ✧          | ✧                                 | ✧                            | ✦                                            |

<sup>1</sup> The areas reflect the primary focus of action: enabling employers, supporting individuals and strengthening system-wide infrastructure. They are not intended as discrete categories, as individual pilot ideas may contribute to outcomes across more than one area.

<sup>2</sup> Continuing Education and Training (CET) refers to structured learning and professional development programmes designed for adults to upskill, reskill, and stay career-resilient.

<sup>3</sup> Labour Movement refers to the National Trades Union Congress, Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), and its affiliated unions and associations.

<sup>4</sup> Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) refer broadly to trade associations, chambers and apex employer organisations, including the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) and Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), that represent and support enterprises across sectors.

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✦ Primary actor ✧ Participating actor

| Areas of Action               | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Government | IHLs & CET Providers | Labour Movement | TACs, HR & Professional Bodies |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Enabling Employers<br>(cont.) | <b>3 Develop Skills-First Enterprise Transformation Pathway</b><br>Provide firms, especially SMEs, with a structured Skills-First Enterprise Transformation Pathway that reduces pathfinding time. Support firms to diagnose workforce needs, map required capabilities, redesign jobs and hiring practices, enable internal mobility and skills-based progression, and measure skills utilisation, helping to embed Skills-First practices into everyday business operations.                                             | ✧          | ✧                    | ✧               | ✦                              |
|                               | <b>4 Build Skills-First Capability Where Workforce Decisions Are Made</b><br>Equip line managers and SME owners, supported by business advisors, with the knowledge, tools and practical capability to apply Skills-First practices in everyday workforce decisions. This includes leading human-centric work redesign and workforce transformation, assessing skills, conducting skills conversations, and making skills-informed decisions that shape how employees' skills are developed, deployed and applied at work. | ✧          | ✧                    | ✧               | ✦                              |

Continued on next page >

✦ Primary actor   ✧ Participating actor

| Areas of Action        | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Government | IHLs & CET Providers | Labour Movement | TACs, HR & Professional Bodies |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Supporting Individuals | <p><b>5 Strengthen Skills-First Capability Across the Career-Learning Ecosystem</b></p> <p>Embed Skills-First knowledge, tools and practical methods into the professional development of HR practitioners, career coaches, adult educators and training providers. Strengthen IHLs and CET providers to provide career profiling and coaching before programme enrolment, help individuals identify transferable skills and make informed learning decisions, and provide post-training support to articulate demonstrated skills and connect with career opportunities. Practitioners should leverage common infrastructure, including the Careers &amp; Skills Passport, to help individuals maintain trusted, portable skills records across learning, work and career transitions.</p> | ✧          | ✦                    | ✧               | ✧                              |
|                        | <p><b>6 Introduce Recurring Career and Skills Review</b></p> <p>Introduce scheduled career and skills reviews at key career and life stages for working adults, prompting concrete learning or career actions and tracking follow-through rather than waiting for disruption. Regular reviews can normalise continuous career planning, while employer recognition of demonstrated skills in recruitment, development and internal mobility can reinforce their value and encourage meaningful participation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ✧          | ✧                    | ✦               | ✦                              |

Continued on next page >

✦ Primary actor ✧ Participating actor

| Areas of Action                   | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Government | IHLs & CET Providers | Labour Movement | TACs, HR & Professional Bodies |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Supporting Individuals<br>(cont.) | <b>7 Default Skills Profile Refresh at Every Career-Learning Touchpoint</b><br>Embed a default prompt for individuals to review and update their skills profile at key career and learning touchpoints, such as when accessing career advisory services or enrolling in funded programmes. This helps keep skills profiles current and useful, while enabling individuals to make learning, skilling and career decisions based on an up-to-date understanding of their capabilities. | ✧          | ✦                    | ✦               | ✧                              |
|                                   | <b>8 Build Skills Fluency Through Real Workplace Problems</b><br>Support training providers to begin with diagnosed business challenges rather than a standard curriculum, identify the capabilities required to address them, and enable learners to develop and demonstrate these skills through real work. This strengthens skills fluency through application, while providing evidence of demonstrated capability that can be recognised in subsequent workforce decisions.      | ✧          | ✦                    | ✧               | ✧                              |

Continued on next page >

✦ Primary actor   ✧ Participating actor

| Areas of Action                          | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Government | IHLs & CET Providers | Labour Movement | TACs, HR & Professional Bodies |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Supporting Individuals<br>(cont.)        | <p><b>9 Mainstream Work-Integrated Learning</b></p> <p>Embed structured work-integrated learning, including work-study programmes, internships, apprenticeships and industry projects, as a core component of IHL programmes. IHLs and industry should provide meaningful opportunities built around authentic workplace tasks and capability needs, while cultivating students' mindsets to value these experiences for skills development, career exploration and lifelong learning. Learners should be able to develop, demonstrate and validate skills through real work, with demonstrated skills recognised, where appropriate, through the Careers &amp; Skills Passport to support employment transitions and provide employers with richer evidence of capability.</p> | ✧          | ✦                    | ✧               | ✧                              |
| Strengthening System-wide Infrastructure | <p><b>10 Establish a Common Verified-versus-Certified Standard for Skills</b></p> <p>Establish shared definitions and validation methods that distinguish verified from certified skills and support consistent recognition of demonstrated capability. Verified skills can be recorded through common infrastructure such as the Careers &amp; Skills Passport, providing individuals and employers with trusted and portable evidence of capabilities that can be recognised across learning, employment and career transitions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | ✧          | ✦                    | ✧               | ✧                              |

Continued on next page >

✦ Primary actor ✧ Participating actor

| Areas of Action                                     | Pilot Ideas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Government | IHLs & CET Providers                     | Labour Movement | TACs, HR & Professional Bodies |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Strengthening System-wide Infrastructure<br>(cont.) | <b>11 Strengthen Shared Skills Infrastructure for Foresight and Inclusion</b><br>Strengthen the national skills infrastructure through a shared translation service that enables organisations to map the national jobs-tasks-skills taxonomy to their job architectures, supported by continuously updated skills and labour market intelligence, including Jobs Transformation Maps. Integrate insights on emerging and declining skills, job redesign trends and pay references linked to demonstrated skills to inform firm-level workforce planning and transformation. The infrastructure should also identify sectors, occupations and worker groups most exposed to transformation, enabling targeted interventions, inclusive workforce outcomes and more consistent signals on the value of demonstrated skills. | ✦          | ✧                                        | ✧               | ✧                              |
|                                                     | <b>12 Develop Skills-First Observatory</b><br>Develop and publish a recurring monitoring approach to track the adoption of Skills-First practices and their relationship with individual, workforce and enterprise outcomes. Drawing on multiple sources of evidence, the Observatory can identify areas of progress and gaps, enable benchmarking and provide a stronger evidence base for understanding how Skills-First practices are taking root and evolving over time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | ✧          | ✦<br>(Centre for Skills-First Practices) | ✧               | ✧                              |

✦ Primary actor ✧ Participating actor

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING WHAT WORKS

The pilot ideas outlined above are intended as starting points rather than fixed solutions. They should be supported by structured research and development to understand what works, for whom, and under what conditions. This allows the Framework to move beyond promoting good ideas towards building an evidence base that continuously improves policy and practice.

Annex B proposes a Skills-First Research and Development Agenda, spearheaded by IAL's Centre for Skills-First Practices in partnership with the Skills and Workforce Development Agency and the research community. The Agenda comprises three complementary functions: the Skills-First Observatory (see Annex C) to track the adoption and outcomes of Skills-First practices, a feedback loop to evaluate and refine existing programmes and mechanisms, and a prototyping function to test new approaches before they are scaled. These create a continuous learning cycle, ensuring that the Framework remains responsive to changing workforce needs and is strengthened by evidence gathered through implementation rather than remaining static over time.

## FROM FRAMEWORK TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Skills-First: Framework for Action is not an endpoint, but a starting point for deeper collaboration across the skills ecosystem. It provides a shared direction for enabling enterprises, supporting individuals and strengthening the ecosystem-wide infrastructure needed for Skills-First practices to take root.

The pilot ideas provide practical opportunities to begin. Their success will depend on enterprises, individuals, government and sector partners, education and training institutions, and other ecosystem partners bringing their respective capabilities to test, adapt and strengthen these ideas in practice. Just as importantly, implementation should surface new needs and possibilities, creating opportunities to co-create further pilot ideas beyond those presented in this Framework.

We invite partners across the skills ecosystem to come forward, participate in the pilot ideas, contribute new ideas and work with us to turn Skills-First from a shared ambition into sustained practice. The Framework marks the beginning of this collective effort.

# 5 Best Practices Showcase

## ENTERPRISE PRACTICE

### CASE STUDY 1:

## HSC PIPELINE ENGINEERING PTE LTD

### Work Design and Redesign: Rebuilding Roles Around Competencies, Not Certificates

*Eleven employees moved into redesigned roles on demonstrated skills, not the qualifications they held*

#### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED:

##### EMPLOYERS

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recruitment and Hiring</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You assess candidates based on the skills required for the role, using demonstrated capabilities, and qualifications as complementary sources of evidence.</li></ul>                                                                     |
| <b>Work Design and Redesign</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You plan ahead for how new technology or business changes will reshape jobs.</li><li>• You match employees to projects and internal roles based on their skills, not just their job title — opening up opportunities for them.</li></ul> |
| <b>Skills Development and Utilisation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You identify the skills your business will need now and in the future, based on sector trends, so training can begin before shortages become urgent.</li></ul>                                                                           |
| <b>Cross-Pillar</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You leverage relevant national and industry tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, where appropriate, rather than spending time and money building your own from scratch.</li></ul>                              |

## THE ORGANISATION

HSC Pipeline Engineering is a Singapore civil engineering company with more than 30 years in pipeline infrastructure for the gas, water, telecommunications and energy sectors. It employs about 344 people, 313 of them site-based.

The company has invested in skills upgrading, automation and digitalisation to reduce reliance on manual labour and make site work safer.



## THE PRACTICE

Ground-penetrating radar, 3D scanning and digital tools changed what the work requires. Experience in trenching is no longer enough on its own. Employees also need to be able to read radar information and check it against utility records.

HSC assessed each affected job across three areas of change: digitalisation and AI, productivity, and sustainability. It identified which tasks were being automated and what new, higher-value tasks were emerging. The redesigned roles were then described by the skills needed to do the work, rather than by qualifications or job titles.

HSC then looked at the skills each employee already had and identified what they needed to learn for the new roles. Training was planned around these gaps. When redeploying employees, HSC looked at what they could do and what skills they could transfer to a new role, rather than simply looking at their previous job.

For new hires, HSC also places greater emphasis on whether candidates have the skills needed to do the job, rather than relying mainly on their qualifications or past job titles.

Where additional support was needed, HSC used national funding schemes: three employees were supported through the Productivity Solutions Grant for Job Redesign, and eight through the Career Conversion Programme.

HSC also changed its own HR Manager role from mainly handling administrative work to playing a more strategic role in supporting the business. Before making these changes, HSC conducted a company-wide survey to understand what employees needed and used their feedback to shape the redesign.

## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ Eleven roles redesigned or newly created and filled internally: two in HR, three in project delivery, four in procurement and two in digital.
- ▶ About 30 per cent of the HR Manager's time released for capability development, workforce planning and retention work.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Eleven employees were assessed and matched to new roles based on what they could do, rather than just the qualifications they had.
- ▶ Eleven employees received funding and structured support to move into their new roles, with clear training and assessment instead of learning on the job as they went along.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Skills-First redeployment is a journey from transition to greater stability and opportunity. Employees may experience uncertainty before they can see the benefits of their new roles, so sentiment can dip temporarily even when people are successfully moving into better-fit opportunities. Build the skills map and destination roles early, before announcing the redesign, and view short-term changes in sentiment as a natural part of the transition. With the right preparation and support, organisations can turn this transition into stronger employee confidence, better role fit and more sustainable workforce outcomes.**

“ In our trade, the tools moved faster than the qualifications did. A certificate earned ten years ago does not tell me whether someone can adapt to the digital workflows we run today, so we stopped asking what people had already earned and started asking what they were capable of learning.”

— Mr Shane Shi

Managing Director, HSC Pipeline Engineering Pte Ltd

## CASE STUDY 2:

**DLM PTE LTD**

## Recruitment and Hiring: Assessing Candidates on Demonstrated Competence

*A wider talent pool, and employees moving into disciplines they had never worked in*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED:

#### EMPLOYERS

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recruitment and Hiring</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You write job advertisements in terms of the actual tasks and skills required, using shared, sector-wide definitions — not vague titles.</li> <li>• You assess candidates based on the skills required for the role, using demonstrated capabilities, and qualifications as complementary sources of evidence.</li> <li>• You formalise skills-based hiring practices so that candidates are assessed consistently, rather than relying on individual managers' judgement.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Work Design and Redesign</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You match employees to projects and internal roles based on their skills, not just their job title — opening up opportunities for them.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Skills Development and Utilisation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You identify the skills your business will need now and in the future, based on sector trends, so training can begin before shortages become urgent.</li> <li>• You offer employees internal career moves based on the skills they already have, even into departments they haven't worked in before.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      |

## THE ORGANISATION

DLM is a mechanical and electrical contractor in Singapore, delivering integrated air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation, electrical engineering and data centre solutions for mission-critical facilities.

Manpower constraints and competition for skilled talent in the Built Environment sector made qualification-based hiring insufficient for the company's growth.



## THE PRACTICE

DLM redesigned several roles, including Project Engineer and Project Manager, around the skills and capabilities the work requires rather than the educational qualifications conventionally attached to them.

Hiring managers and interviewers were trained to assess candidates on demonstrated competencies, transferable skills and relevant work experience. The change was formalised, so assessment is consistent across interviewers rather than left to individual judgement.

For existing employees, DLM encourages lateral moves into new disciplines. Employees are assessed on skills, aptitude and potential to succeed in a different role. A quantity surveyor moved into a project engineer role. A project engineer moved into a BIM modeller position. A senior project manager took on a digital innovation role and went on to build workflow automations and chatbots using artificial intelligence.

DLM also uses competency gap assessments to identify what employees need to develop, with structured training provided to help them move into new roles. The same skills-based approach is now being extended to other roles in the company, including the Senior HR and Administration role, so that roles and career opportunities are increasingly shaped by the skills the business needs rather than traditional job titles or qualifications.

## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ A wider talent pool, as candidates with transferable skills from other backgrounds became eligible for roles previously closed to them.
- ▶ Reduced hiring constraint and improved hiring efficiency compared with qualification-based recruitment.
- ▶ Workflow automations and chatbots built in-house by a redeployed employee, improving operational efficiency.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Named cross-discipline transitions: quantity surveying to project engineering, project engineering to BIM modelling, project management to digital innovation.
- ▶ Access to structured development pathways tied to emerging business needs rather than generic training.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Hidden talent surfaces when skills, potential and learning agility are the test, rather than qualifications, job titles or tenure. The same shift widens opportunity for employees and widens the hiring pool for the business.**

“ While a Skills-First approach is not a silver bullet, it has proven effective in expanding access to talent, reducing hiring effort and improving retention. This is particularly important in the built environment sector, where talent shortages require organisations to look beyond traditional qualifications and focus on the skills and potential that candidates bring.”

— Mr Joseph Goh  
Managing Director, DLM Pte Ltd

## CASE STUDY 3:

# PHYSIO AND SOLE CLINIC PTE LTD

## Recruitment and Hiring: One Competency Framework Across Every Function

*Consistent hiring criteria, paired with clinicians who direct their own upskilling*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED:

#### EMPLOYERS

#### Recruitment and Hiring

- You write job advertisements in terms of the actual tasks and skills required, using shared, sector-wide definitions — not vague titles.
- You formalise skills-based hiring practices so that candidates are assessed consistently, rather than relying on individual managers' judgement.

#### Skills Development and Utilisation

- You plan training around your business strategy, rather than delivering generic programmes disconnected from future needs.
- You formally assess and recognise employees' skills, so skills are backed by real evidence, not just self-reporting.

## THE ORGANISATION

Physio and Sole Clinic is an allied healthcare provider in Singapore, delivering physiotherapy and podiatry through 11 clinics.

Clinical practice changes continuously. The currency and consistency of clinician skills therefore determine both patient outcomes and the organisation's capability, which makes skills a business question rather than a training question.



## THE PRACTICE

Skills-First runs through hiring and skills development processes together.

An organisation-wide competency framework and scorecard guide recruitment across every function, including human resources, administration, marketing, finance and the clinical teams. Candidates are assessed on skills, behaviours and role-specific competencies rather than experience alone, and every hiring manager works from the same criteria.

Clinicians receive a training and development fund to spend on courses of their own choosing: \$1,000 for those with under two years of service, and \$1,500 for those with two years or more. The choice of course sits with the clinician.

The Allied Health Academy, the clinic's own training arm, runs structured courses and continuing education for clinicians. A mentorship programme pairs staff with senior clinicians who guide them as they build new skills.

A six-month competency checklist for physiotherapists, and function-specific onboarding decks for finance, administration, marketing and clinical roles, set out responsibilities and competencies from the first day.

## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ More consistent, higher-quality patient care across the 11 clinics.
- ▶ A standardised and fairer hiring process, with managers aligned to one set of evaluation criteria.
- ▶ Better-fit hires, selected on skills and behaviours rather than experience alone.
- ▶ Improved clinic operations among administrative staff, including patient service standards, documentation, crisis management and service recovery.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Clinicians manage cases more proactively, communicate better with patients, and apply evidence-based techniques with greater confidence.
- ▶ Ownership of learning choices, through a fund each clinician directs.
- ▶ A clinician used the fund to build his clinical expertise and now guides and mentors junior physiotherapists.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Give employees ownership of their own upskilling through a flexible fund and structured mentorship, and pair it with competency-based hiring criteria. Any organisation can start small: a modest training allowance for staff, plus a simple mentor-pairing scheme.**

“ *Skills-based hiring will work well when coupled with a solid training programme.*”

— Ms Fiona Hu Wenyan

Director and Chief Podiatrist, Physio and Sole Clinic Pte Ltd

## CASE STUDY 4:

## OVOL SINGAPORE

## Skills Development and Utilisation: Building Capability Before the Business Needs It

*Internal progression and cross-functional moves in a company of 43 people*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED:

#### EMPLOYERS

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Work Design and Redesign</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You prepare employees early for changes to their roles — for example, retraining of employees is planned as part of business transformation to enable employees to take on new roles.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Skills Development and Utilisation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You identify the skills your business will need now and in the future, based on sector trends, so training can begin before shortages become urgent.</li> <li>You plan training around your business strategy, rather than delivering generic programmes disconnected from future needs.</li> <li>You offer employees internal career moves based on the skills they already have, even into departments they haven't worked in before.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Cross-Pillar</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You leverage relevant national and industry tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, where appropriate, rather than spending time and money building your own from scratch.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## THE ORGANISATION

OVOL Singapore is a lean company of 43 employees providing paper, print media and visual communication solutions.

Digitalisation, diversification and changing customer needs have reshaped the business. Workforce development has followed the same curve, with learning selected against what the business will need next.



## THE PRACTICE

Development is chosen against three things: business need, the employee's role, and the capabilities that will let them contribute more.

In 2025, employees across functions attended SNEF's SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace 2.0 programme, building a working understanding of digital tools, cybersecurity and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Participants now apply generative AI in daily work, including emails and customer quotations. Sustainability capability was built the same way, including a 2.5-day United Nations Global Compact Network Singapore programme attended by the Chief Information Officer.

Learning also happens through the work itself. When OVOL entered the then-new sign and display sector, the manager responsible travelled to the United States and Canada to learn directly from the group's established operations.

Development follows changing responsibilities. Employees who moved into credit control and shipping received relevant training. Two employees taking on broader responsibilities attended a programme on developing high-performance teams.

OVOL also invests ahead of a specific opportunity. In 2019, two senior employees completed SNEF's Professional Diploma in Leadership and People Management. Years later, as the business expanded, both were able to step into larger leadership roles.

## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ More than 1,500 training hours recorded across 43 employees between 2023 and 2025.
- ▶ Larger leadership roles filled from within when the business expanded, by people developed years earlier.
- ▶ Generative AI in routine use for emails and customer quotations.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Progression from operational roles into supervisory and management positions.
- ▶ Cross-functional moves, including accounts to credit control, and customer service to shipping.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Build readiness before the need arises. Capability invested in today is what gives people somewhere to grow tomorrow, and gives a small company a bench of talent it does not have to hire for.**



“ I have always believed in investing in our people through learning. It is about building skills the business needs, and it is also how learning empowers people to grow and shows that we believe in them.”

— Ms Genevieve Chua  
Chief Executive Officer, OVOL Singapore

## CASE STUDY 5:

# CENTRE FOR HEALTHCARE INNOVATION, NHG HEALTH

## Work Design and Redesign: Rebuilding a Role Task by Task, Then Scaling the Method

*One nursing role became a national platform that has since reimagined 36 healthcare roles*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED:

#### EMPLOYERS

#### Work Design and Redesign

- You maintain visibility of the skills your employees have and how those skills are being used in the business.
- You plan ahead for how new technology or business changes will reshape jobs.

#### Skills Development and Utilisation

- You identify the skills your business will need now and in the future, based on sector trends, so training can begin before shortages become urgent.

#### Cross-Pillar

- You leverage relevant national and industry tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, where appropriate, rather than spending time and money building your own from scratch.

## THE ORGANISATION

The Centre for Healthcare Innovation, part of NHG Health, prepares Singapore's healthcare workforce for an ageing population and new technology.

In July 2025, with the Centre of Asian Nursing Centre and the Centre for Allied Health and Pharmacy Excellence, it partnered the Centre for Skills-First Practices at the Institute for Adult Learning to test a structured way of redesigning jobs, starting with a single frontline role.



## THE PRACTICE

Nurses, allied health staff and human resource leaders spent two half-day workshops rebuilding a healthcare role from the ground up. They deconstructed the role into its individual tasks, then reconstructed it around the skills healthcare will need going forward.

Patient care stayed at the centre. What changed was how clinical time and expertise were deployed. Rather than adding responsibilities to an already full role, the team removed, streamlined and redistributed lower-value tasks. Time released through redesigned workflows and AI-enabled technology could then be reinvested in higher-capability roles and care transformation.

The method was then built into a platform. NHG Health developed it with the Institute for Adult Learning on skills credentialing, and is currently collaborating with the Institute for Human Resource Professionals on a sector-wide job redesign playbook, so that other organisations could apply the same steps without repeating the pilot.



## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ The CHI Workforce Accelerator launched in July 2026, taking any role through four stages: reimagine, redesign, rapid prototype and roll out.
- ▶ A repeatable 3 to 6 month process, replacing what had been a lengthy one-off pilot.
- ▶ Thirty-six healthcare roles reimaged using the same method, sketching how work, skills and care could evolve over the next decade.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Frontline nurses and allied health staff redesigned their own roles rather than receiving a redesign made for them.
- ▶ Lower-value tasks removed and redistributed, releasing time for higher-capability clinical work.

## LEARNING POINTS

**CHI did not begin with a national platform. It began with one role, one small pilot, and a systematic method for breaking work into its component tasks, redesigning the lower-value activities, and creating capacity for higher-value work.**

“ The application of the work transformation methodology at CHI allows us to identify future-oriented work and skills for our healthcare workers, building on their existing roles. We see this as a critical step in charting a strategic roadmap that aligns our professionals with the future models of health and healthcare, and guides workforce transformation and upskilling efforts.”

— Mr Thomas Liew (Deputy Director) & Ms Celine Ong (Director)  
Co-Leads, Workforce Transformation, Centre for Healthcare Innovation

## CASE STUDY 6:

# MR ARRIOLA PHILIP ERASMUS, LASTIC (S) PTE LTD

## Skills Identification and Career Navigation: Moving Sideways on Transferable Skills

*Four decades in uniform, then two sector changes, each built on capability already held*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED

#### INDIVIDUALS

##### Skills Identification and Career Navigation

- You identify skills you already have that would let you move sideways into a different job — useful if your current role is shrinking or changing.
- You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.

##### Skills Development and Learning

- You set out a plan for the skills you want to build over time, and follow through on it.
- You choose learning based on whether it builds a skill you'll actually use at work, not for the certificate it comes with.

#### EMPLOYERS

##### Recruitment and Hiring

- You assess candidates based on the skills required for the role, using demonstrated capabilities, and qualifications as complementary sources of evidence.

##### Cross-Pillar

- You distinguish general, transferable skills from knowledge unique to your organisation, and make sure critical know-how is documented and passed on, protecting the business against disruption when key people leave or retire.



## PROFILE

Mr Arriola Philip Erasmus spent four decades with the Singapore Armed Forces. He has since worked in adult education, and now in operations and administration at LASTIC, a young Singapore company producing biodegradable alternatives to conventional plastics.

## THE PRACTICE

Mr Arriola did not start over at each transition. He identified what he already held, and built on it.

His military career developed operational discipline, leadership, communication, training and coaching, and long experience working to documented standard operating procedures. These transferred.

On retiring, he built on his experience as a trainer at the Signals Institute by taking the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment, and then the Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education. Both were chosen for the role he intended to hold, not for the certificate. He worked as an adult trainer at Acuate for seven years.

At LASTIC he manages suppliers, purchase orders, invoices and customer service. The role required new capability in demand forecasting, performance monitoring, digital record-keeping and inventory management, which he built in post. His next area of development is redesigning and simplifying workflows using new technology, including artificial intelligence.

LASTIC, for its part, assessed him on what he could do rather than on whether he had worked in the sector before.

## THE OUTCOME

### For the enterprise

- ▶ Minimal settling-in time, because familiarity with structured workflows and documented procedures transferred directly into the role.
- ▶ Improved work efficiency and customer service levels.
- ▶ Stronger governance and operational discipline in a young organisation, drawn from his experience in communications, leadership and coaching newer colleagues.

### For the individuals

- ▶ Continuous employment across three very different sectors, each move built on capability already held.
- ▶ New capability acquired in post, in demand forecasting, performance monitoring and digital record-keeping.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Career mobility does not require prior experience in the same sector. It requires two things at once: the individual to recognise what transfers, and the employer to look for it.**

“ *Having a positive attitude and motivation is the key to success. Mr Arriola has proved to be a great asset to the young team at LASTIC.*”

— **Mr Richard Khoo**  
Chief Executive Officer, Lastic (S) Pte Ltd

## CASE STUDY 7:

**JESSLINE YAP****Skills Development and Career Navigation:  
Turning a Career Setback into a New Direction**

*Losing her job prompted Jessline to rethink her path, build new capabilities and develop a career in adult education*

**SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED****INDIVIDUALS****Skills Identification  
and Career  
Navigation**

- You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.
- You check that a course fits your interests and life priorities before spending time or money on it, rather than choosing it simply because it is popular or in demand.

**Skills Development  
and Learning**

- You choose learning based on whether it builds a skill you'll actually use at work, not for the certificate it comes with.
- You weigh up whether a skill is likely to still be useful in a few years before committing time to learning it.
- You set out a plan for the skills you want to build over time, and follow through on it.
- You learn at a pace that fits your work and family commitments, rather than trying to match a pace that doesn't suit your life stage.



## PROFILE

Jessline Yap is an adult educator whose career was disrupted when she unexpectedly lost her job as a trainer in her thirties. The setback came at a difficult time, with financial responsibilities at home and her father in poor health. Rather than treating the setback only as a search for another similar job, Jessline used it as a point to reconsider what she wanted from her career and what she needed to learn to move forward.

## THE PRACTICE

Jessline made deliberate learning choices based on three considerations: her immediate employment needs, her longer-term professional direction and emerging workforce trends.

To regain employment, she completed the Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education at IAL. The programme developed her capabilities in curriculum development and instructional design, enabling her to secure courseware development and training engagements.

As her capabilities expanded, Jessline began receiving opportunities to undertake enterprise consultancy. Her role gradually grew from delivering programmes to advising organisations more strategically. She planned her development accordingly, including funding her own Kirkpatrick Four Levels Evaluation certification. This equipped her to connect learning interventions with workplace performance and business results.

Jessline also kept abreast of changes in technology and work through research, industry developments and engagements with enterprises, institutions and individuals. Anticipating that future work would require people to combine human strengths with artificial intelligence, she enrolled in a Masters programme in the Science of Learning. The programme deepened her understanding of cognition, artificial intelligence, learning analytics and research methods.

She applies these capabilities by bridging organisational strategy and implementation. She works with business leaders to understand their goals, translate them into practical workforce roadmaps, and design, implement and evaluate interventions. This allows her to support business outcomes while remaining attentive to the people affected by change.

Her own experience as an adult learner also strengthened her empathy. She listens closely, uses questions and reflection, and connects new ideas with learners' experiences to help them build understanding and confidence.

## THE OUTCOME

- ▶ Jessline's learning generated both professional and personal returns. It enabled her to secure sustained work, expand into consultancy and provide more integrated advice to enterprises and learners. Over time, she progressed from implementing training to connecting learning, performance and organisational priorities.
- ▶ Her development also strengthened her confidence and sense of agency. She describes her accumulated capabilities as an internal reservoir she can draw upon when facing uncertainty or new challenges.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Career setbacks can create an opportunity to reassess what matters, keep building relevant skills and apply them in new ways. Jessline's experience shows how continuous learning can strengthen both career direction and the value we bring to others.**



“ *Skills-First, to me, is about recognising what I can do, continuing to build my skills, and having the confidence to apply them in new ways. My career may change, but the skills I build and the value I can bring continue with me.*”

— **Ms Jessline Yap**

Consultant & Founder, The Learning Motion Pte Ltd

## CASE STUDY 8:

**BARRY CHOU****Career Navigation: Finding a New Direction After Two Decades in Corporate Work**

*After two decades in the corporate sector, Barry Chou made the difficult decision to pursue a different path. By reflecting on what mattered to him and recognising the skills he had developed over the years, he found a new direction in life and career design, professional hosting and moderation.*

**SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED** **INDIVIDUALS****Skills Identification and Career Navigation**

- You plan your next career move around what you can actually do, not just the certificates you hold — because employers increasingly hire and promote based on proven ability.
- You assess how your current skills map onto other jobs, including ones you may not have considered.
- You identify skills you already have that would let you move sideways into a different job — useful if your current role is shrinking or changing.
- You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.

**Skills Development and Learning**

- You look for opportunities to learn new skills through your actual work — for example, a new project or assignment — rather than only through formal courses.

**Skills Demonstration and Signalling**

- You describe your experience in terms of the skills you've built — for example leadership or budgeting — rather than just listing past job titles.

## PROFILE



For much of his career, Barry worked in training, facilitation, learning and development, and organisational transformation. Recognised as a high-potential employee, he progressed professionally and led or supported teams across SMEs, multinational companies, government and the Labour Movement. He consulted with leaders, developed new areas of work and helped organisations chart their transformation roadmaps.

As his career developed, Barry began reflecting more deeply on the work he found meaningful and the value he wanted to create. Leaving a familiar corporate career after 20 years was both exciting and unsettling. He was not simply changing jobs. He was stepping away from an established professional identity to focus on coaching individuals, while continuing to inspire larger audiences through hosting and moderation.

## THE PRACTICE

Barry began by taking stock of what he had built throughout his career. He looked beneath job titles and considered the capabilities that had remained useful across his different roles.

As a trainer, he became highly proficient in speaking, facilitating and engaging audiences. His consulting work taught him to understand the needs of clients and internal stakeholders and to design suitable frameworks, programmes and interventions. Through leading teams himself and working with leaders, employees and teams, he had also developed the ability to listen, ask questions, coach others and guide conversations.

Barry realised that these capabilities were transferable. They could be applied in coaching, where he now helps individuals truly unpack who they are and what they can do, design their very own future, strengthening personal agency and engagement with the world of work. These competencies were also relevant to hosting and moderation, where he needed to engage audiences from the stage, draw out different perspectives on-the-go, and connect ideas on the spot. He also uncovered his passion for theatre acting and stepped into it, and discovered how the same skills for his theatre hobby and live stage productions can likewise be transferred to his professional emceeing and moderation work.

His decision was guided by his skills, values, interests and personality. He recognised that he was most fulfilled when empowering others and seeing ‘their eyes light up’.

The transition also built on earlier moments of learning. At his first hosting engagement in 2001, Barry froze on stage and came away feeling that he had failed. When he was later invited to host another event, he had to decide whether to remain within his comfort zone or try again. He accepted the opportunity, performed well and continued developing his craft.

## THE OUTCOME

- ▶ Barry successfully moved from a long corporate career into life and career design, hosting and moderation. Rather than starting over, he carried his experience forward and applied his capabilities in new settings.
- ▶ Today, he uses his own COMPASS coaching framework to help clients rediscover themselves, clarify what matters and design practical pathways forward. These pathways may lead to a new role, a business, fractional work or another possibility. He also continues to partner organisations in hosting signature events and engaging their audiences.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Barry’s journey shows that career navigation begins with knowing oneself and finding one’s own compass. A change in direction becomes more manageable when individuals can recognise the skills they possess, understand where those skills can be applied and choose work that reflects what matters to them.**



“ I realised I was not starting over. The skills I had built over two decades and the person I have become could be carried into new work that reflected who I am and how I wanted to contribute in my next chapter.”

— Mr Barry Chou

Life & Career Design Coach, Emcee, Moderator, and Founder, Be.Inspired.

## CASE STUDY 9:

# MUHAMMAD KHALID

## Skills Identification and Career Navigation: Building a New Career on Transferable Skills

*After eight years in sales, Khalid drew on his transferable skills and a clear career plan to make a purposeful move into healthcare.*

### SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED

#### INDIVIDUALS

#### Skills Identification and Career Navigation

- You assess how your current skills map onto other jobs, including ones you may not have considered.
- You identify skills you already have that would let you move sideways into a different job — useful if your current role is shrinking or changing.
- You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.

#### Skills Development and Learning

- You choose learning based on whether it builds a skill you'll actually use at work, not for the certificate it comes with.

#### Cross-Pillar

- At every major career transition, you discuss your skills and career plans with your employer or a career coach, and review whether your actions are improving your career opportunities, skills and earnings.

## PROFILE

At 44, Muhammad Khalid is a Senior Patient Service Associate at the National Cancer Centre Singapore. Just a year earlier, he was working in sales, a field in which he had spent eight years as an associate and consultant.

His move into healthcare was more than a change of job. It marked a new stage in his life and reflected a carefully considered decision about how he wanted to contribute through his work.



## THE PRACTICE

Khalid approaches major life decisions with a five-year plan. When he turned 40, he began asking what he wanted the next stage of his career and life to look like. Although he valued his experience in sales, he wanted work that would allow him to make a more direct difference to others.

He discussed his plans with his family, friends and manager. These conversations helped him clarify what mattered and consider different possibilities. The final decision remained his. He chose healthcare because it offered the sense of purpose and human connection he was seeking.

Moving into a new sector could have felt like starting again. Instead, Khalid reflected on the skills he had developed and where else they could be applied. His years in sales had taught him to listen carefully, understand people's needs, manage expectations and respond calmly when problems arose. He had also developed patience, empathy and the ability to connect with people from different backgrounds.

Khalid recognised that these capabilities could be equally valuable when supporting patients and their families. He was not leaving his experience behind. He was applying it in a different setting where it could make a meaningful difference.

He also considered what he still needed to learn. In May 2025, he left his sales role and enrolled in Generation Singapore's Patient Service Associate programme. He chose the programme because it was directly relevant to his intended career and would develop the capabilities needed for a patient-facing role.

After graduating in November 2025, Khalid joined the National Cancer Centre Singapore in January 2026 as a Senior Patient Service Associate, despite having no previous healthcare experience.

Today, he combines his healthcare knowledge with the interpersonal strengths developed through eight years in sales. His warm and people-centred approach helps patients feel more comfortable and supported during difficult periods in their lives.

## THE OUTCOME

- ▶ Khalid successfully moved from sales into healthcare by combining his transferable skills with targeted training. He secured a patient-facing role that was better aligned with his desire to support others.
- ▶ His experience shows that a mid-career transition does not always require a person to begin from zero. Existing capabilities can provide a strong foundation, while relevant learning can build the additional skills needed to enter and perform in a new sector.

## LEARNING POINTS

**Khalid's journey shows that beginning a new career does not mean leaving past experience behind. A person's next opportunity may begin with recognising the value of skills already developed through work and life. By reflecting on what mattered to him, seeking perspectives from people he trusted and building the additional capabilities required, Khalid turned his experience into a purposeful new direction.**

“ At 40, I asked myself what I wanted the next five years of my life to look like. I knew I wanted work where I could make a more direct difference to someone. Moving into healthcare was a big step, but I realised I was not starting from zero. I brought with me eight years of experience in listening to people, understanding their needs and helping them through difficult situations. Today, when I can help a patient feel more comfortable, I know I made the right choice.”

— Mr Muhammad Khalid

Senior Patient Service Associate, National Cancer Centre Singapore

## CASE STUDY 10:

**WOO LAI YEE****From Caregiver to Eldercare Professional:  
Finding Purpose in a New Career**

*After almost 30 years in the corporate sector, Lai Yee left her career to care for her mother. The experience inspired her move into eldercare, where she built relevant skills through learning and volunteering while applying her transferable skills in purposeful work.*

**SKILLS-FIRST PRACTICES APPLIED****INDIVIDUALS****Skills Identification  
and Career  
Navigation**

- You plan your next career move around what you can actually do, not just the certificates you hold.
- You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.

**Skills Development  
and Learning**

- You choose learning based on whether it builds a skill you'll actually use at work, not for the certificate it comes with.
- You look for opportunities to learn new skills through your actual work — for example, a new project or assignment — rather than only through formal courses.

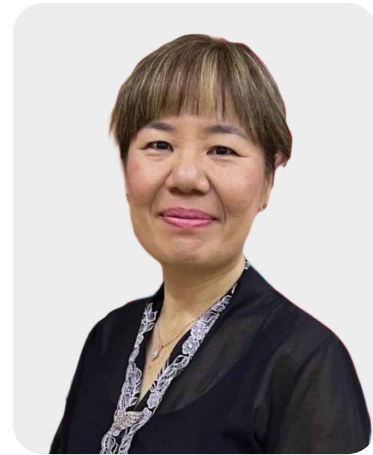
**Skills  
Demonstration and  
Signalling**

- You build relationships with mentors, colleagues, family and others who can open doors and support you through career decisions — connections often matter as much as skills.

## PROFILE

At 55, Lai Yee is a mid-career switcher with almost three decades of experience in multinational companies across the consumer goods and technology sectors. Her work centred on business development, sales and retail marketing, including a corporate role with Apple in Singapore.

Four years ago, when her mother's health deteriorated following a stroke, Lai Yee left her job to become her primary caregiver. For two years, she navigated medical and community care services, learned about her mother's condition and made important decisions on her behalf. It was a demanding period, but it also led Lai Yee to reflect on how she wanted to contribute in the next stage of her life.



## THE PRACTICE

After her mother passed away, Lai Yee decided to pursue a career in eldercare. The transition was intimidating. People around her wondered whether she would eventually return to corporate work. Job advertisements also showed that even entry-level roles often required relevant experience in eldercare or healthcare.

Rather than making the transition all at once, Lai Yee explored the sector in stages. She completed a two-and-a-half-month online course in healthcare leadership to understand the healthcare landscape. Recognising that a certificate alone would not demonstrate her suitability for the work, she sought advice from people in the sector. One adviser encouraged her to volunteer and experience the work for herself.

Lai Yee trained as a Silver Generation Ambassador and spent a year visiting seniors in their homes. She reached more than 300 seniors and learned to build trust with people she had never met, including those with whom she did not share a common language or dialect. The experience gave her relevant evidence for her resume. More importantly, it confirmed that eldercare was where she wanted to build her career.

She subsequently secured a role at an active ageing centre and progressed to Centre Manager within one year and seven months. Lai Yee soon recognised that she was not starting from nothing. Many capabilities from her corporate career remained useful. She could interpret targets, develop action plans, support staff and build partnerships with community organisations and educational institutions. The setting had changed, but the underlying skills had not.

At the same time, she continued building sector-specific capabilities. She completed at least ten community care modules, including geriatric case management, volunteer management and activity planning. She applied her learning to assess seniors' needs, connect them with suitable services and improve engagement. By the time she left the centre, her team had exceeded its targets for the year.

Lai Yee has since joined another active ageing centre to gain wider exposure to eldercare approaches, research partnerships and technology-enabled programmes. She has also applied for a master's degree in gerontology to deepen her knowledge and become a better manager at her workplace.

### THE OUTCOME

- ▶ Lai Yee moved from a long corporate career into eldercare without discarding the experience she had built. Volunteering helped her test the fit, demonstrate commitment and develop relevant experience. Her corporate capabilities helped her progress, while continued learning strengthened her confidence and effectiveness in the new sector.

### LEARNING POINTS

**Lai Yee's journey shows that a major career switch can be approached through informed steps. Individuals can explore a field before entering it, build evidence through real experience, identify which existing skills remain valuable and acquire the sector knowledge needed to perform well. Support from family, advisers and peers can also make a difficult transition more manageable.**

“ I hope my mother would be happy with the decision I have made. She always taught us to respect and care for our elders, and to keep studying. At 55, I am still learning and doing what I can to give back to seniors.”

— Ms Woo Lai Yee  
Centre Manager, Active Ageing Centre

# Glossary

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**Apex Employer Organisation:** A nationally recognised employer representative body that represents employers' interests, promotes sound employment and industrial relations practices, and collaborates with government and unions on workforce and enterprise development.

**Skills-First:** An approach that prioritises the identification, acquisition, demonstration, use and recognition of skills as central aims of workforce development, across recruitment, job design, learning and career advancement. It requires systemic coordination; it complements rather than replaces qualifications.

**Career Health:** An individual's ongoing capacity to navigate career transitions, remain employable and continue developing relevant skills. It also refers to the national Career Health initiative led by the Ministry of Manpower and Skills and Workforce Development Agency. Career Health is the individual outcome; Skills-First is the labour-market approach that helps make it possible.

**Verified Skills vs Certified Skills:** Verified skills are demonstrated through workplace application; certified skills are attained through training and assessment. Both are important. The Framework seeks to ensure that verified skills carry recognition and value alongside certification.

**Skills Fluency vs Skills Literacy:** Skills literacy is the ability to identify and understand skills, whether one's own or those within a workforce. Skills fluency is the ability to apply those skills effectively in real work. The Framework seeks to shift workforce decisions from recognising awareness of skills to recognising their demonstrated application.

**Structured Career Planning:** Career planning is a process where individuals better understand their career values, skills, interests, personality, jobs, and career paths; apply this understanding to identify career goals; develop plans to achieve these goals, which may include obtaining a job and/or reskilling, though not necessarily so; act on and review career plans.

**Routinised Practice:** A behaviour embedded as a regular and default step in an organisation's processes or an individual's decision routines, rather than undertaken only occasionally or as a one-off effort.

**Real Work Projects:** Work assignments that provide evidence of skills application by enabling newly developed or claimed skills to be demonstrated, validated and recognised through actual work rather than classroom completion alone.

**Skills-Based Selection:** The use of demonstrated skills as a basis for hiring, deployment or progression decisions, rather than relying primarily on qualifications or credentials.

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Mr Mark Lee is the Chairman of the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), Singapore's apex business chamber. He is currently a Nominated Member of Parliament, advocating for SMEs and the broader business sector since 2023. He is also the CEO of Sing Lun Holdings Pte Ltd, a global enterprise spanning industry, investments, and real estate. He works closely with businesses across sectors to strengthen enterprise competitiveness, champion business transformation and address key workforce and manpower challenges facing Singapore companies.

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Ms Tan Hwee Bin is the Vice President of the Singapore National Employers Federation. She is the Executive Director of Wing Tai Holdings Limited, a leading property and lifestyle company listed on the Singapore Exchange. Ms Tan serves as Chairman of NTUC FairPrice Co-operative Limited and NTUC FairPrice Foundation, and on the boards of NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited and Tripartite Alliance Limited. She is also the Co-Chair of Singapore's Tripartite Workgroup on Senior Employment. Ms Tan was awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) in 2011 and the Public Service Star (BBM) in 2018 by the Singapore Government.

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Ms Caryn Lim is the Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Job Security at the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). She oversees NTUC's Job Security ecosystem, driving efforts to improve workers' wages and work prospects by helping workers access end-to-end support from skills training and career coaching to job matching while supporting companies in their workforce and business transformation. She works closely with tripartite partners and industry stakeholders to strengthen workforce resilience and employment outcomes for workers.

*Continued on next page »*

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Ms Dilys Boey is Chief Executive of the Skills and Workforce Development Agency, where she leads the statutory board's efforts in workforce development and lifelong learning. She previously served as Chief Executive of Workforce Singapore and Deputy Chief Executive (Industry Clusters) at Enterprise Singapore. Prior to joining the Singapore public service, Dilys spent 25 years in management consulting, including as a Partner and ASEAN People Advisory Services Managing Partner where she led the People Consulting practice across Southeast Asia in areas such as capability building and organisation restructuring.

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## Existing Initiatives Supporting Skills-First Practices

| Existing initiative             | What it already enables                                                       | Enhancement through Framework for Action                                                                                                                                                                                 | Skills-First Practices for Individuals*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Skills-First Practices for Employers*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Skills Frameworks               | Provides common descriptions of occupations, tasks and skills across sectors. | Strengthen their use by individuals to identify, articulate and plan around their skills, and by employers in job design, hiring, capability mapping, deployment, progression and skills recognition.                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You make use of shared tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, to better understand your skills, career options and changing job opportunities, without needing expert interpretation.</li> <li>You describe your experience in terms of the skills you've built — for example leadership or budgeting — rather than just listing past job titles.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You leverage relevant national and industry tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, where appropriate, rather than spending time and money building your own from scratch.</li> <li>You write job advertisements in terms of the actual tasks and skills required, using shared, sector-wide definitions — not vague titles.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    |
| Jobs Transformation Maps (JTM)s | Identifies how jobs and skills are evolving within sectors.                   | Help individuals anticipate changing skills needs and plan their development, while enabling enterprises to identify future capability needs and prepare earlier for job redesign, reskilling and workforce transitions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You make use of shared tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, to better understand your skills, career options and changing job opportunities, without needing expert interpretation.</li> <li>You weigh up whether a skill is likely to still be useful in a few years before committing time to learning it.</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You leverage relevant national and industry tools, such as Skills Frameworks and Jobs Transformation Maps, where appropriate, rather than spending time and money building your own from scratch.</li> <li>You plan ahead for how new technology or business changes will reshape jobs.</li> <li>You prepare employees early for changes to their roles — for example, retraining of employees is planned as part of business transformation to enable employees to take on new roles.</li> </ul> |

| Existing initiative                 | What it already enables                                                                           | Enhancement through Framework for Action                                                                                                                                 | Skills-First Practices for Individuals*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Skills-First Practices for Employers*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Careers & Skills Passport (CSP)     | Provides individuals with a consolidated record of qualifications, skills and career information. | Strengthen the recording and verification of demonstrated skills and their use in career planning, hiring, skills recognition, internal mobility and career transitions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You build a record that proves your skills — such as completed work samples, test results, or a skills passport — that you can show to employers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You assess candidates based on the skills required for the role, using demonstrated capabilities, and qualifications as complementary sources of evidence.</li> <li>You maintain visibility of the skills your employees have and how those skills are being used in the business.</li> </ul>                                   |
| Career Conversion Programmes (CCPs) | Supports workers moving into new occupations through structured reskilling.                       | Strengthen the identification and recognition of transferable skills, practical skills assessment, workplace learning and deployment into new occupations and roles.     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You plan your next career move around what you can actually do, not just the certificates you hold — because employers increasingly hire and promote based on proven ability.</li> <li>You identify skills you already have that would let you move sideways into a different job — useful if your current role is shrinking or changing.</li> <li>You hold onto a clear sense of who you are and what you want from your career, so that a setback — including losing a job to automation — becomes a chance to choose a new direction, not just a search for the same job again.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You assess candidates based on the skills required for the role, using demonstrated capabilities, and qualifications as complementary sources of evidence.</li> <li>You formalise skills-based hiring practices so that candidates are assessed consistently, rather than relying on individual managers' judgement.</li> </ul> |

| Existing initiative                                | What it already enables                                                                    | Enhancement through Framework for Action                                                                                                                                                                      | Skills-First Practices for Individuals*                                                                                                                                                                         | Skills-First Practices for Employers*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enterprise Workforce Transformation Package (EWTP) | Supports enterprises in workforce transformation, job redesign and capability development. | Provide a structured pathway that links business strategy and future capability needs to job redesign, capability mapping, targeted learning, workforce deployment, skills recognition and business outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You look for opportunities to learn new skills through your actual work — for example, a new project or assignment — rather than only through formal courses.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You plan ahead for how new technology or business changes will reshape jobs.</li> <li>You prepare employees early for changes to their roles — for example, retraining of employees is planned as part of business transformation to enable employees to take on new roles.</li> <li>You identify the skills your business will need now and in the future, based on sector trends, so training can begin before shortages become urgent.</li> </ul> |

\*Note: The initiatives identified and their mapping to Skills-First practices are illustrative rather than exhaustive, highlighting key initiatives and the most relevant practices.



Scan the QR code for more initiatives

## Research and Development: An Intelligence and Learning Agenda for Skills Value Realisation

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The Skills-First Research and Development (R&D) Agenda serves as the learning function of the *Skills-First: Framework for Action*. It sets out how research can be used to track whether Skills-First practices are changing, understand why change does or does not occur, test approaches that may improve adoption, and feed evidence back into policy and practice. It comprises three mutually reinforcing research areas.

- **Area 1: Skills-First Observatory** provides the measurement backbone. It tracks the adoption, routinisation and outcomes of Skills-First practices across individuals and enterprises.
- **Area 2: Feedback Loop** evaluates existing mechanisms and programmes, including their theory of change, implementation and policy design. It examines whether and how they contribute to routinising Skills-First practices, with findings feeding into the Observatory and policy refinement.
- **Area 3: Prototyping** provides a sandbox for designing, testing and evaluating new mechanisms that can move the adoption “delta”, particularly where existing mechanisms have not yet shifted Skills-First practices.

This R&D Agenda is deliberately action-oriented. Its value lies in generating evidence that can inform policy and practice, improve decisions, and advance Skills-First practices among individuals, enterprises and the wider ecosystem, enabling skills to be activated, developed, utilised and recognised in the labour market.

We welcome local and international researchers, policymakers, practitioners and organisations to collaborate with us on this R&D Agenda.



Scan the QR code to access the full paper and register your interest

## Singapore Skills-First Observatory: Monitoring of Skills-First Practices and Outcomes

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The **Singapore Skills-First Observatory** proposes a national framework to monitor Singapore's progress towards a Skills-First workforce ecosystem. As the measurement component of the *Skills-First Framework for Action*, the Observatory is intended to provide a systematic and evidence-based view of how Skills-First practices are being adopted, embedded and translated into workforce and enterprise outcomes over time.

The proposed Observatory responds to a gap in the current measurement landscape. While existing surveys and evaluations provide valuable insights into workforce outcomes and individual programmes, there is currently no coordinated mechanism to track the adoption and routinisation of Skills-First practices across the ecosystem over time. The Observatory seeks to address this by bringing together evidence from multiple sources, including dedicated surveys, existing national surveys, administrative data and labour market datasets.

The framework focuses on **four complementary components**. The Core Monitoring Layer examines: (1) Skills-First practices among individuals, (2) Skills-First practices among employers, and (3) associated workforce and enterprise outcomes. The Innovation Layer tracks (4) emerging initiatives and pilots, providing opportunities to learn from new approaches and identify promising practices that may have potential for wider adoption.

The Observatory is guided by several design principles. It focuses on **measuring actual practices rather than stated intentions**, by examining how Skills-First approaches are reflected in real career and workforce decisions, rather than attitudes or aspirations alone. It also distinguishes between **adoption and routinisation**, recognising that practices may be implemented to different degrees before becoming embedded in routine decision-making. The framework focuses primarily on **individuals and employers**, while considering the role of the wider ecosystem in enabling implementation. It is designed as an **ongoing learning mechanism**, with repeated measurement used to identify progress, gaps and areas for improvement.

We welcome local and international researchers, policymakers, practitioners and organisations interested in contributing to the Singapore Skills-First Observatory.



Scan the QR code to access the full paper and register your interest

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