

SKILLSOFT **360 SERIES**

# BE THE EYE OF THE STORM

GUIDING YOUR  
ORGANIZATION  
THROUGH  
TURBULENT TIMES

by  
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Chief Marketing Officer,  
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skillsoft®



# INTRODUCTION

“We’re living through what could be called ‘a perfect storm’ of change.”

— MICHELLE BB

Since the onset of the global pandemic, three seismic shifts have convened to disrupt business as usual:

- A global health crisis: COVID-19
- Worldwide economic uncertainty
- A widespread social justice movement

In the midst of fear and uncertainty, social unrest, and intense economic pressure, employees across the globe are looking for stability, support, and reassurance.

## **And that puts HR leaders on the frontline.**

HR leaders, in turn, need new ways to ignite change and create long-term momentum as they build the agile, adaptable, and resilient workforce of the future. This moment in our collective history has forced HR leaders to develop new competencies and pivot quickly — under great stress — to become caregivers in a whole new way.

As the leading global learning company, Skillsoft is here to support you and your most valuable resource — your people.

For the past six months, companies around the world have been revisiting, rethinking, and reimagining what business looks like in the face of a prolonged time of crisis — and many are evaluating how to handle a remote workforce indefinitely.

In my role as Chief Marketing Officer at Skillsoft, I’m no stranger to organizational change. Here are some of my key takeaways from the past months, including some successful case studies and learning resources that can help you not just face the unique challenges of today and survive — but thrive.



# THE NEW FACE OF HR.

“The new coronavirus pandemic highlights two urgent needs: to be more digital and more human.”

— SENIOR EXECUTIVE, TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

HR leaders have always addressed organizational management imperatives: hiring, onboarding, advancement, performance, and succession. Today, you’re attending to personal protective equipment (PPE), employee safety, and employee childcare — spending more time on basic human needs. You’re also spearheading critical cultural change as your organization redefines inclusivity — something that’s overdue for many of us.

Recently, we surveyed a group of HR professionals about the future of work and talent management as we think beyond the pandemic. A theme we heard over and over is that as business evolves and companies emerge, people and our investments in them will be as important as the technology we use. Perhaps even more so.

Of course, to meet the challenges of these extraordinary times, compassion matters as much as compliance. Safeguarding the health and well-being of your employees is vital — but so is ensuring that your organization can continue to deliver value that maintains financial stability for all going forward. And that means embracing new terrain, new technologies, and new skill sets.

How? By enabling the democratization of learning.



# THE STRONG SURVIVE. THE ADAPTABLE THRIVE.

65% of children entering primary school will end up in jobs that don't have a name yet.

**WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM**

Even before the current crisis, rapidly changing technologies were disrupting jobs across the globe, creating a continually shifting “future of work.” In fact, The McKinsey Global Institute’s 2017 report estimated that as much as 14 percent of the global workforce would have to switch occupations or acquire new skills by 2030 because of automation and artificial intelligence. And it’s anybody’s guess what those new occupations will look like.

Here’s an example. Five years ago, not many of us knew what an artificial intelligence (AI) conversational analyst or conversational designer was. But now, a quick Google search reveals a large number of job opportunities with exactly those titles. That’s the challenge that we in the HR, learning, and talent professions face: the jobs of tomorrow may not yet exist and we see a massive skills shortage for the ones that do. For example, according to Deloitte’s 2020 Global Human Capital Trends survey, 68% of organizations say they are currently making only moderate investments in reskilling or no investment at all as it relates to AI, yet Deloitte cites AI as one of the most significant areas of reskilling needed.

Organizations need to hone their ability to adapt and evolve, to be resilient and future-fit — whether it’s in response to an unanticipated event (like the pandemic) or just to be prepared as their industry changes.

Because it *will* change. And who’s at the center of all of it? HR.

# THE KEY TO NAVIGATING CHANGE? RESILIENCE.



“These changes will make my role more important and challenging and I believe this will be the case for HR professionals across many industries.”

**CHRO  
FINANCE COMPANY**

True resilience requires a “springboard” mindset: HR must keep core values at the forefront and let those values guide each and every decision made during this time. Individually, resilience is born from:

- *Positive attitudes and growth mindsets.*
- *Providing workers with the tools they need.*
- *Supporting productive relationships within and without work.*
- *Providing a clear and meaningful mission.*
- *Giving workers the freedom to perform, achieve, and grow.*

Organizationally, resilience includes building a more agile operating model; ensuring that the workforce — especially leaders — has the right capability set; nurturing organizational relationships; sharing data in real-time; and building and promoting leadership that engenders trust and supports creativity and innovation.



# THE POWER OF THE PIVOT.

Today, the best prepared organizations are being *proactive* so they can be *reactive* — at an extremely rapid pace — even when they don't know in advance exactly what they'll need to react to.

At Skillsoft, we experienced this ourselves, as the pandemic changed the way we work and the way we engage with our customers — especially in the area of live events and in-person trainings. We realized early on in the pandemic crisis that Perspectives, our annual customer forum planned for May, couldn't happen as conceived. Between the scale of the event and all the uncertainty, we had to quickly calculate risks, make decisions, and move forward *proactively*.

Our destination event for 1,000 customers, including hundreds of HR professionals, transformed into a live, global, digital experience for tens of thousands. It was definitely uncharted territory.

If we had wavered, if we had waited, we wouldn't have accomplished what we did. It worked because we trusted in our people's ability to adapt and grow.



**DESTINATION: YOU ENJOY THE JOURNEY**  
PERSPECTIVES 2020  
skillsoft | sumtotal

If you missed Perspectives 2020, we've put together an eBook of highlights from the digital conference, as well as links to resources to help us navigate the new normal together.

## CASE STUDY:

# DEUTSCHE TELEKOM LEADS THE WAY.

**180K**  
employees  
in Europe and  
Middle East

**145K**  
current Percipio  
enrollment

**10**  
countries where  
Percipio is in use

**1 WEEK**  
with Percipio  
surpassed  
content  
consumed in  
previous year

Deutsche Telekom AG is a global telecommunications company with 180,000 employees distributed over Europe and the Middle East. Like other global companies, they've had to balance the needs of a large team with different languages, cultures, work-related learning regulations, and varying levels of infrastructure.

Before deploying Skillsoft, almost all training was delivered via a traditional classroom, which limited the volume and variety of learning that could occur. Recognizing the inherent limitations of classroom-based training, the L&D team had begun a global roll-out of Skillsoft's learning platform, Percipio, before the pandemic struck. So, tens of thousands of employees in seven countries were already leading the way in learning.

The shift to the Percipio platform made something amazing happen: in Austria alone, the amount of learning content consumed in one week surpassed all the learning done in the previous year.

That's the power of building a digital learning culture and providing the tools needed to seamlessly integrate learning into their day-to-day workflow. Just think how relevant that is now that so many of us are managing remote workforces.



CASE STUDY:

# FILLING GAPS WITH THE PEOPLE ON HAND.

**278K**  
learning hours  
since April 2020

**145K**  
digital badges  
earned

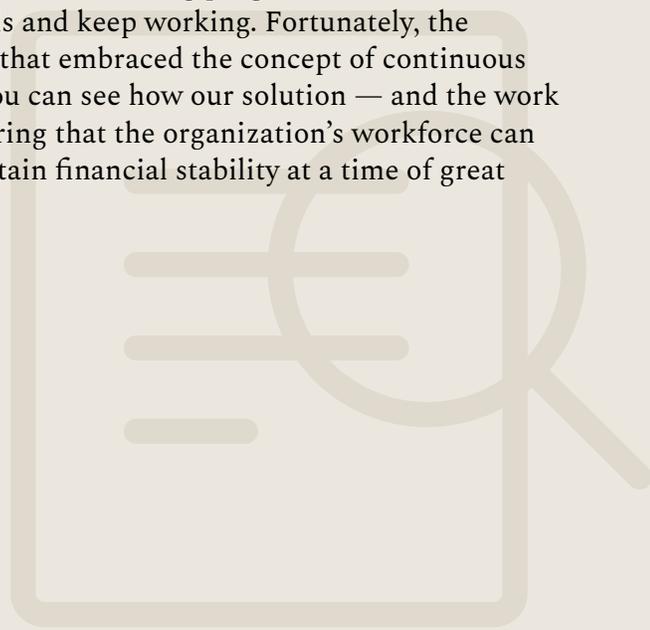
**>55%**  
of members  
using CGI  
Academia

**FURLOUGHS  
AVOIDED**  
by reskilling  
during pandemic

CGI is an end-to-end consulting company that delivers a full spectrum of services to help clients become digital enterprises. Skillsoft has been a critical partner in CGI's journey to launch CGI Academia, a companywide online learning program that leverages our learning platform Percipio.

When the pandemic struck, CGI suddenly had a reduced number of projects for their team member consultants to work on and many were on the bench. Rather than furlough them, however, CGI found ways to quickly re-skill and up-skill them in order to fill gaps for projects that were still active. They asked the question, "How can we help these members pivot very quickly into taking roles that ... we would have advertised, recruited for?"

They created bootcamps and an intensive training program so that their existing team could shift their skills and keep working. Fortunately, the organization already had a culture that embraced the concept of continuous learning. In a situation like that, you can see how our solution — and the work they do — is mission critical, ensuring that the organization's workforce can continue to deliver value and maintain financial stability at a time of great uncertainty for many.





CASE STUDY:

# TWO WEEKS TO TAKEOFF: A VIRTUAL SUCCESS.

**185-  
YEAR-OLD**  
relationship-based  
insurer

**150 NEW  
ENGINEERS**  
certified annually

**12  
LEARNING  
LABS**  
converted into  
virtual spaces

**2 WEEKS**  
to launch course  
for 20 engineers

How does a 185-year-old relationship-based business with a culture rooted in traditional face-to-face training pivot to virtual learning in two weeks? In a word, *courage*.

FM Global is one of the world's largest commercial insurance companies. They use engineers, not actuaries, to assess and minimize risks on their clients' sites. In this industry, certification is crucial, with FM Global's 1,800 engineers training six weeks annually across their 12 engineering labs. The pandemic forced the company to halt in-person training, and the organization needed to respond. FM Global turned their 12 labs into virtual simulated spaces and moved to a remote learning platform. FM Global built and launched their first course, an interactive engineering training program for 20 engineers from around the world, in just two weeks. They've since digitized the remaining courses.

By being flexible, adaptable, creative, and courageous, FM Global proved that it can be innovative and responsive to critical business needs. Even in a pandemic.



# FOCUS ON BEING HUMAN.

“The digital transformation will make HR even more strategic ... It is a change of mindset throughout the company, with a focus on improving the customer experience, in the case of HR, the internal customer as well.”

**PRESIDENT,  
TECHNOLOGY  
COMPANY**

As the pandemic continues, industries around the world have to examine what must endure and what must change. We're leaping ahead to widespread digital transformation. We're changing workflows, how and where people work, and upgrading peoples' skills at scale.

During this time of unprecedented upheaval, HR is at the very heart of an organization's ability to survive and thrive as we all react, reimagine, and rebuild. We must build a culture of continuous learning that recognizes and nurtures us as whole people. With continuous learning, we can transcend current events and be better prepared for the future, whatever it may be.

We must continue to be there for each other, and human and emotional intelligence — perhaps the most important soft skills of all — will be our best guide.

“I think this is the beginning of the most exciting period we've ever been part of. In the next 20 or 30 years, people are going to come back to this time and ask 'who were the people that made the difference?' I think they're going to look at HR people and say they're the ones who led us through this.”

**VP, ASSISTANT HEAD OF GLOBAL HR,  
MANUFACTURING COMPANY**

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## **MICHELLE BOOCKOFF-BAJDEK**

As Chief Marketing Officer, Michelle Boockoff-Bajdek (BB) leads a global marketing organization focused on helping companies unlock the hidden value inside their greatest asset — their people.

In her role, Michelle is responsible for the company’s marketing strategy to drive growth, generate awareness, and drive demand for Skillsoft solutions among learners, customers, and partners. She oversees all key functions, including customer marketing, corporate communications, demand generation, marketing operations, and business development. Most importantly, she serves as the company’s brand evangelist, helping to build a vibrant community of passionate learners.

Prior to Skillsoft, Michelle held several executive roles in the high tech sector, most notably as the CMO of IBM Watson, where she was responsible for marketing the company’s artificial intelligence (AI) products and solutions. Michelle also served as the global head of marketing for The Weather Company, an IBM Business, where she helped companies understand how to anticipate, plan for, and ultimately make better decisions — with greater confidence — in the face of weather.

# ABOUT SKILLSOFT

Skillsoft delivers online learning, training, and talent solutions to help organizations unleash their edge. Leveraging immersive, engaging content, Skillsoft enables organizations to unlock the potential in their best assets — their people — and build teams with the skills they need for success. Empowering 36 million learners and counting, Skillsoft democratizes learning through an intelligent learning experience and a customized, learner-centric approach to skills development with resources for Leadership Development, Business Skills, Technology & Development, Digital Transformation, and Compliance.

Skillsoft and SumTotal are partners to thousands of leading global organizations, including many Fortune 500 companies. The company features three award-winning systems that support learning, performance and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform, and the SumTotal suite for Talent Development, which offers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle.

Learn more at [www.skillsoft.com](http://www.skillsoft.com).

## **ABOUT THE SKILLSOFT 360 SERIES**

The 360 Series comprises papers and reports by thought leaders inside and outside the Skillsoft community. It challenges assumptions, considers subjects from multiple angles, and provides a fresh, yet comprehensive, view of topics that are most important to today's business leaders.

