OPTIMAL INSIGHT
CENTRE FOR FUTURE INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS & RESEARCH / EXECUTIVE GUIDE 01

The Future Readiness Gap



Why strong performance today can coexist with weak preparation for what comes next.

A practical guide for leadership teams

Read the evidence. Challenge assumptions. Choose one future-facing decision and a first action you can test in 30 days. The worksheets are designed for an executive meeting or planning workshop.

Dr Michele Sagan
Future of work scholar and founder, Optimal Insight

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THE EVIDENCE

The pressure is already visible

Public data show the scale of workforce change. These are signals for a leadership c

39% of existing skill sets are expected to change or become outdated between 2025 and 2030, according to employers surveyed globally by the World Economic Forum. [1]

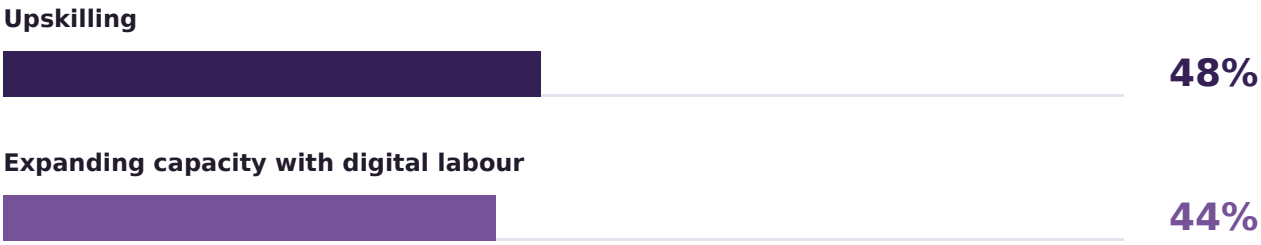
GLOBAL EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS / OUT OF 100 WORKERS BY 2030



29	19	11	41
Upskill in role	Reskill and redeploy	Training unlikely	No training projected

In the WEF projection, 59 of every 100 workers need training: 29 in their current role, 19 for redeployment and 11 unlikely to receive the training they need. The remaining 41 are not projected to require training under this measure. [1]

MALAYSIA / LEADERS' REPORTED PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS



Microsoft's 2025 Malaysia Work Trend Index reports these as leaders' priorities. These percentages describe responses to that survey and are separate from the WEF global workforce estimates above. [2]

What the evidence does not tell us: whether a specific organisation is ready. That requires its own evidence about strategy, work, people and leadership.

THE FUTURE SHAPING LENS

A wider view of readiness

Dr Michele Sagan's Future Shaping research examines the forces pulling organisations off course and the value they should be able to generate. [3]

FOUR COMPOUNDING FORCES TO INVESTIGATE

Disruption

Changes in technology, markets and work can make current strengths less reliable.

Disconnection

A gap can grow between strategy, daily work, leadership and people.

Discontent

Loss of trust, meaning or agency can quietly erode capability.

Degradation

Short-term choices can damage the human and environmental systems on which value depends.

THE OUTCOMES TO PROTECT AND GENERATE

Prosperity

Long-term economic value and intellectual capital.

People

Capability, inclusion and human flourishing.

Purpose

Meaning, ethics and alignment with wider society.

Planet

Stewardship of ecological and shared resources.

Use the lens: What are we measuring today, what might change, and which kind of value would our current decisions strengthen or weaken?

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Five questions worth discussing

Use one question at a time. Ask for evidence, opposing views and an owner for the next step.

1

Which current strength could become a constraint?

A reliable operating model can also make it hard to invest in unfamiliar opportunities.

2

What signals are we treating as peripheral?

Look beyond the usual competitors and within changes to technology, regulation, customers and people.

3

Where do people experience the gap?

Ask what the strategy demands of people and what the current culture and work design actually enable.

4

What would a different future require?

Consider at least two plausible conditions before making an irreversible commitment.

5

Which one capability should we build first?

Choose an action that a named owner can test, review and adjust.

WORKSHEET 01

Signals and assumptions

Choose a live strategic question. Capture what you know, what you assume and what would change your mind.

Decision or challenge we are examining:

SIGNAL

What emerging change could matter over the next 2-5 years?

ASSUMPTION

Which belief about customers, work, technology or talent may no longer hold?

EVIDENCE

What do our current organisational results or conversations show?

ALTERNATIVE

What plausible future would make us rethink our choice?

The prompts are a discussion aid. They do not produce a diagnostic score or forecast. For an organisational assessment, use the relevant Optimal Insight instrument.

WORKSHEET 02

A decision you can test in 30 days

Move from a future-facing discussion to a named action. Keep the first test small enough to learn from.

OUR CHOICE

What will we start, stop or change?

WHY NOW

Which evidence and emerging signal make this choice important?

OWNER & PARTNERS

Who will lead, and who needs to be involved?

30-DAY TEST

What can we test, with whom, and by when?

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

What would show that the action is helping?

After 30 days: review what changed. Decide whether to extend the test, change course or gather more evidence.

PUTTING THE GUIDE TO WORK

The next conversation

A leadership team can use this guide in one meeting. Deeper decisions benefit from evidence about the organisation itself.

A 45-MINUTE STARTING CONVERSATION

10 min | Read the signals

Name one external shift that could materially affect your organisation.

15 min | Test the assumption

Use the questions on page 4 and the worksheet on page 5.

15 min | Choose a first action

Complete page 6 with an owner and a test you can review.

5 min | Agree the next evidence needed

Decide whether you need a diagnostic, facilitated foresight session or learning pathway.

CONTINUE WITH OPTIMAL INSIGHT

The Centre for Future Insights works with organisations and education partners on research, future-thinking conversations and applied learning. Optimal Insight can help connect this guide to GOD assessments, the Generative Organisation Dashboard, consulting, facilitator-led training or Insights Academy.

Sources and method

[1] World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025 (digest).

[2] Microsoft Malaysia, 2025 Work Trend Index, 8 May 2025.

[3] Michele Sagan, Future Shaping (forthcoming, November 2026).

Method note: Public statistics above come from separate studies with different respondent groups. The Four Forces and four outcomes are an Optimal Insight interpretive lens, not results from those surveys. No client data are shown.

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