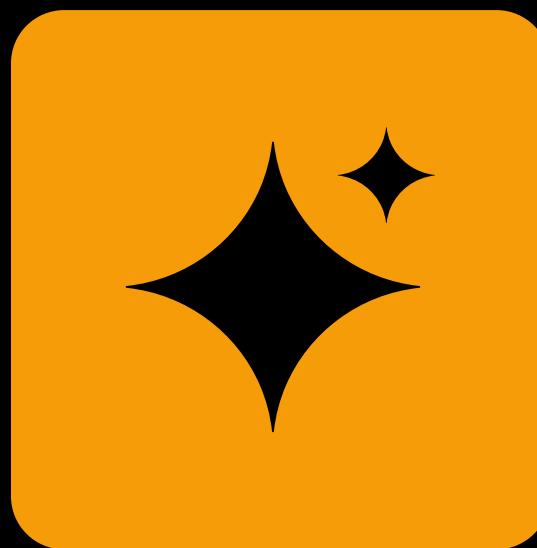
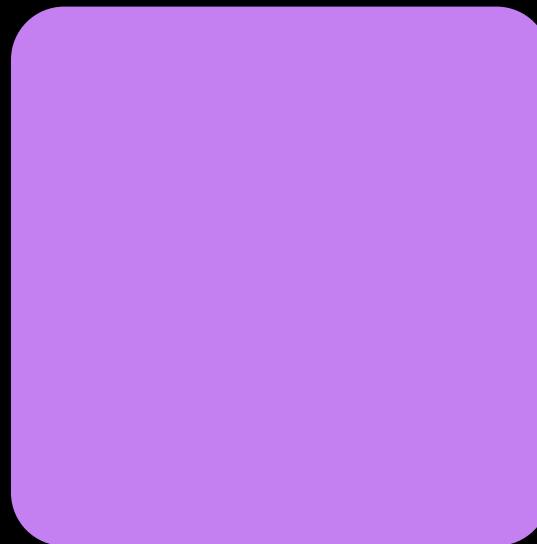
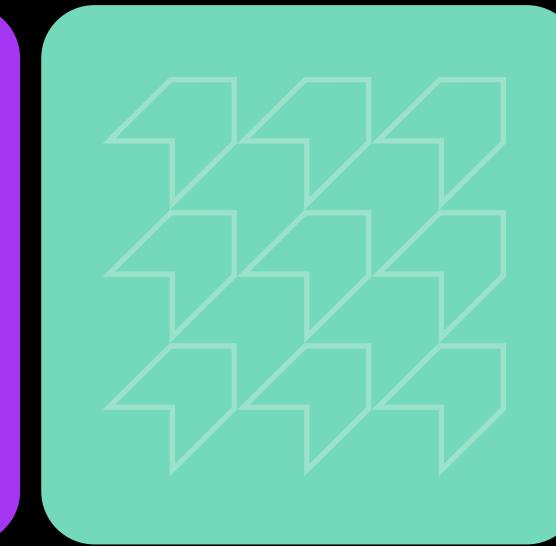
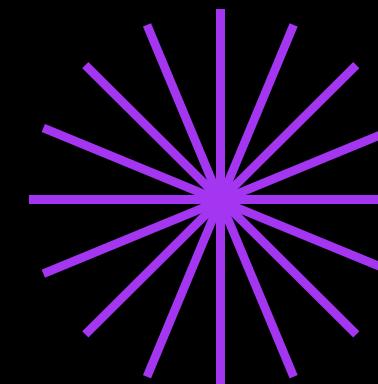


2026

# GLOBAL LEARNING & SKILLS TRENDS REPORT



Navigating  
transformational  
change  
in the era of  
AI and beyond



# CONTENTS

## 1 Introduction

Navigating transformational change in the era of AI and beyond

3

## 2 Key Trends for Today's Organizations

- 2.1 AI fluency isn't a technical goal: It's a new operating system 7
- 2.2 Immersion beats instruction when it comes to skills development: AI learning happens best in the flow of work 13
- 2.3 You can't scale skills without scaling leadership, ethics, and agency 18
- 2.4 If AI is your finish line, you've already lost the race 23

## 3 Conclusion

Adapting to AI disruption as practice for the next transformation

28

# INTRODUCTION



# 01

## Introduction

**Navigating transformational change in the era of AI and beyond**

We have reached a tipping point in how we develop skills in the AI era.

Enterprises are fully aware of the scale of the AI transformation, and this is the year they must ensure that they progress in how AI is integrated and applied across the organization. Almost overnight, what was once considered the domain of IT teams or innovation hubs has become a company-wide imperative for every function, business line, and geography. Human resources and learning teams are being asked to play a critical role in skilling and upskilling talent in AI and complementary skills. Their role will be more essential than ever, as every organization moves to make AI fluency a key strategic initiative.

**Rather than seeing AI as a plug-and-play technical solution, AI fluency makes it possible for people to reframe how they work, adapting their roles to build intelligent systems and ecosystems that amplify business value across interconnected workflows.**

The stakes could hardly be higher, nor the pace more relentless. Skills become obsolete at a dizzying velocity; new jobs appear as quickly as old ones transform. Meanwhile, familiar challenges, including economic volatility, hybrid work friction, and lagging employee engagement, layer atop the disruptive force of change.

Employees across every function are having the same realization: “I need to stay valuable and effective in my role as AI transforms how work gets done.” Organizations face their own version: “We need our workforce to confidently adopt and apply AI capabilities without disrupting productivity or requiring massive retraining investments.”

The jobs to be done go beyond skills acquisition. Employees need to feel confident navigating AI tools, be perceived as forward-thinking contributors, and make tangible progress in their daily work. Organizations need to focus on teaching their employees to use AI effectively and ethically as they build adaptive capability at scale, all while maintaining operational excellence.



Traditional learning solutions consistently fail to fulfill these requirements. Yet the solution is not found in simply hiring more tech talent, sending people to online classes, or even declaring that the future is agentic.

**Instead, the answer lies in a systematic reinvention, where organizations build a learning system oriented around jobs to be done. It requires creating an operating system for permanent reinvention and adaptability that increases capability, enables agency, and scales leadership.**

A learning system enables people to continually learn in the flow of work, moving beyond single courses or formal training into holistic, guided learning journeys that drive faster time to competency. By combining diverse modules, modalities, and formats, such as snackable content, hands-on practice, assessments, and certifications, Udemy creates a flywheel of skills development: sparking curiosity, deepening mastery, and proving skills while delivering measurable performance improvement.

In this system, human instructors remain central, while AI augments the experience: Learner agents act as personalized, instructor-inspired guides, and enterprise agents scale learning operations, aligning skills growth to business outcomes with proven ROI. Together, this blend of human expertise and AI makes learning continuous, contextual, and impactful at

both the individual and organizational level, creating competitive advantage through strategic workforce development. Protocols like Model Context Protocol (MCP) make this integration possible by enabling AI tools, data systems, and learning platforms to communicate seamlessly within existing workflows. This systems approach transforms learning from an event into an engine and enables learning to be easily and more naturally integrated into the work day.

**This report is for business, learning, technical, and AI leaders ready to move past incremental change.**

Drawing on new proprietary data from Udemy, it identifies key trends that will help drive strategy and outlines a roadmap for action. It offers guidance on building AI fluency, where AI readiness isn't just embedded in your learning content, but is a foundational part of your culture and operating system. The following chapters identify the essential trends for 2026 and offer practical, tested strategies to ensure this era of disruption becomes an engine for growth, agility, and lasting advantage.

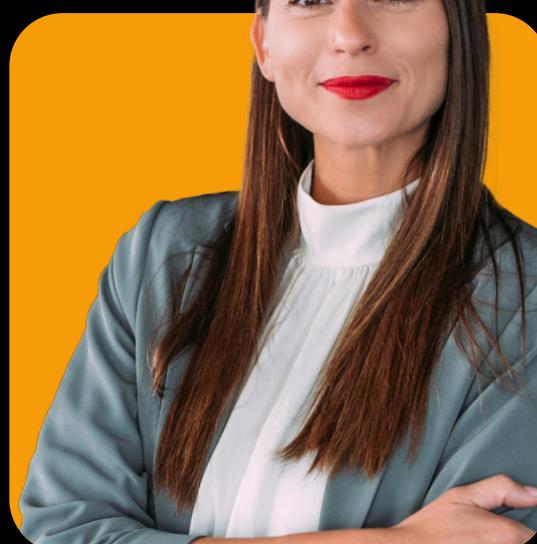
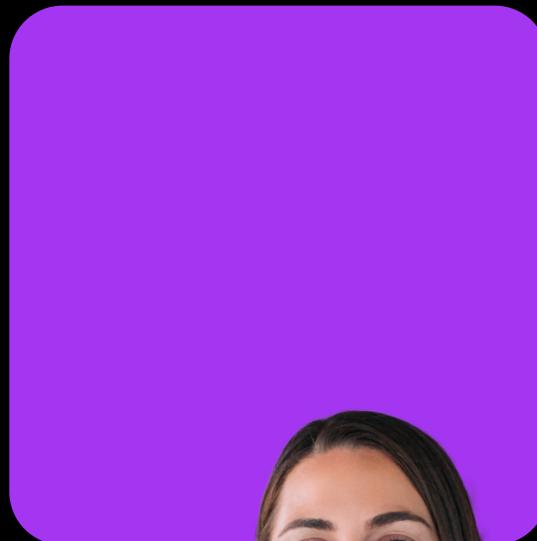
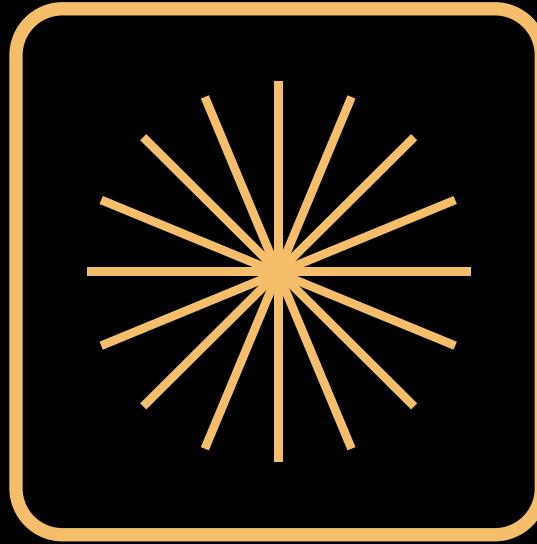


# KEY TRENDS



21

AI fluency isn't a technical goal:  
It's a new operating system



# 21

## AI fluency isn't a technical goal: It's a new operating system

### Redefining AI readiness starts with fluency

Most organizations still talk about “AI skills” as if it is simply a matter of training people on tools, code, or data analysis. **But the core challenge is not teaching people how to use the technology. Instead, it’s rewiring the enterprise to play, experiment, and find ways to incorporate AI into workflows. Then you will have the fluency to build not only a new culture but a new operating model and the new systems, learning content, and behaviors to continuously learn from AI, adapt with it, and lead through it.**

AI fluency is the new benchmark. True fluency means understanding AI’s capabilities and applications, alongside its risks, limitations, and essential ethical concerns. It means developing the habit of using AI on a daily basis. Skills development for AI readiness

requires not just upskilling on the technical level or determining how to use it fluidly, in everyday use cases. It requires the ability to ask the right questions, to know when to rely on AI (and when to press pause), and to foresee impacts beyond the immediate. Crucially, fluency necessitates the development of adaptive skills, including judgment, curiosity, flexibility, and risk tolerance.

AI fluency is not a binary state. It is a journey, and one that is no longer optional for companies who want to lead from the front. This requires building a shared, dynamic, organization-wide capability that must be continually cultivated, measured, and renewed in every team and role. Next, we will examine what leading organizations are doing to build AI fluency and how to do it yourself.

**Demand for AI learning has grown explosively on Udemy, while learning content to develop AI skills has also quickly expanded**

#1 most learned Existing AI topic



**ChatGPT**

Employees are actively looking to augment their skills in prompting this powerful technology and building generative pretrained transformers (GPTs). This AI technology topic continued to see the most learning consumption on Udemy Business as employees expanded their skills.

#1 most learned New AI topic

**AI agents & agentic AI**

Learning to use these new AI technologies has surged more than any other net-new AI topic over the last year, signaling their quick growth and deep value. AI agents can perform pre-programmed tasks while agentic AI systems can make decisions and adapt to evolving workplace situations.

**AI topics were fastest growing across all business and professional learning**

#1 surging business skill

**+3,400%**

growth YoY of Microsoft Copilot learning for business

#1 surging tech skill

**+13,534%**

growth YoY of GitHub Copilot learning for tech

# What leading organizations are doing to build AI fluency

Focusing on multi-layered skills development



## Foundational skills

All employees should be conversant in AI's language, logic, ethical considerations, and potential impact on their work. Foundational AI skills are the new digital literacy; they include: understanding AI's strengths and limits, crafting effective prompts, validating outputs with critical thinking, applying AI for everyday productivity, and using it responsibly. These skills equip professionals to confidently collaborate with AI in any role.

## Applied in-role

Functions and teams must learn applied use cases and integrate AI into daily processes, whether that means leveraging predictive analytics in human resources (HR) or using AI for cybersecurity threat detection. For example, product and engineering teams might embed AI across the development lifecycle to accelerate delivery, reduce defects, and better inform roadmap decisions.

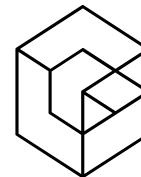
## Cross-functional learning agility

As AI weaves through every line of business, organizations must break down silos and encourage learning that spans traditional functional borders and technologies. The end result should be an integrated learning ecosystem that scales learning, experimentation, and capacity-building organization-wide.

## Leadership as architects of change

Leaders, not just technology, set the vision for how AI transforms business models, value creation, and even culture, and secure employee buy-in to make the vision a success. This requires new leadership skills and change management direction to guide employees to embrace the change.

## How Udemy customers are doing it



**genpact**

Genpact, a professional services firm with 125,000 employees, created an immersive 12-week learning program for all employees to develop comprehensive expertise in generative AI and large language models (LLMs), from the fundamentals to advanced techniques.

After 8 weeks of courses, employees gained AI skills proficiency of 75% and went on to develop applied expertise in 4-week proof-of-concept projects. Working with Udemy Business to establish the program, **Genpact met 100% of their L&D ramp-up goal.**

**100%**

of the L&D goal for employee AI upskilling

**12 weeks**

to develop employee AI expertise



**devoteam**

Devoteam laid out an ambitious plan to enable its 11,000 employees to “learn at the pace of change,” training all employees on generative AI. They designed, launched, and deployed their AI program within just three months.

With Udemy Business Pro and AI Starter Paths as a foundation, Devoteam delivered accelerated learning for everyone, deploying a global AI upskilling program. This resulted in **70% of the workforce being upskilled in AI within months and 4% lower employee attrition.**

**70%**

of employees upskilled in AI within months of implementation

**4%**

lower employee attrition

# Building an AI fluency plan that drives business impact



Define what AI fluency means for your business today.

Evaluate your organization's level of AI fluency and develop a strategy to improve it, plus a roadmap to get there. See the next section on how to do this.



Move beyond generic “AI training.”

After establishing foundational AI skills goals for everyone, set clear benchmarks for key functional teams, such as finance, marketing, engineering, development, operations, and leadership.



Get the right tech in place.

Evaluate, select, and deploy appropriate AI tools to meet the needs of your organization, key functional teams, and top use cases.



Bake in legal considerations from the start.

Work with the legal department to articulate essential considerations and how to ensure data protection, then share the rules with all employees.



Get into the details of what's needed by function.

Map out areas of the business most positively impacted by AI. Perform targeted skills gap analyses for each function to ensure employees are ready to get the most out of AI tools.



Foster shared cross-functional understanding.

Use job rotations, collaborative projects, best-practice share-out sessions, and communities of practice to build peer learning and break organizational silos. Develop a communications calendar spotlighting AI mini-successes and learnings to reinforce a living, evolving language around AI.



Total AI courses and consumption on the Udemy platform

11M

+10

1.4K

GenAI course enrollments to date

new GenAI enrollments per minute

AI courses on Udemy Business



Communicate that AI fluency requires continuous practice, experimentation, and learning.

Incorporate AI fluency into performance goals and cross-functional initiatives, development conversations, and succession pipelines. Treat it as an ongoing expectation, not a discrete course or badge.



Make learning continual, fun, and rewarding.

AI is evolving so quickly that learning cannot be seen as “one-and-done.” Make AI learning continual and build employee engagement in exercising AI fluency through gamification, social sharing of new use cases, and rewards for innovation.



Assess your organization's cultural baseline around AI regularly.

Launch “AI readiness” pulse checks and Q&A sessions to surface both new use cases and any confusion or blockers.

# Assessing and building AI fluency

An individual employee needs a set of foundational skills and the ability to apply them in context to be able to advance beyond a basic level of AI competency.

The same is true for organizations. It's essential to assess your overall level of AI fluency and map out a strategy and plan to level up.

To do this requires asking questions across multiple teams in the organization and evaluating the input.

## Questions to measure fluency

- How familiar are teams with AI tools, use cases, and ethical considerations?
- What programs exist for AI skills development, and how many employees have taken them?
- How often do you update your skills development program, and how is it integrated into the flow of work? Do employees have access to experts to get information and support?
- How targeted is AI skills development by function and role?
- How deeply has your organization integrated AI into workflows? Have you done so cross-functionally? Have AI agents been implemented?
- How and how often do you identify gaps and areas of opportunity and act based on these? How do you measure success?

# 3 levels of AI fluency

## Level 1 Augment

### Build foundational AI literacy

**Focus:**  
All employees gain foundational knowledge and practical familiarity with common AI tools with broad applications (like Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and ChatGPT), including capabilities, limitations, and key ethical considerations. Learning targets employee pain points and is delivered in the flow of work.

**Scope:**  
Augment existing processes, rather than redesigning them.

**Benefits & applications:**  
Results in faster, more consistent task execution, basic automation, and productivity gains. Reduces anxiety and builds confidence through knowledge and hands-on practice.

## Level 2 Assist & Automate

### Develop workflow integration

**Focus:**  
Role-specific training and more advanced use cases extend AI applications across functions. Cross-functional process development enables deeper integration and potential process transformation.

**Scope:**  
Support not only execution but also analysis, and generate recommendations to inform strategic decisions.

**Benefits & applications:**  
**Internally:** Improves decision-making, personalized recommendations, and complex data analysis.

**Externally:** Streamlines product and service delivery. Creates strategic advantages in speed, accuracy, and innovation.

**Leaders guide AI transformation at all levels**, modeling and amplifying continuous innovation in how they use AI and assessing organizational readiness, while securing stakeholder engagement and setting strong ethical standards. They also nurture an innovation culture and invest in workplace skills development for all employees in both AI tool fluency and adaptive abilities, to keep employees resilient and ready for profound workplace change.

To determine your organization's AI fluency, take the [Udemy fluency assessment](#).

## Level 3 Agentify & Rework

### Integrate agentic AI capabilities

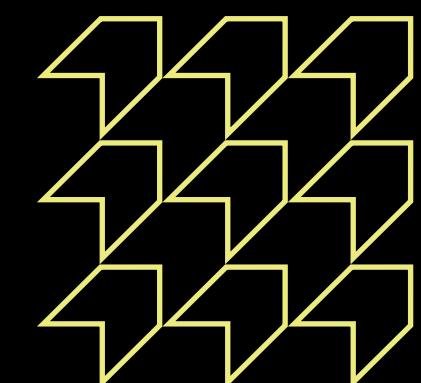
**Focus:**  
Adopt agentic AI that can operate autonomously under employee direction. Protocols like Model Context Protocol (MCP) and Agent2Agent Protocol enable coordinated human–agent teamwork to build the workforce of the future.

**Scope:**  
Rethink and redesign processes, systems, and governance at an advanced level to rework business operations.

**Benefits & applications:**  
Enables end-to-end process management, multi-step task coordination, and context-aware, self-directed problem-solving. Scales value by having employees guide agentic systems for continuous, organization-wide optimization and new operating models, unlocking new efficiencies and growth strategies.

22

Immersion beats instruction when it comes to skills development:  
AI learning happens best in the flow of work



# 29

## Immersion beats instruction when it comes to skills development: AI learning happens best in the flow of work

Skills applied are skills that stick

The myth that learning happens in a training room, or through a one-time, online certificate course, dies hard.

But the evidence is overwhelming: Skills stick best when they are exercised, adapted, applied, and refined on the job and in real-world projects. A look at the lifecycle of skills development helps us understand why. It starts with skills acquisition or development: simply learning a new skill. The next level is skills mastery, practicing the skill in an immersive environment and applying it, whether a simulation of a real-world scenario or a chance to perfect the skill in the flow of work. The final stage is skills relevancy, keeping the skills fresh and up-to-date as the technology, tools, and processes evolve.

Immersive learning environments, where employees “learn by doing,” expedite both confidence and competence.

For technical topics and applications, this includes practicing new skills through hands-on application in labs and sandboxes. For adaptive skills, which include judgment, critical-thinking, or equanimity in emotionally challenging situations, it can include role playing difficult topics in context followed by AI-powered feedback.

Finding ways to acquire and master skills faster is hugely important, as the half-life of current skills shrinks and the speed of new skills needed in the enterprise accelerates. The ability to develop expertise in new tools, transfer learning across

projects, and evolve with changing platforms is what delivers real business value for organizations and career resiliency for employees.

### 3x more efficient

Students who applied skills in practice with immediate feedback learned 3x more efficiently than those who learned by lecture alone.

[Carnegie Mellon](#)

When skills development takes place in the flow of evolving work and is directly relevant to the work being done, there is less friction in the process. There is also an important role for developing skills through “play,” or the time and headspace that leaders provide their teams to simply try out new tools and use cases. Whether through work or play, those who absorb skills through applied experience are most prepared to tackle new challenges at speed.

Personalization, or the surfacing of targeted content and interactive challenges at the moment of need, further amplifies effectiveness. Through context-specific practice tailored to their needs in the moment, coupled with continual feedback from AI-powered learning technology, people build stickier, more transferable skills.

# What leading organizations are doing to make AI skills development part of daily workflows

Organizations leading the AI skills race embed learning directly into work, making it:



## Hands-on & contextual

Employees are able to practice AI fluency skills in context. They can try out key adaptive skills by role-playing them with an AI avatar, and dive into assessments and labs for technical skills. AI is applied in project teams, customer initiatives, and workflow optimization and not just in theory.

## Continuous & routine

Developing more AI use cases is not a quarterly or annual L&D activity, but part of every team's sprint, routine, and review cycle. Teams engage in small, measurable experiments and iterate on results so learnings are rapidly incorporated into processes, tooling, and success metrics.

## Peer- & feedback-powered

Mastery demands healthy trial and error, transparent feedback, and shared reflection, all ways to accelerate skills development "in the wild." Formal mechanisms, including peer coaching, review sessions, and shared playbooks, ensure insights are captured, normalized, and propagated across teams.

## Personalized & business-aligned

Upskilling is an integral part of each employee's roadmap and ladders up to real business challenges, organizational values, and strategic priorities. Learning paths are tailored to role-based proficiency benchmarks and tied to key performance indicators (KPIs), so employees see direct career incentives for adopting AI capabilities.

## How Udemy customers are doing it

# Prodapt

Prodapt used AI to create personalized learning paths and integrated learning into daily workflows, **delivering micro-learning in the flow of work**. Now, **90% of employees understand the fundamentals of GenAI**.

Prodapt implemented a multi-faceted approach to upskilling to create a scalable and personalized learning environment. By partnering with Udemy Business and integrating advanced AI tools, Prodapt provided employees with diverse, self-paced learning resources and gained the ability to create learning paths quickly and efficiently.

# 90%

of employees upskilled in AI through learning in the flow of work

**Role Play** allows employees to practice key adaptive skills in context, receive feedback, and fine-tune their abilities

# 3,300+

Role Plays have been published in Udemy Business courses in the 3 months since launch.

# Nearly 300

enterprise customers have created 900+ custom Role Plays for their employees.

# 38+

new Role Plays are created every day on Udemy Business.



# How to support skills development in the flow of work



Integrate AI-powered learning into the flow of work.

Assign learning tasks and experimentation as part of objectives and key results (OKRs), project milestones, and operational reviews.



Use real-world, AI-powered tools for continual upskilling, feedback, and skills assessment.

Curricula should be dynamic to keep pace with skills development. AI-powered learning technology should provide scenario-based challenges followed by instant feedback alongside pathways that update with new business needs.



Create iterative, fail-safe sandboxes.

Give people safe spaces for testing AI approaches, piloting process changes, and sharing lessons learned.



Link skills development to real projects and business impact.

Assign teams to solve real business challenges with new AI tools, and measure impact in value, speed, revenue, or customer satisfaction — closing the loop between learning and performance.



Champion cross-skilling and mobility as career accelerators.

Encourage employees to rotate into new functional areas and work on AI-driven initiatives beyond their original domain.



The organizations that thrive will be those that build immersive environments where employees can become AI fluent and build cultures where technology amplifies uniquely human capabilities.”

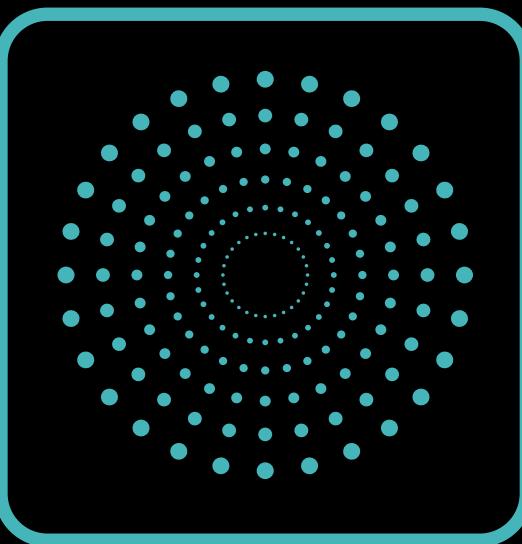


Hugo Sarrazin  
CEO of Udemy  
[FastCompany](#)



2 3

You can't scale  
skills without  
scaling leadership,  
ethics, and agency



# 2 3

## You can't scale skills without scaling leadership, ethics, and agency

**The new leadership imperative: Trust, agency, and ethics in an AI-powered world**

The headlines often focus on AI as a technical disruptor, but the human response is where most transformations succeed or fail.

**As companies pursue AI maturity, strong leadership and employee agency become the true force multipliers.**

AI can breed fear and confusion, and not without reason. But AI anxiety is a symptom of failed leadership as much as disruptive technology. It's essential to employ new leadership skills to manage beyond the tech stack to the "people stack," building cultures of permission, purpose, and responsible innovation.

**AI anxiety is a symptom of failed leadership as much as disruptive technology.**

The shift to AI is not only about improving productivity and accelerating processes. It's also about leaders empowering employees, providing them with the conditions, learning opportunities, and ability to experiment in order to build confidence

**The demand for adaptive leadership skills is growing**



**#6**

Foundational leadership was the 6th most consumed business skill on Udemy Business.

and clarity. They need to learn to use new AI tools ethically and strategically, with organizations clearly and explicitly sharing the "rules of the road" with employees. Leaders must champion AI and set the conditions for employees to build trust through learning, experimentation, and agency.

A fundamental shift to AI is also about addressing employee fears: of being replaced in their jobs, of losing access to their privacy, of losing the human quality of interactions. The solution is knowledge and familiarity. People need an understanding of the technology and permission to explore, speak up, shape adoption, and even rewrite processes to benefit their own roles and the organization. The era of AI agents requires organizations and their leaders to create the conditions for employee agency, empowering employees to determine how to evolve the role of AI and how to use it to compound their own contribution.

Ethics is at the core. The potential for misuse, whether intentional or otherwise, must be addressed. Employees need to know where the boundaries are, how to critically evaluate AI outputs, and how to assess the human impact of automation or algorithmic decision-making. Organizations need to create guardrails for their employees, guiding them on how to use AI ethically in the business context.

# What leading organizations are doing to prepare leaders and empower employees to be ready for AI

Investing in employees and building engagement and trust in sustained AI transformation



## Reframing leadership & trust for the AI era

Leading companies are redefining what it means to lead by prioritizing vision, adaptability, and ethical stewardship over traditional command and control. Modern leaders are coaches, catalysts, and role models for bold experimentation, creating the conditions for employees to build trust with AI tools and approaches.

## Empowering employees to make decisions

Instead of centralizing decision-making, innovative organizations distribute agency — giving teams real autonomy to pilot AI tools, shape workflows, and actively influence transformation.

## Prioritizing the ethical use of AI

Future-proof organizations establish clear guidelines and equip employees with the judgment to use AI responsibly, ensuring trust, transparency, and long-term impact. As AI continues to shape business decisions, the ability to engage with it ethically will be as essential as technical proficiency.

## Embedding accountability & psychological safety

Effective organizations recognize that transformation moves at the speed of trust. They practice frank communication about the impact of AI and create safe spaces for employees and leaders to admit what they don't know, to try out new tools and ways of working, and to safely challenge assumptions as they learn (and fail forward) together.



The future competitive landscape won't be defined by who has the best AI, but by who has the leaders who are best-prepared to drive change and empower employees to use AI effectively."

Stephen Bailey  
CEO and Co-Founder of [ExecOnline](#)

## How Udemy customers are doing it



# PEPSICO

PepsiCo brought on Udemy Business Leadership Academy in a move to build operational excellence. Their purpose was to create a “more agile and united procurement organization, one that could predict disruption, take it in its stride, and embed new efficiencies across various processes,” thereby improving the agility, resilience, and competitiveness of its procurement processes and teams.

Today, PepsiCo has run the program 35 times, providing learning to more than 1,200 employees, with completion rates of up to 98%. Promotion rates increased more than 2x for employees completing the program.

# +2X

promotion rates of employees completing the procurement leadership program

# 88%

of employees agree that **effective leadership is critical** to the success of their organization's initiatives.

But only

# 55%

felt confident in their management team's ability to seize opportunities and mitigate AI's risks.

And only

# 48%

of employees believe their leaders are ready for the AI era.

Udemy



AI fluency is not just about tools, it's about culture. In the next decade of rapid AI development, organizations that anchor adoption in process, measurement, and accountability will be better prepared to navigate uncertainty, manage risk, and responsibly seize opportunities as they emerge.”

**Shingai Manjengwa**

Senior Director, Education and Development, Talent & Ecosystem  
Mila – Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute

# How leaders build trust, agency, and ethics in an AI-powered world



## Lead by example and manage change.

Leaders, including executive teams and senior leadership, visibly and transparently lead the way by using AI themselves, demonstrating that trying out and adopting AI is a key behavior for all employees. They should communicate actively on AI strategy and expectations as well as the changes AI is causing so that they are reinforced and top of mind for everyone in the organization.



## Give employees agency.

Create pathways for bottom-up innovation in AI workflow design and use-case development. Empower teams to challenge and improve adopted solutions.



## Develop leaders as coaches and builders of trust.

Upskill managers on empathy, change management, risk communication, and ethical decision-making.



## Establish clear, well-communicated AI values and boundaries.

Write and socialize your “AI code of conduct” for the entire organization. Make it a living set of guidelines tied to organizational values. Train teams to recognize potential biases in AI outputs, safeguard user privacy, and understand how AI decisions are made.



## Create feedback loops.

Engage leaders at every level to regularly ask, listen, and then adapt strategy based on employee input, experience, and outcomes.



## Invest in resilience and psychological safety.

Train managers to respond to AI anxiety with empathy and concrete guidance; recognize and celebrate learning moments, not just outcomes.

**+98%**

increase in upskilling in AI ethics & governance



It was the **6th** most consumed AI topic on Udemy Business.



Leaders must consciously shape how AI integrates into the organizational culture by establishing rules and norms that preserve human creativity and connection while leveraging AI’s capabilities. This means modeling thoughtful AI usage, celebrating innovative applications, and continuously reinforcing that AI serves human objectives, not the reverse.”



**Hugo Sarrazin**  
CEO of Udemy  
*FastCompany*

# 24

If AI is your  
finish line,  
you've already  
lost the race



# 24

## If AI is your finish line, you've already lost the race

**True competitive advantage:  
Adaptability outlasts any technology**

The final illusion to shatter is the idea that AI transformation is the finish line. It may be the most profound change in our work lifetimes, but it won't be the last.

**In reality, AI is simply the most current and visible in a long line of transformative disruptions.**

If your organization prepares only for AI, you risk developing AI-focused skills, cultures, and leaders, and just in time to be overtaken by the next wave of change. The real competitive edge is permanent adaptability, fueled by what Udemy now calls adaptive skills. These are skills like decision-making, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. They have a shelf-life beyond any technological phenomenon, allowing employees to navigate the profound change that AI is bringing to work while preparing them for unforeseeable shifts in the future. Adaptability is not only a personal trait. It is an organizational capability built through developing these enduring skills and enforcing them through culture, routine, and leadership commitment. And it is the only solution for both AI itself and what comes after AI.

### → Adaptive skills

Adaptive skills enable individuals to remain agile and responsive in a constantly changing world, particularly as technologies and processes evolve. Transferable across contexts and industries, these skills are essential building blocks that empower people to excel in an AI-driven world, where humans focus on strategy and verification, rather than execution. Examples include skills like critical thinking, emotional resilience, and the ability to navigate ambiguity.

**4<sup>th</sup>  
fastest  
growing**

**Adaptive (soft) skills learning grew 25% YoY, placing it in the top 4 fastest-growing communication skills on Udemy Business.**

**+38%**



**growth in learning about decision-making on Udemy Business over the last year**

**+37%**



**growth in learning about critical thinking on Udemy Business over the last year**

# What leading organizations are doing to future-proof for what comes after AI

## Doubling down on developing adaptive skills



### Critical thinking & judgment

As AI takes on routine “doing,” the human role is to plan, prioritize, question, and verify the output, all skills that become more, not less, valuable in the automation age. Every employee needs strong contextual judgment, analytical capabilities, and ethical understanding to validate and enhance AI output.

### Learning agility

Organizations (and employees) that thrive are those who can pivot, unlearn, and relearn fast — regardless of what technology is hot this quarter. Curiosity, experimentation, and rapid feedback loops accelerate capability building and competitive advantage.

### Resilience & ambiguity navigation

Psychological resilience and the ability to operate amid uncertainty are now core business competencies. Teams that can normalize ambiguity outperform by adapting quickly and sustaining productive momentum.

### Innovation & creativity enhancement

Thinking outside the box is a key skill for innovative new growth strategies. If large language models (LLMs) thrive on synthesizing all of the existing data they have ingested, the thing they can't do as well as people is innovate new ways of thinking and doing.

## How Udemy customers are doing it

# integrant

Integrant achieved nearly 100% AI adoption following its training initiatives. To ensure that employees had the skills to be ready for not only AI but also to have the complementary adaptive skills needed for the next transformative change, the company adopted a learning matrix. The matrix is scalable to different levels of assessed competencies in AI and other technical and adaptive skills, offering a systematic approach to upskilling.

Integrant set target skills for each job title, curated Udemy training programs to close gaps, and implemented regular reassessment to ensure sustained growth. The matrix became a strategic tool supporting Integrant's vision of organizational agility, helping the company remain responsive to a dynamic market landscape.

# 100%

AI adoption following upskilling programs

# 50%

reduction in skills gaps for key competencies within six months



This strategic shift has positioned our organization to remain agile, competitive, and resilient in the face of ongoing changes in the workplace.”

Peter Amir

Learning and Development Lead at Integrant

# 84%

of Gen Z workers consider soft skills critical to professional success.

[Udemy](#)

# 40%

of midcareer professionals are improving soft skills like communication and creativity.

[Udemy](#)

# Get ready for what comes after AI



## Make adaptability and lifelong learning your operational north star.

Build learning paths that develop not just expertise, but growth and change-readiness. Then establish key performance indicators (KPIs) and manager scorecards that measure these.



## Embed critical thinking and ambiguity navigation into every level of learning.

Go beyond tests of knowledge to use real-world scenarios and Role Plays. Ensure there is feedback that helps employees practice how to think critically and act meaningfully when the “right” path isn’t obvious.



## Enable leaders to reinforce skills development.

Leaders should make upskilling and reskilling part of day-to-day work and coaching conversations, not just something touched on periodically in performance reviews and career development evaluations.



## Call out and reward versatility.

Celebrate employees who pivot, cross-skill, and thrive through change.



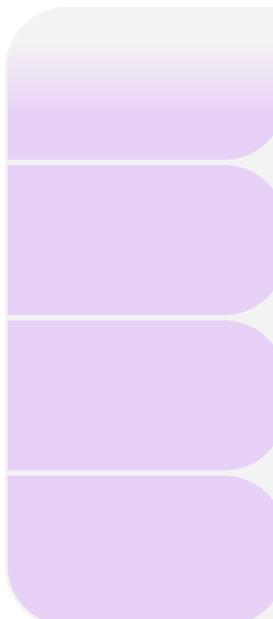
## Keep learning systems as nimble as your business.

Regularly refresh content, methods, and learning culture to match emerging business priorities.



## Start scanning – and preparing – for work and life beyond AI.

Integrate trendspotting, scenario planning, and reinvention as part of strategic learning and workforce planning.



**3.8x**  
more innovative

Highly resilient and adaptable employees are **3.8x more innovative**.

McKinsey



# CONCLUSION



# 03

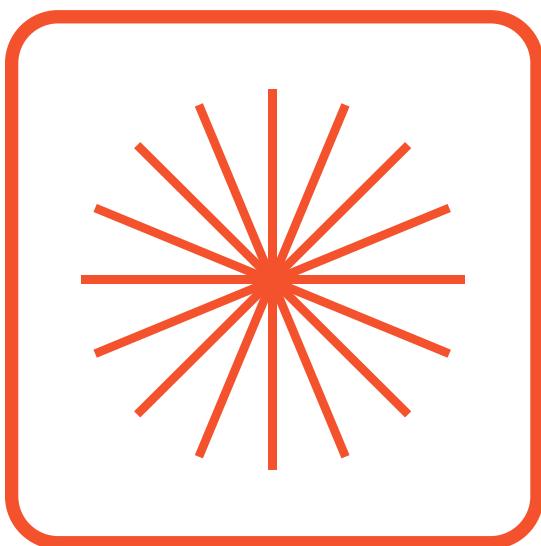
## Adapting to AI disruption as practice for the next transformation

The future is being rewritten in real time. AI is no longer a distant promise or threat. It is the engine of growth and the grammar of the modern enterprise.

But the defining challenge for leaders isn't mastering a specific technology. It's orchestrating the new workforce portfolio: employees leading a fluid collaboration with AI models, agents, and compute power. The leaders won't be those who pick the "right" model, but those who rebuild how their business learns, decides, and ships change. Those who evolve their approach to skills development through the Udemy learning system will benefit from the greatest adaptability, driving AI integration better and faster than the competition. The force multipliers on the road to even greater

success will be the ability to scale agency and ethical stewardship, while helping employees develop resilience and judgment. It's essential to cultivate the skills to navigate profound change, both for the age of AI and whatever comes after AI. This requires developing a mindset, a framework, and an approach to learning that fuels continuous transformation.

Executives and employees alike should embrace what is uncomfortable about change, seeing each disruption as practice for the next. The organizations that are ready to meet this moment are those that will lean into permanent reinvention, putting themselves in a position to thrive and lead. Join them. Shift from treating upskilling as a nice-to-have to viewing it as the essential motor of your AI transformation, where a human-centered, AI-powered workforce will shape the future of work.



# About Udemy Business

Udemy is an AI-powered skills acceleration platform transforming how companies and individuals across the world build the capabilities needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving workplace. Udemy Business provides enterprise skills development solutions to thousands of companies, including Ericsson, Samsung SDS America, On24, Tata Consultancy Services, The World Bank, and Volkswagen, to build agile, future-ready teams.

Learn more at [business.udemy.com](https://business.udemy.com)

## Data methodology

For this report, we analyzed data from thousands of our customers around the world. We calculated total consumption by Udemy Business learners across all course topics for the year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. We calculated the percentage growth in consumption compared to the year from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. The total consumption and surging ranking for the AI topics is also drawn from the July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, time period.