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Skills-first Hiring- Have We gone The Distance?

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“You’ve got to have a talent, for your talent.” - Stella Adler, American actress and acting coach

Imagine that you are the hiring manager of a globally known firm. You bump into the Resume of a candidate who is a tech graduate from a marquee institute and claims to have worked in Google's CEO team. Would you treat it as a blanket qualification for selection? And hire unwittingly? Obviously not. You will instead dredge the candidate's skills beyond the CV to figure out if s/he fits into your company's position. Just a hypothetical case like this attests to the importance of skills-based hiring.

Today, when the demand for quality talent outpaces supply, skills-first hiring is even more critical. **More so at a time when the insanely capable Generative AI threatens to automate an array of roles and displace or replace humans in droves. Skills-first hiring marks a seismic shift from orthodox credential-based hiring.** In a recent report published by Test Gorilla, over 70 percent of the survey respondents believed that skills-based hiring is

more effective than relying on Resumes. For example, a desperate job aspirant can opt for the 'spray and pray' model and apply to scores of companies. In this case, the company with the right skills-based strategy can filter out the misfits.



Skills-based hiring can improve diversity

Skills-based hiring helps create a more inclusive economy. People of color are disproportionately those with skills but no degree. One of the reasons people are investing in skills-based hiring is to create more equitable pathways to opportunity. A report says 85 percent of companies want diversity in their workforce. Skills-based hiring has positively impacted diversity hiring for 84 percent of responding companies. More than 70 percent of Asian, Arab, or colored respondents say skills-based hiring leads to new jobs.

Have companies found the pathways for skills-based hires?

Skills-based career pathways aren't for every candidate. They are to be designed or structured for crucial roles or for the talent that's hard to come by. One company that figured out its own skills-based program because it wasn't happy with what it was getting from college graduates is Boeing. Boeing had trouble hiring for cybersecurity jobs. They found that graduates of computer science programs had a theoretical understanding but were still new to what a cybersecurity job entailed on a day-to-day basis. They created a cybersecurity apprenticeship program that didn't require a degree.

IBM has moved to a more skills-based performance management approach. Strategically, IBM knows they must shift their skills to stay competitive. Through the performance review process, they're now recognizing people's skills on that forward-looking vision and rewarding people who invest in developing the skills they'll need in the future.

But the Resume isn't dead

A company can't hire someone based on one source of information. It takes skills and the ability to share them in various ways - like a summary, an interview, etc. The time you spend creating a powerful summary is still worth it. Be careful not to overpromise or substitute SEO strategy for legit details on your CV. You'll be tested, questioned, and interviewed to ensure you're the right fit. Your Résumé will never speak for itself - that's why you must. Whether taking a test or interviewing, you must be clear, concise, and compelling. Don't let a PDF or LinkedIn profile tell the whole story. If you want to succeed in a tough market, you must share your skills and talents.



Skilling into the future

As we glide into the future with autonomous cars and robots as our co-workers, it's about time to spin how we hire talent. Prioritizing credentials over skills is an archaic notion. The future of the workforce will be reigned by folks who are as skilled in data crunching as in crafting an infectious marketing campaign. They are the pros who will not be constrained by degrees or certifications- they are learners and problem-solvers on the go. Companies must adapt to this new hiring paradigm to stay competitive. **In a world where technology keeps pace with the blink of an eye, adaptability is our best ally.**



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