Gartner

Gartner Insights

Build Workforce Skills That Keep Pace With AI

CV Viverito, LJ Justice









Build Workforce Skills That Keep Pace With AI

29 April 2026 - ID G00851757 - 12 min read

By: CV Viverito, LJ Justice

Initiatives: Building Workforce Capabilities and Skills; Strategy, Risks and Opportunities; CxO Leadership; Designing the Enterprise for AI

> AI transformation is outpacing workforce readiness. To maximize AI value and thrive in the human-machine era, CHROs must build and evolve targeted skills that align with how AI augments, reengineers, or invents work itself.

Insights at a Glance

While AI implementation surges, workforce readiness lags behind. Without a flexible, targeted approach to skill development, AI investments will underdeliver on their promise of transformation. To harness the true value of AI, CHROs must build specific AI skills based on how AI transforms work.

Anchor workforce development in evergreen skills that remain valuable as technology changes. From there, regularly assess where and how AI is impacting roles to prioritize and cultivate the targeted skills employees need, providing clarity for employees rather than overwhelming them with an ever-growing list of AI skills requirements:

- When AI augments work (makes existing work better and faster), focus on problem formulation and AI judgment and risk mitigation.
- When AI reengineers work (redesigns workflows and functions), focus on systems thinking and human-AI mediation.
- When AI invents new work (creates new AI-based ways of working), focus on strategic foresight and ethical leadership.

Integrate practical, experiential learning into routine workflows to ensure skills are applied, not just taught. Systematically aligning skills with the evolving nature of AI's impact builds a resilient workforce that drives sustainable business transformation.

Impact

While 95% of CHROs report active AI initiatives, 51% of CIOs and senior IT leaders perceive that evolution of skills required is outpacing talent supply. [1, 2]

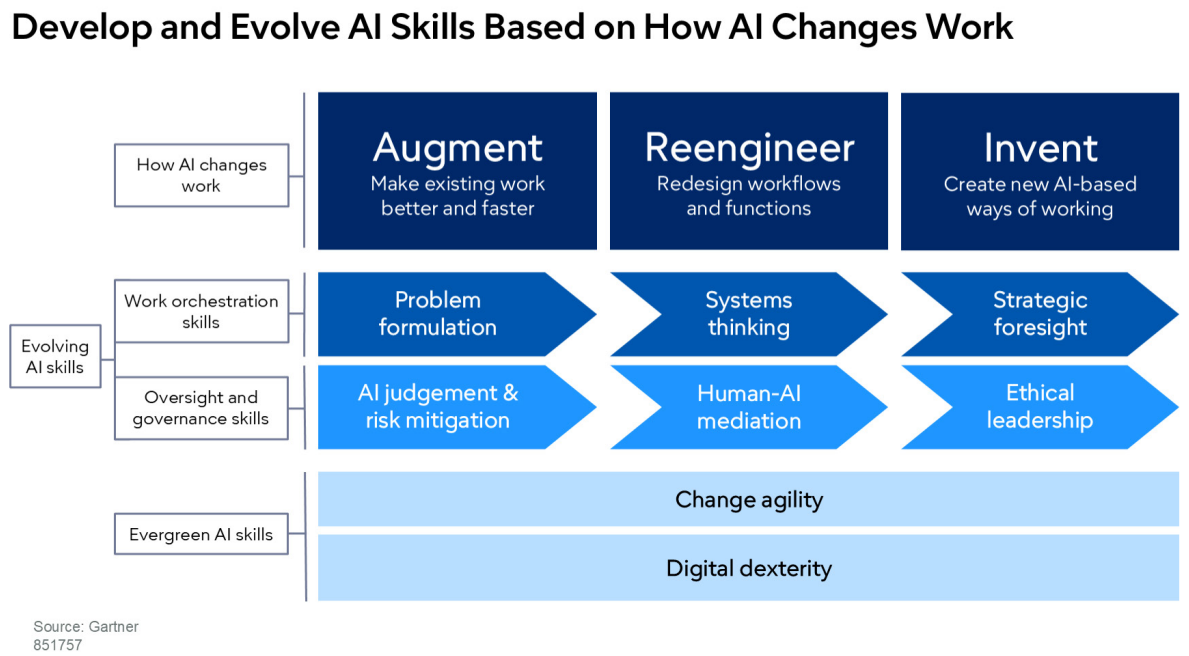
Gartner's position: *As AI transformation outpaces workforce readiness, organizations can no longer afford to overwhelm employees by continually chasing new skill priorities without a clear framework and must instead focus on developing evolutionary capabilities that progress alongside the way AI impacts work.*

If organizations fail to advance workforce skills alongside their technology, they will be left with expensive AI systems operated by a workforce lacking the ability to use them effectively.

Stop overwhelming employees with more skill requirements as AI evolves. Instead, focus on evolutionary skills that enable **work orchestration** to shape how humans and AI collaborate for maximum impact, and **oversight and governance** to promote reliable and trustworthy outcomes (see Figure 1).

Employees whose roles are impacted by AI in multiple ways only need to focus on the most advanced level required. For instance, ethical leadership for when AI invents new work intrinsically draws upon foundational AI judgment and human-AI mediation.

Figure 1. Develop and Evolve AI Skills Based on How AI Changes Work



Gartner

Actions

- Anchor workforce capability in evergreen skills like change agility and digital dexterity to empower employees to drive value as AI evolves.
- Assess where AI is augmenting, reengineering, or inventing work across functions and roles to identify which targeted skills are most critical.
- Systematically cultivate AI skills based on how AI changes work through experiential learning embedded into daily workflows.

How to Execute

Anchor workforce capability in evergreen skills like change agility and digital dexterity, then build aligned skills based on how AI is changing the way work gets done:

- **When AI augments work** it does not fundamentally change processes, but makes existing processes faster or more efficient. For example, Kaiser Permanente uses ambient AI listening to transcribe patient-clinician conversations during office visits and create more accurate notes. [3]

- **When AI reengineers work** organizations are revamping entire workflows and functions to make work more efficient with AI. For example, a finance department deploys AI agents to autonomously validate and process invoices, which reengineers the human work from invoice processing to advanced data analysis and exceptions handling. [4]

- **When AI invents new work** organizations create entirely new, AI-based ways of working that dramatically improve scale and disrupt markets. For example, over the next few years, salespeople will have AI agents working alongside them to prioritize leads, do research and analysis, and nurture prospects independently. [5]

Follow a 70-20-10 development model that focuses on experiential learning to cultivate targeted skills that evolve alongside AI's increasing operational impact on the work itself (see Table 1).

Table 1: AI Skills Definitions

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

AI skill	Category (how AI changes work)	Definition
Problem formulation	Augment	The ability to clearly scope and define the problem statement, determine objectives, and establish boundaries to guide effective solutions.
AI judgment and risk mitigation	Augment	The ability to verify when AI outputs are accurate and reliable, mitigate biases and maintain alignment with organizational standards and objectives.
Systems thinking	Reengineer	The ability to solve problems by analyzing how individual components interact, connect, and are interdependent within the larger whole.
Human-AI mediation	Reengineer	The ability to resolve conflicts between human judgment and AI recommendations in decision making.
Strategic foresight	Invent	The ability to systematically explore and prepare for multiple plausible futures and anticipate disruptions to make better strategic decisions.
Ethical leadership	Invent	The ability to continually manage the design and operation of AI systems to deliver fair and responsible results such as data privacy protection, trustworthiness and fairness, and meaningful work-sharing between humans and technology.
Change agility	Evergreen (all categories)	The ability to respond and adapt to changes and new guidance as they arise.
Digital dexterity	Evergreen (all categories)	The ability and ambition to use technology for better business outcomes.

Source: Gartner (April 2026)

AI Skills for Augmented Work

Although the core workflows remain largely the same in this category, employees need to enhance their focus on solving the problem at hand while mitigating risk and ensuring the best output possible from AI.

Problem formulation is critical because in augmented workflows, an AI tool's output is heavily dependent on the human's ability to clearly scope the problem they are trying to solve. It allows for effective boundary-setting and context in order to prompt effectively.

AI judgment and risk mitigation addresses the risk of cognitive offloading and default trust in AI. As tasks become more augmented, employees must proactively verify reliability, mitigate risks, and practice ethical AI governance.

How to Build AI Skills for Augmented Work

- **Problem formulation:** Partner with IT to co-organize interdepartmental workshops with employees to collaboratively scope and define business challenges. Based on the findings, create and distribute templates for teams to form problem statements and set goals. Include "task decomposition" worksheets to break down their workflows into AI-augmented tasks versus human-executed tasks to practice scoping boundaries.
- **AI judgment and risk mitigation:** While formal training on responsible AI is essential, CHROs should use real-world practice to habitualize contingent trust in AI outputs. Provide team norm templates to managers to co-create digital skepticism skills. Strategies may vary, but the goal is to build a shared expectation for questioning and checking AI-augmented work. For example, managers could normalize regular AI pros/cons sessions where teams work together to highlight an AI output's strengths and weaknesses (see Four Ways to Measure the Accuracy of Customer-Facing AI).

AI Skills for Reengineered Work

Reengineering processes creates ripple effects that the workforce needs to be able to understand, anticipate and mitigate, which requires a specific skill set.

Problem formulation must evolve into systems thinking to address unintended consequences (ripple effects) of AI. This nonlinear approach to problem solving helps employees recognize how each task is interdependent to the outcome, enabling them to navigate and optimize AI-powered workflows more effectively. In fact, systems thinking has been shown to result in a 1.6x boost in employee performance in the AI era. [6]

AI judgment and risk mitigation must evolve into human-AI mediation to navigate the friction between AI reasoning and human nuance. With reengineered workflows, complex exceptions emerge that require empathy, emotional intelligence and human judgment. Human-AI mediation empowers employees to produce more meaningful AI outcomes in such cases, consequentially retraining the model for improved decision making.

How to Build AI Skills for Reengineered Work

- **Systems thinking:** Create structured pathways to gain cross-functional exposure. By briefly immersing themselves into the employee experience and customer experience of a reengineered workflow, employees understand first-hand the "ripple effects" of an interconnected system. This might include short-term "day in the life" shadowing or scenario-based role plays.

- **Human-AI mediation:** Conduct “post-mortems” and scenario-based “pre-mortems” where teams review complex exceptions handling (e.g., an AI cancels a long-term customer’s subscription due to several missed payments, but doesn’t take into account that this customer has been impacted by a natural disaster). Teams discuss how and why human intervention occurred (or should occur) and report solutions to developers.

AI Skills for Newly Invented Work

As AI becomes so deeply integrated into ways of working, it results in new products, services, markets, or business models. This means that workers must safeguard against unintended risks, maintain human trust, and evolve human judgment to meet the moment.

Systems thinking must evolve into strategic foresight to proactively explore multiple plausible futures and anticipate market disruptions due to entirely new AI-driven ways of working. While systems thinking is critical for reengineered workflows, research from the World Economic Forum suggests it becomes increasingly susceptible to automation as AI advances. [7] This is when human’s cognitive capacity must shift to anticipating future scenarios and building change-resilient solutions.

Human-AI mediation must evolve into ethical leadership to proactively prevent catastrophic safety and ethical failures. A recent study by Applied Sciences identifies ethical leadership as a top-five essential skill required for the AI era. [8] As AI drives organizations to invent new ways of working, humans must elevate their oversight to manage the design, trustworthiness, and fairness of autonomous systems.

How to Build AI Skills for Newly Invented Work

- **Strategic foresight:** Provide managers with “what-if” scenario planning toolkits and task team leaders to conduct thought exercises on the impacts of emerging AI. At the general workforce level, the goal is not to successfully predict the future, but to build change-ready mindsets that anticipate disruption. For instance, teams might explore what they would do if AI automated a key workflow or if recent innovations make their flagship product obsolete.

- **Ethical Leadership:** Institutionalize the practice of "red-team" culture hacks into team meetings. This can be gamified on a larger scale by incentivizing employees from across the business to act as internal ethical hackers, actively seeking to identify instances of bias or purposely confuse autonomous workflows before they are rolled out internally or externally.

Evergreen AI Skills

Even as employees evolve their skills, successful AI transformation requires a strong human foundation of skills whose value won't expire because a new technology arrives. These are evergreen skills needed to sustain business continuity through technological disruptions.

Change agility enables employees to successfully navigate the continual friction of AI-driven transformation. In fact, change agility in the AI era makes employees 1.6 times more likely to achieve high performance. [6]

Digital dexterity enables employees to maintain proficiency with the tools most relevant to their roles, preventing stagnation as technology evolves. Specific AI tools, as they are today, will inevitably become obsolete through the relentless pace of transformation. This evergreen skill cultivates a workforce that continuously integrates new AI technologies into their own unique workflows.

How to Build Evergreen AI Skills

- **Change agility:** Partner with business leaders to identify core skills to prepare for and adopt any type of change (e.g., openness, problem-solving, emotional regulation), then help leaders find "micro-moments" within daily workflows (e.g., draft review, project debrief) to practice core change skills until they become intuitive "change reflexes" (see Make Your Workforce Change-Ready by Building Their Core Skills).

- **Digital dexterity:** Don't rely solely on one-size-fits-all enterprisewide AI tool training that likely comes from the vendor itself. Instead, HR and IT should partner to create role-specific use-case libraries that help employees integrate AI directly into the flow of work. Implement communities of practice as employee-led resources that cultivate a culture of knowledge-sharing and innovation to mitigate the atrophy of "snapshot in time" AI skills.

Success Measures

Monitor AI skills proficiency to track workforce readiness to drive value from AI transformation by:

- Conducting regular self-assessments and 360° peer reviews focused on AI skills, targeting at least 80% workforce participation. Address skill gaps with tailored training.
- Equipping managers with a template to log team-based experiential AI learning activities. Managers submit these summaries to HR, enabling the organization to monitor skill development and practical AI adoption and share success stories.

Measure AI-driven business value realization attributable to workforce AI skill development by:

- Tracking productivity and business outcomes with key metrics like reduced cycle times, increased output per employee, and accelerated time-to-market for AI-powered products or services. Set specific improvement targets (e.g., 10% reduction in cycle times within six months).
- Monitoring AI-related compliance and ethical incidents, aiming for a 20% year-over-year reduction.
- Measuring engagement scores and retention rates among employees in AI skill development programs, targeting a 2% increase in engagement and reduced turnover over the next year.

Evidence

[1] **2025 Gartner Q4 AI and HR Function CHRO Survey.** This survey was conducted to gain insights into CHRO perspectives on the current state of AI within their organizations and HR functions, as well as to collect up-to-date information on HR functional transformation. The research was conducted online from 17 November through 16 December 2025 and included responses from 110 heads of HR with representation from various geographies, industries and functions. Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

[2] **Gartner CIO Talent Planning for 2026 Survey.** This survey was conducted to understand how CIOs are designing their talent strategy in the AI-driven environment with respect to skills strategies, including training programs and skills evolution, IT organizational design, work design, and different aspects of using AI in work. The research was conducted online from November through December 2025 among 533 respondents across various industries and regions, including Asia/Pacific (n = 133), Europe (n = 150), and North America (n = 250). Qualifying organizations reported enterprisewide annual revenue of at least $50 million or equivalent. Respondents were screened for CIO or senior IT leadership roles with decision-making responsibilities in talent planning strategies and at least awareness of their enterprise's AI vision and strategy. Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

[3] Lessons learned from the Kaiser Permanente rollout of ambient AI scribes, Kaiser Permanente.

[4] How to Start Assessing Agentic AI's Impact on Skills and Jobs

[5] 19 Artificial Intelligence Use Cases for B2B Sales

[6] **2025 Gartner HR Symposium Employee Survey.** This survey was conducted to understand employees' experience using artificial intelligence (AI) and technology at work, how it's affecting their jobs, and their perceptions of culture, leadership, and change at their respective organizations. The survey was conducted online in July 2025 among 3,029 employees from different geographies, industries, and functions. The survey was designed and developed by Gartner's HR practice research team. Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

[7] New Economy Skills: Unlocking the Human Advantage, World Economic Forum.

[8] Leaders' Competencies and Skills in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: A Scoping Review, Applied Sciences.

Recommended by the Authors

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

Which Competencies Power High Performance in the AI Era?

Essential HR Skills for Success in the AI Era

How to Start Assessing Agentic AI's Impact on Skills and Jobs

© 2026 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner's prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner's Business and Technology Insights Organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner insights may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its insights should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by Gartner's Usage Policy. Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its insights is produced independently by its Business and Technology Insights Organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see " Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity." Gartner insights may not be used as input into or for the training or development of generative artificial intelligence, machine learning, algorithms, software, or related technologies.

Table 1: AI Skills Definitions

AI skill	Category (how AI changes work)	Definition
Problem formulation	Augment	The ability to clearly scope and define the problem statement, determine objectives, and establish boundaries to guide effective solutions.
AI judgment and risk mitigation	Augment	The ability to verify when AI outputs are accurate and reliable, mitigate biases and maintain alignment with organizational standards and objectives.
Systems thinking	Reengineer	The ability to solve problems by analyzing how individual components interact, connect, and are interdependent within the larger whole.
Human-AI mediation	Reengineer	The ability to resolve conflicts between human judgment and AI recommendations in decision making.
Strategic foresight	Invent	The ability to systematically explore and prepare for multiple plausible futures and anticipate disruptions to make better strategic decisions.
Ethical leadership	Invent	The ability to continually manage the design and operation of AI systems to deliver fair and responsible results such as data privacy protection, trustworthiness and fairness, and

		meaningful work-sharing between humans and technology.
Change agility	Evergreen (all categories)	The ability to respond and adapt to changes and new guidance as they arise.
Digital dexterity	Evergreen (all categories)	The ability and ambition to use technology for better business outcomes.

Source: Gartner (April 2026)

Actionable, objective insights

Position your organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools.

Report

The CHRO Report

Quarterly insights for HR leaders on challenges, risks and actions.

Download Now

Webinar

The Top CHRO Trends and Priorities Shaping 2027

Expert insights and recommendations to shape HR's strategy for 2027.

Watch Now

Roadmap

AI Roadmap for HR

Discover key steps to build an AI roadmap that delivers value in HR.

Download Now

Guide

CHRO Guide for HR Transformation

View practical strategies to reinvent HR and deliver value in the AI era.

Download Now

Already a client? Get access to even more resources in your client portal.
Log In ↗

Connect with us

Get actionable, objective business and technology insights that drive smarter decisions and stronger performance on your mission-critical priorities. Contact us to become a client:

U.S.: 1 855 322 5484
International: +44 (0) 3300 296 946

Become a Client

Learn more about Gartner for CHROs
gartner.com/en/human-resources

Stay connected to the latest insights

Attend a Gartner conference
View Conference

© 2026 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. CM_GBS_5497850

Gartner®