RETHINKING THE BUILD vs BUY APPROACH TO TALENT

How Savvy Employers are Building Tech Skills from Within

by Josh Bersin

Senior Advisor, Whiteboard Advisors

COMMISSIONED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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About the Author

Josh Bersin is an analyst, author, educator, and thought leader focusing on the global talent market and the challenges and trends impacting business workforces around the world. He is often cited as one of the leading HR and workplace industry analysts in the world.

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He sold the company to Deloitte in 2012, when it became known as Bersin by Deloitte, where he continues to serve as a senior advisor. This year, Bersin announced the launch of Josh Bersin Academy, the only professional development platform focused exclusively on HR.

Bersin is frequently featured in talent and business publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *Fast Company*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. A senior advisor at Whiteboard Advisors, he is a regular keynote speaker at industry events and a popular blogger with more than 700,000 followers on LinkedIn.

About General Assembly

General Assembly is a pioneer in education and career transformation, specializing in today's most in-demand skills. The leading source for training, staffing, and career transitions, we foster a flourishing community of professionals pursuing careers they love. GA works with students online and in person across the globe, and partners with top employers to help companies source, assess, and transform talent.

About Whiteboard Advisors

For more than 15 years, Whiteboard Advisors has brought an unmatched understanding of policy and market trends to transformative organizations working at the intersection of education and the future of work. Our team of researchers, policy wonks, and storytellers takes breakthrough ideas to scale to reimagine how we learn, work, and live.

Introduction

We live in interesting times. The unemployment rate is as low as we've seen in decades, jobs are being automated and augmented by machines, and workers are anxious about their skills[1]. In fact, more than 49% of professionals now feel anxiety about their skills and opportunity for learning on the job has now become the top driver of employment brand[2]. With good reason: recent research from General Assembly suggests that seven in 10 hiring managers at white-collar employers had to lay off workers because of new technology that made their jobs "irrelevant or redundant."

Against that backdrop, companies are spending $1,200 to $1,400 per year on employee development[3], most of which goes toward ongoing skills development, compliance, and various forms of safety, operational, and on-the-job training. But when entirely new skills are needed, companies typically hire externally—spending $4,000 or more per job candidate[4]. The resulting war for talent is fueling a costly "zero-sum game" that may actually exacerbate growing skill — and equity — gaps in high-demand fields.

> **"The resulting war for talent fuels a costly "zero-sum game" that may actually exacerbate growing skill — and equity — gaps in high-demand fields.**

Today, however, all this is changing. In a world where new skills are in high demand and most professionals are fully employed, it is no longer cost effective to simply "buy skills."

Hiring AI engineers, for example, is exceedingly challenging. Artificial intelligence professionals now command salaries of $250,000 or more, immediately out of graduate school, and are still in very short supply. LinkedIn's latest report on in-demand skills found that people with AI skills are nine times more difficult to find than

1 Source: Edelman Trust Barometer, 2019
2 Source: research conducted by Josh Bersin for LinkedIn, October 2018 (n=2,800 professionals)
3 Source: ATD Annual study of L&D professionals; Josh Bersin proprietary research
4 Source: Bersin by Deloitte research; Josh Bersin proprietary research

typical candidates. This means that it may take you months to find an AI engineer, and even then, you may not find someone with the exact skills profile you had in mind. And if you're not one of the top tech companies, you're competing with companies offering stock options, huge bonuses, and other benefits that may be impossible (or unreasonable) for you to provide.

The good news is that a new breed of immersive training strategies, pioneered by coding bootcamps and other accelerated training providers, is enabling employers to develop experts in-house — and with unprecedented efficiency, speed, and scale.

The Economics

Research suggests that the cost of recruiting a mid-career software engineer (who earns $150,000-200,000 per year) can be $30,000 or more including recruitment fees, advertising, and recruiting technology expense. This new hire also requires onboarding and has a potential turnover of two to three times higher than an internal recruit. By contrast, the cost to train and reskill an internal employee may be $20,000 or less, saving as much as $116,000 per person over three years.

Why is this now possible? Purpose-built assessments now help employers pinpoint skills gaps, enabling more targeted learning to accelerate competency. Micro-learning and adaptive learning tools allow learning to take place within the flow of work. The experiences of tens of thousands of students and alumni have provided accelerated training providers, like General Assembly, with insights into learning patterns that inform instructional design aligned to employer needs. Such providers are transforming curriculum development into a far more dynamic process. These shifts are enabling businesses to pursue new approaches to talent development as a critical business strategy. They are enabling the shift from "buy" to "build" when it comes to tech talent development.

Of course, as digital business models emerge and jobs change rapidly, it's important to understand the skills you need today as well as those you need over the coming three to five years. This is particularly critical as technology continues to transform the workplace. Simply put, skill gaps you see today can often be filled with traditional training solutions — those you see emerging in the future take extra effort to address.

> **Not only do such intensive, internal training initiatives work, they create an incredible boost in employee engagement and loyalty.**

One of the world's largest publishing companies recently did an analysis of its 75,000-plus workforce and found that throughout its business units, there were significant skill gaps in digital marketing, SEO, digital publishing, analytics and AI. After studying the scale of the problem, leaders determined they needed to replace or reskill almost 15,000 employees. The prospect of meeting these ambitious hiring targets on a tight timeline through hiring alone was virtually impossible, so the company built its own immersive in-house training program exclusively focused on the digital competencies and related tools important in modern publishing. The results have been amazing. Such intensive, internal training initiatives not only enable workers to build new skills, they can also boost employee engagement and loyalty as people realize that they can reinvent themselves — while remaining employed.

How to Build Tech Talent from Within

To design learning and development programs, companies have historically built training departments that created and/or purchased courses, hired instructors, and delivered a catalog of courses to employees. This approach to employee training, modeled after the university course catalog, is easy to create and easy for employees to understand — and it remains the standard for most training needs.

The level of engagement in these training programs varies: sometimes employees have free rein to choose what courses they want to take; at other times, managers direct people to take certain courses in order to progress in specific areas or learn about new products or tools. Courses offering training on vendor software (e.g., Oracle, Microsoft), IT skills (e.g., Cisco, Symantec), and training on general topics such as supervision, sales skills, and many forms of safety and compliance are handled this way. These programs are administered through learning management systems and often record completed courses to track employee progress, which can then be discussed in annual performance reviews and sometimes used as a way to determine readiness for advancement.

> **"As digital skills have become disruptively important and time-critical to obtain, companies are building intensive training programs that can rapidly up- and re-skill existing employees to keep pace with real-time changes in technology."**

But the rapid pace of technological change is putting pressure on conventional approaches to training. Employees are being required to not just train, but re- and upskill individuals to perform entirely new job functions. Traditional models of training, while highly valued, do not provide the structure or time required to effectively conduct this more intensive, transformational work. So as digital skills have become disruptively important and time-critical to obtain, companies are building intensive training programs that can rapidly up- and re-skill existing employees to keep pace with real-time changes in technology — including digital fluency, data analytics, AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, and more.

These short-form, immersive training programs differ from generalized learning solutions in several ways:

	GENERALIZED L&D SOLUTION	IMMERSIVE UP-AND RESKILLING PROGRAMS
GOAL	Deliver a variety of courses that improve employees' ability to do their jobs; courses tend to span disciplines and modalities for applicability to employee audiences across functions and levels.	Rapidly deliver new technical skills at scale to ensure that employees within specific functions can most effectively leverage fast-changing technologies in real time to meet core business needs.
PROGRAMS	Typically outsourced, contracted, or developed in-house; usually designed to be completed in short periods of time alongside existing work requirements.	Co-designed and customized with expert third parties and internal staff to meet specific digital skill requirements; programs can take weeks or months for employees to complete, can be fully immersive (e.g., full-day programs that necessitate time off work) and often require additional study and project-based work.
LEARNING	Created using standardized, out-of-the-box instructional design and content.	Created for specific job roles and projects. Designed with input from L&D leaders and directly aligned with a company's specific technology stacks and business needs so learning can be immediately applied on the job.
TEACHERS	Typically training professionals or generalists witha broad-based understanding of relevant skill sets, but not deep subject matter expertise.	Experts paired with instructional designers. Certified instructors, often current practitioners.
WORK	Content typically includes examples and case studies generated by content vendors, as well as customized projects based on understood company needs or priorities.	Projects and assignments focused on digital challenges (e.g., web development, digital marketing) tailored to leverage the company's data, tools, and tech stack in real-time — and aligned to immediate business problems.
CREDENTIALS	A completion certificate in an LMS, possibly shared internally.	A validated credential which has value externally if or when an employee leaves the company.
INVESTMENT	$1,200 to $1,400 per year per employee.	From $4,000 to $15,000 per employee. Investments are made with the knowledge that employees are moving to critical roles — or reinventing existing roles — with new skills that are challenging or expensive to find on the outside.

Companies implementing such initiatives see big benefits. Employees who are the beneficiaries of deep investments of time and resources to stay relevant feel more committed to the organization, retention and engagement goes up, and the company now sees a clear pipeline of digital skills emerging in its own talent. Experts can contribute to the success of others and students can start to work on projects while they learn. Perhaps most importantly, companies can leverage their employees' growing subject matter expertise in fields like data analytics to generate new insights that can support business growth and strategy more broadly.

As you will see from the examples in this paper, companies can set these programs up with the help of vendors such as General Assembly, and results can be outstanding. These examples also highlight the investment needed in order to ensure the success of these programs — including dedicated internal leadership, and support from HR and business leaders for employees who participate in these intensive and often very demanding learning experiences.

Building a Business Focus to Ensure Success

Following are guidelines to keep in mind for building specialized internal academies. It is important to emphasize one overarching, critically important criterion for success: these initiatives only succeed if the CEO, CHRO, and other top business executives are involved. There must be a strong culture of "reinvention" put into place, and this will stress management, HR, and reward systems in many ways.

The financial services industry, which is being disrupted by digital commerce and a new breed of competitors, has become particularly good at this. CEOs and top executives from companies like Capital One, Visa, and Mastercard are all building such academies.

This level of business commitment is required because digital skills training will change the way you do business. Here are some tips:

> **"These initiatives only succeed if the CEO, CHRO, and other top business executives are involved.**

Looking Inward

- Business leaders need to be sponsors of development and resources, recognizing that an internal candidate's new technical skills — along with their existing organizational savvy — may result in a higher-performing employee in a shorter period of time. Specific structures, rules, and rewards can help encourage managers to look inward, rather than hiring from the outside whenever a new job opens up, a new role is created, or demand for a new skill increases.
    - **An internal candidate who is freshly minted with new skills may appear less capable than an outside candidate**, but in reality, the internal candidate brings with him or her well-honed networks, a good understanding of how the company works, and years of valuable business knowledge. Consequently, the internal candidate may ultimately far outperform a highly skilled external candidate.
- **HR must provide tools and guidance** to determine what employees are best suited to learn various new skillsets. This means developing career coaches, assessment tools, and lots

of storytelling and data to help people understand what is expected and what new roles are logical transitions.

- **Hiring managers must be rewarded for letting people move into new roles,** freeing people to reinvent their existing roles, and giving them the time to learn. Managers must be rewarded for "producing talent," not "consuming talent." All business leaders must support employees' desires to develop new skills, and business leaders must also take time to prepare themselves for a new world of work.

- **Every employee in the company should understand what skills are most in-demand** and how they will be used, so they can prepare themselves for jobs of the future. This type of transparency creates excitement and empowers people to join, contribute, and reinvent or transition their roles.

Training and Upskilling

- **You have to make strategic decisions about when to hire and when to develop for very critical new areas**. My research into such factors as speed to market, competitive recruiting environment, and organizational experience shows that technical teams, for example, can benefit from experience and project expertise from competing companies. But such external hiring should be done strategically; otherwise the academy will never fulfill its promise.

- **You must provide enough core education, support materials, and time for people to truly reinvent themselves.** A recent report by the World Economic Forum[4] shows that the average time required for a worker to gain enough knowledge to successfully reinvent a career following an AI- or automation-based job disruption is around 15 months. Organizations that succeed in these programs understand this pipeline issue, so they create models that people can realistically complete and often include internships or apprenticeships for acquiring on-the-job experience.

- **You should strongly consider building an apprenticeship, coaching, and/or project work programs that lets people test their aptitude and skills as early as possible**. Such programs not only build expertise, but they also can help employees assess their interest and fit for new roles. By shifting existing L&D resources to these programs, employers can make spending on talent development dramatically more effective.

Bloomberg

LEADING WITH DATA

Bloomberg pioneered the technology to gather and deliver an unprecedented amount of data at market speed. Since Day 1, their goal has been to democratize access to crucial data and information so financial markets can operate fairly and efficiently.

As the world of data rapidly evolves, the skills needed for our employees are also rapidly evolving. When Domenic Maida was chosen to lead Bloomberg's Global Data Division in 2013, he immediately saw the opportunity to automate processes and apply data science and analytics in new ways to develop innovative products for clients.

Objectives

Bloomberg considers "build" and "buy" to be complementary strategies for training and talent development. The organization takes a hybrid approach that combines direct investment in upskilling with more traditional recruiting strategies, as well as other forms of support for employee education, such as tuition reimbursement. The goal of the program is to respond to rapid shifts in demand for talent, especially as the shelf-life of technology skills continues to shrink.

To ensure the company's data team members have the most up-to-date skillsets, Bloomberg's Global Data Division developed profiles of the "employee of the past" as well as the "employee of the future," both of which lay out the type of work being done and the required skills. These profiles, which are continually updated, help guide the learning available to the Global Data Division's 1,500 employees; they also inform hiring.

Key Strategies

One of Bloomberg's learning initiatives is based on intensive classroom training for upskilling employees. Suzanne Mulder, head of learning for the Global Data Division, and her team worked with General Assembly to customize its data analysis curriculum for the specific skills needed at Bloomberg, such as SQL, Python, and Qlik Sense tools. The resulting program is designed to address the skill

gaps of existing employees who had been hired in past years under different skill profiles.

"The company values the business knowledge and experience of these employees, so we made a strategic decision to invest heavily — in both time and money — to teach them new skills," said Mulder. The program includes 60 hours of classroom time over the course of ten weeks, as well as homework and out-of-class study. Students also complete a capstone project in which they conduct a comprehensive data analysis related to their day-to-day work using the new skills learned. All training is conducted by experienced General Assembly instructors, complemented by in-house "wrappers" that provide additional support with follow-up and guidance for learners.

> **"The company values the business knowledge and experience of these employees, so we made a strategic decision to invest heavily – in both time and money – to teach them new skills.**

The program, called Leading with Data, was piloted in 2017 with 30 leaders from all over the world. The pilot was kicked off with a two-day workshop to give participants an overview of the changing roles of employees and the tool and technology evolution taking place, as well as the goals and nature of the intensive training program. According to Mulder, the company prioritized the enrollment of leaders because they would be leading future change. "The pilot enrollees were grateful for the investment in their skills because they typically focused on skills development for their team members and not on themselves," said Mulder. The inclusion of leaders in the pilot also gave managers a voice in the final design of the program and engaged their support for future training offerings.

Program Outcomes

To date, 180 employees have gone through the program and it has expanded to include individual contributors. Those leaders who have completed the program themselves welcome the opportunity to enroll their team members. They understand the time it takes to

learn new skills and can guide employees toward capstone projects aligned with business priorities.

“I have seen business initiatives that were prototyped during the class put into production. The program has led to tangible business results, as well as creating a common foundational skill set that we all must have going forward,” said Maida, who is a strong advocate and supporter of the program.

“Technology upskilling can add tremendous value to a business, but it is very important to recognize it is a change management initiative,” said Mulder. Many employees can find such training programs intimidating; others may not recognize the need to change.

“You have to be able to clearly lay out the need for change and explain how the new skills and tools will be used and applied. This is a critical part of transforming the skills needed for the roles of the future.”

FROM ACTUARIES TO DATA SCIENTISTS

Guardian, one of the largest mutual life insurance companies in the United States, is transforming itself from the inside out, according to Gail Kelman, head of learning and career development. Over recent years, the company has been aggressively modernizing its technology and processes, while simultaneously moving the corporate culture to one focused on client centricity. With support from the highest levels of the organization, Guardian has prioritized significant investment in learning and talent development to prepare its workers for the digital economy.

Company leaders recognized, though, that such an evolution required more than digital transformation. New job roles and new skills would also be needed to identify new product and service opportunities and to take advantage of the company's vast data resources. In other words, people transformation was just as important a business strategy as the adoption of new technologies, tools, and IT strategies.

"We realized that our knowledge workers had to become more proficient with technology," said Kelman. "We also realized that the envisioned change required a multi-year, multi-disciplinary, cross-functional effort involving HR and IT, as well as our innovation and data science teams."

In 2018, Guardian announced a partnership with General Assembly to determine the skills most needed to support the company's strategy, to assess current employee skill levels, and to provide training to reskill and upskill employees. General Assembly was selected because of its successful track record in working with companies to develop talent pipelines to fill skills gaps, as well as its reputation for delivering high-quality training. Delivered online, in-person, and in blended formats, training programs would span areas such as predictive analytics, data science, digital marketing, and web development.

Three groups of employees were identified who could add the greatest business value with new technology-related skills: marketers, actuaries, and developers. Programs were piloted in 2018 and are now being rolled out to larger cohorts. Leaders from across the company have been closely involved in working with General Assembly to shape the content of training curriculum to address the skills required for new job roles, new processes, and general technology trends. Additionally, General Assembly's ongoing feedback process identified content areas where students struggled, needed more time, or found too easy — allowing for further program revisions.

> **We realized that the envisioned change required a multi-year, multi-disciplinary, cross- functional effort.**

Guardian Is Training Actuaries To Become Data Scientists

One of Guardian's business imperatives is to extract more value from its extensive data assets and lead the digital future of insurance. In recent years, the company has broken down data siloes and created a consolidated data lake. A centralized team of data scientists serves as a shared resource to meet various business needs and to work with business partners to identify new opportunities to derive value from data.

However, the demand for this kind of talent and the skillsets of Guardian's data professionals, like actuaries, made them the perfect place to invest. Actuaries are a natural fit because they are already familiar with the use of algorithms and have extensive institutional knowledge. The General Assembly-conducted training for selected individuals heavily emphasizes the use of data analytics tools and predictive analytics. Upon completion of the months-long training, students completed Guardian specific capstone projects that involved real business problems and required the application of predictive analytics such as new approaches to analyzing claims and predicting which group cases will close. This work was featured in Guardian's 2019 annual report. Today, the Data Science team works hand in hand with the other data professionals throughout the organization, accelerating Guardian's ability to leverage predictive analytics to capitalize on business opportunities. Guardian and

General Assembly have adapted the program and a second cohort of individuals will begin the data science journey in early 2020.

Assessments for Determining Skills Gaps

To help Guardian assess the overall digital skills of its marketing organization and to identify candidates for its digital marketing training, General Assembly applied its digital marketing assessment, developed and refined over several years. The assessment, which measures fluency with digital marketing tools, data analytics, and social media, also highlighted areas of strengths and weaknesses and helped shape the digital training curricula.

The result was a blended curriculum of in-person workshops with General Assembly instructors and self-paced instruction and involvement with Guardian subject matter experts to help students understand exactly why the new skills were being taught and how they would be applied. While the curated curriculum won't be complete until December 2019, Guardian's marketers have already seen significant increases in the assessment of these critical digital marketing skills.

Enterprise-wide Innovation Challenges

In addition to reskilling and upskilling initiatives, Guardian also has kicked off an idea crowdsourcing platform designed to foster enterprise innovation. Participation is open to all Guardian colleagues, who have the ability to submit suggestions for improvement and innovation, as well as to vote and comment on ideas submitted by others. Since its inception, employees have submitted more than 2,200 ideas. According to Kelman, submitted suggestions not only aid in the achievement of strategic objectives, but also encourage creativity, adaptability, and agility at all levels of the company. Guardian also engages top suppliers in an annual Innovation Partner Challenge, which has generated more than 400 ideas.

Through its innovation challenges, Guardian has produced more than 70 prototypes, 50 of which have been implemented.

"We're a 159-year old company," said Kelman. "Our overarching goal — and the driver behind our transformation initiatives — is to stay relevant to our consumers and partners for another 150 years."

Adobe

EXPANDING PATHWAYS TO TECH

The Adobe Digital Academy, started in 2016, combines Adobe's commitment to positive social impact with the creation of a diversified talent pipeline for skilled engineers.

Conducted in partnership with General Assembly*, the Academy offers non-traditional students looking to launch careers in software engineering, UX design, or data science an intensive technical boot camp, followed by the opportunity to participate in a three-month apprenticeship program with an Adobe engineering or design team. It is worth noting that this program initially relies on finding external candidates — but rather than looking for skilled talent outside the organization, Adobe brings in entry-level apprentices and then provides upskilling through the Digital Academy.

Program Overview: Providing Non-Traditional Students with the Education and Experience Needed for Successful Careers

Students come into the Academy with varying amounts of technical exposure. Some candidates are self-taught, others may have degrees from schools outside the United States, others may have some IT experience. Applications are carefully screened by Adobe's University Talent team, as well as General Assembly program managers who look for characteristics such as a commitment to learning, communication skills, a growth mindset — all reflective of Adobe's core values. Students accepted into the program are paid a monthly living stipend.

The Adobe Digital Academy offers two learning tracks for its scholarship students, each taught by highly experienced General Assembly instructors. A 10-week track is for user experience design, which focuses on information architecture and relevant design tools and principles; the second 12-week track focuses on web

development and includes training on HTML, CSS, Javascript, Ruby on Rails, Node, and SQL. The classes run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are supplemented by daily homework assignments.

Upon completion of the boot camp, scholars are eligible to apply for Adobe apprenticeships with various engineering and design teams. Acceptances are based on student performance throughout the boot camp experience, as well as Adobe's own internal talent needs. Those accepted for apprenticeships, which last from three to six months, are paid at competitive hourly rates and receive benefits like wellness and commuter dollars and a daily lunch stipend. Those who do not get placed into apprenticeships receive guidance and support from Adobe and General Assembly for finding other jobs suited to their newly acquired skills.

> **"To date, approximately 50% of Academy scholars have found full-time at Adobe, and have found full- time roles in tech.**

Throughout the apprenticeships, scholars are supported by three mentors: a technical mentor from their team who is available to answer technical questions and provide on-the-job guidance; a business mentor from one of Adobe's employee networks who can help the scholar "plug into" Adobe's employee communities; and an Academy alumnus who has transitioned to full-time employment at Adobe and can help the scholar with employment logistics, address the challenges inherent in a new workplace, and identify additional training resources and opportunities.

Upon completion of apprenticeships, scholars then have the opportunity to interview with Adobe hiring managers for full-time employment. To date, approximately 50% of Academy scholars have found full-time engineering jobs at Adobe, and 80% have found full-time roles in tech.

The Importance of Partnerships

Liz Lowe, the senior program manager for the Adobe Digital Academy, credits the Academy's success to its strong partners. "In addition to the company's extensive instructional experience, General

Assembly employees bring a deep understanding of how to support non-traditional students. They are dedicated to their work and our mission of social impact," she said. Additionally, Lowe cited the value of General Assembly's connections with non-profit organizations, with whom Adobe works to source potential scholarship candidates, as well as its ability to scale as Adobe takes the Academy into new geographic regions.

As a next step in scaling the program, Adobe has open sourced their process with the Adobe Digital Academy Playbook—a guide to help other companies establish similar modern apprenticeship models. By partnering with more companies and spreading awareness about the success of modern apprenticeship programs, Adobe hopes to create more opportunities for diverse candidates to enter technical careers through re- and upskilling across the industry. Adobe is also working with partner companies to identify and open up more of these types of entry-level roles at other companies to help place Digital Academy graduates into full-time employment. With the launch of the playbook, Adobe is committing to place 99% of Digital Academy graduates into full-time positions, whether at Adobe or another company.

The Adobe Digital Academy Playbook is available for download here: http://adobe.com/go/digitalacademyplaybook

A Unique Program for a Unique Mission

According to Lowe, the Adobe Digital Academy stands apart from other corporate-sponsored training programs in several ways.

- **The Academy has a solid track record of success.** Of the candidates who have gone on to full-time employment at Adobe, 96% remain on the job today — a noteworthy retention rate. As Kelly Orasin, senior manager of talent acquisition, noted, "Academy graduates are extremely dedicated and loyal to Adobe. They are hugely appreciative of the investment we've made — and continue to make — in their career success."

- **The Academy experience also has had a positive impact on the careers of those who do not get jobs at Adobe.** According to Lowe, with the support of General Assembly and Adobe, 80% of scholars go on to full-time roles, even if that's with other technology companies. "Having the Adobe brand on their resumes opens doors that would normally remain closed."

- **Hiring managers are also appreciative of the strong work ethic, innovative problem solving, and overall resourcefulness** Academy graduates bring to their teams, according to Orasin. "Because they come from different backgrounds, Academy graduates bring a different perspective to work teams, which can be very refreshing and useful. Managers also tell us that they see increased team morale when Academy graduates come on board."

- **Because the Adobe Digital Academy is tied to Adobe's commitment to social impact — not just to building out the company's talent pipeline — innovation and risk-taking is encouraged.** Company leaders recognize the Academy's positive social value and consider it to be a solid community investment.

Conclusion

Skills Development For Competitive Advantage

Let me conclude with a simple concept. In today's world of low unemployment and rapid digital transformation, companies that can rapidly develop new skills internally will far outperform their peers. It's no longer possible to "hire" your way to success: your most powerful strategy for business growth is to build skills from within.

As these case studies show, creating internal "skills academies" is now achievable by almost every company. And not only is this a more cost-effective way to acquire talent, it creates a culture of agility and growth in your people. Today nearly half of employees are anxious about their skills and future jobs. You can remove this anxiety and engage these people quickly by giving them a place and tools to learn.

In the past, companies often retired workers or "restructured" them out of jobs when new skills were needed. Today, it is possible to reskill and transform your people at a far lower cost than you may think. The World Economic Forum found that 96% of all jobs being transformed by automation can be reskilled within 2 years or less, and most of these new roles increase wages in the process.

It's time to rethink your HR and L&D investments in a strategic way. Build your own "reinvention academies" and you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish.