

Why Capability Building Is Essential

Last year, we met with the leadership team of a global consumer goods company. The organization had invested heavily in proprietary AI platforms and tools, but the team was frustrated by the lack of impact.

These kinds of stories are surprisingly common, and they have a common root cause: a lack of accompanying investment in employee skills development. Whether in transformations, post-merger integrations, cost programs, or comprehensive AI or tech programs, capability building is the multiplier that turns ambition into results. This finding led us, in 2022, to launch [BCG U](#)—a unit specializing in helping companies scale the adoption of new skills, behaviors, and mindsets.

Since that first meeting, thousands of employees from the consumer goods company—from senior leaders to frontline managers—have been trained to embed new tools directly into their daily work through BCG U’s tailored upskilling program. The training is personalized according to role and starting ability and leverages on-the-job learning experiences to build new ways of working.

Three of four employees who have gone through the program now consistently use AI tools in their day-to-day work with demonstrable outcomes, including higher-quality decision making, increased productivity, and greater job satisfaction.

What We Have Learned Through BCG U

Over the past three years of helping clients develop new capabilities, several lessons have stood out:

- **Anchor capability building in value creation.** Whether it's AI, mergers, or new business models, organizations need their people ready to reinvent themselves and their work. Capability building requires a sustained, outcomes-driven roadmap—typically covering 12 to 36 months—focused on the biggest drivers of organizational value rather than fragmented, one-time L&D efforts.
- **Success depends on people, not just technology.** At BCG, we often talk about how more than 70% of the success of any transformation, especially with AI, comes from people—their skills, behaviors, and confidence in applying new approaches. Our [BCG Behavioral Science Lab](#) reminds us that humans are more inclined to resist loss than embrace gain. The companies that win in the next decade will be those that reinvent their people's capabilities as fast as technology reinvents itself.
- **Move from learning to doing.** Employees can best build new behaviors and skills in the context of their day-to-day work. This means applying new knowledge on the job, getting real-time feedback, and revising job processes so that they nudge new behaviors. For example, with access to a Gen AI-powered coach, bank employees can practice new customer success capabilities in their daily work and get real-time feedback for improvements. Only with this type of reinforcement does long-term skill development occur.
- **Upskill up and down the organization.** Leaders must set the tone, but sustainable value capture depends on engaging all levels, from the CEO to the frontline worker. Upskilling efforts that tailor the content, depth, and application to the specific needs of each function and level in the organization stand the highest probability of success.

Capability Building as a Strategic Advantage

In today's world, where technology and business models evolve at

unprecedented speed, organizations must invest in their people with more frequency, greater depth, and stronger intent. When this is done right, employees engage differently. Conversations about value creation happen daily, tool adoption accelerates, and the culture shifts.

Organizations that invest in capability building see more than reskilled employees. They see more resilient, adaptive, and high-performing teams.

Until next time,



Christoph Schweizer
Chief Executive Officer

Further Insights



BCG U: A Capability-Building and Enablement Solution

BCG U is a capability building platform that offers exceptional training programs to help talent build new capabilities as organizations transform.

TRANSFORM TALENT TODAY



Five Must-Haves for Effective AI Upskilling

The most effective way for a company to help its workforce adopt AI skills is a five-step approach that includes assessing what's needed and preparing people for change.

LEAD WITH AI UPSKILLING



Five Ways to Make the Most of Your Reskilling Investments

Reskilling is no longer optional. As the shelf life of a skill gets shorter and talent becomes scarce, companies must construct successful reskilling programs.

MAKE EVERY SKILL COUNT