

The ***EXPERIENCE*** ***Gap***

Organizations struggle to find talent with the experience they need— just as workers struggle to find foothold roles where they can gain it. How then can we bridge the experience gap?



WORK

WORKFORCE

ORG & CULTURE

CLOSING THE *EXPERIENCE GAP*

Why are my new hires not ready to contribute?

- The work itself—for both white- and blue-collar workers—is moving from predictable and routine to context-specific and exception-based
- Economic and market pressures force organizations to be more lean and agile.
- The pursuit of efficiency is pushing greater responsibilities to lower organizational rungs.
- Early-career workers often are less prepared for work.

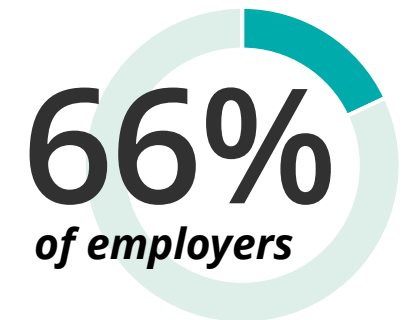
Tension: expecting expertise without experience

- There is a need for experienced workers and the reality is that many skilled candidates lack the necessary experience.
- AI is shrinking traditional entry-level roles, making it harder for workers to gain necessary hands-on experience.

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS



say their recent hires weren't fully prepared—most citing lack of experience



have recently increased experienced requirements—most “entry level” roles now require 2-5 years experience

The *EXPERIENCE* gap

Considerations for success:

- To close this gap, organizations must shift from rigid experience requirements to skills- and potential-based hiring.
- Leaders need to rethink how they develop talent—not just source it, and re-evaluate how AI, automation, and restructured roles accelerate skill-building, not replace human judgment.

Nambian Readiness Gap

According to the Deloitte 2025 HC Trends survey results, 45.24% of Namibian leaders in organizations are getting started and focused on addressing the immediate needs of the disappearing entry-level roles and informal on-the-job learning opportunities.

What do leaders want from experience? Adaptability in different contexts. How do they get it?

Traditional view of experience

Number of years of directly related experience as a proxy

WHAT LEADERS **THINK** THEY WANT FROM EXPERIENCE

Expanded view of experience

Application of human capabilities and technical and functional skills in real-world contexts

WHAT LEADERS **REALLY MEAN** AND NEED BY EXPERIENCE

CLOSING THE EXPERIENCE GAP

ACTIONS

Sourcing and development

- Upskilling in context
- Create micro-opportunities to develop judgement
- Capitalize on internships
- Partner with higher education
- Reconsider apprenticeships



Reimagining work

- Design for gateways and possible future paths
- Design for teams



Augment judgement and adaptability with AI

- Harvest tacit knowledge
- Supplement actions of less-experienced workers
- Accelerate the development of conceptual frameworks



IN PRACTICE

SIEMENS

As part of Australia's Industry 4.0 initiative, Siemens has partnered with Swinburne University to offer an apprenticeship program in which students gain practical experience and earn an associate degree. The combination of academic learning and practical experience helps apprentices be more resilient and versatile in their careers

Medtronic

Medtronic, looking to diversify its workforce and remove barriers for job seekers, partnered with workforce education provider InStride to implement a skills-based hiring approach—removing degree requirements, recredentialing 65 roles across 17 job families, and targeting developmental to the contextual pathways in which skills are used. They are now attracting a broader pool of talent: half of IT workers are now in roles without a degree requirement.



Amazon introduced a culture coach—using a generative AI model trained on internal documents such as performance reviews to offer employees guidance on navigating daily work interactions. Per Amazon's senior vice president of people experience, "This coach is able to draw from the experience of all of the people that we've hired [and] evaluated, what we said was good [...] maybe not as good, or what could have been improved, and give that kind of feedback."

In summary

Leaders and executives today shouldn't wait for higher education or government policy to solve this problem. Fortunately, organizations have many options to close the experience gap. Those that proactively and intentionally unpack the components of the "years of experience" proxy can use a range of tools and strategies to reproduce them—positioning themselves and their people to deliver value to each other for years to come.



WORK

WORKFORCE

ORG & CULTURE