

# Metaskills for the Future-Ready Team

*Assessing the Current State*



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## The Cowen Group

A leader in fostering community, innovation, and growth for professionals in the business of law, the Cowen Group assembles experts to publish forward-thinking industry papers that explore evolving challenges in data intelligence, eDiscovery, and information governance and provide critical advancements in understanding and managing the complexities of modern data types within various legal contexts.

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# Meeting Near-Future Challenges

*In a conference room on the third floor of a building in a Kansas office park, a midsize software company’s law department is holding its weekly leadership meeting.*

*It’s a long, “do-more-with-less” agenda. They’re discussing staffing a traditional ops team facing new data challenges—better triaging of mobile data for litigation, aligning collections efforts with data use policies, handling data according to jurisdictional laws, identifying litigation variables, managing outside counsel time, and controlling spend.*

*They’re also set to discuss a rapidly expanding IP docket, managing a new procurement workflow, and onboarding a new compliance monitoring system. At the same time, they need to navigate through a series of acquisitions the company is contemplating. Some of these agenda items are familiar and consistent, but others are brand-new responsibilities and amorphously defined, and this latter category is starting to be the new normal.*

*They are discussing their rapidly changing needs, newly required skill sets, sudden staffing gaps, and how—through all this change—to keep moving forward, faster.*

*The director emphasizes the opportunity to enhance capabilities with new tools, relationships, and workflows but notes the challenge of identifying specific actions to be ready for the next three years. Leaders express uncertainty about future problems but stress the need for self-starters who can adapt as the landscape changes.*



This type of meeting is happening across various locations, driven by the increasing data volume and velocity, the opportunities of generative AI, and the evolving role of corporate legal departments moving from cost centers to strategic partners.

This research paper—authored by business-of-law professionals in eDiscovery legal operations, information governance, and beyond—addresses the question of how to be future-ready. Part one discusses the impact of GenAI, identifies essential metaskill sets, and emphasizes assessing team capabilities to identify gaps and opportunities. Part two introduces a ranking exercise to evaluate metaskills and suggests a priority matrix called Got, Want, Need to determine present capability, future opportunity, and risk. Part three outlines using these assessments to create a strategic plan, highlighting the need to buy, build, or partner for crucial skills.

# Part One:

## What Makes a Team Future-Ready?

### AI + HI Will Drive the Future of Work

GenAI is a game-changer, no doubt. It revolutionizes how companies operate. It processes mountains of data in seconds. It automates tasks with ease. Yet it doesn't *drive* innovation. The driver is still human intelligence (HI). Human minds spark creativity and strategic decisions and exercise sound judgment, something AI can't replicate ... at least not yet.

AI is wondrous and powerful—but it needs human insight and wisdom to exercise and govern it. Teams planning to adapt to a rapidly changing future do need to leverage AI, but simply learning how to prompt ChatGPT—or what keywords work best in Midjourney—won't be enough. AI must be married to capable human governance.

Given this reality, many scholars, experts, and corporate leaders—from members of the Forbes Human Resources Council to respondents of Big Four corporate surveys to leaders of the World Economic Forum—are asking: “Given that the business landscape—its people, processes, and tools—will evolve rapidly and in both foreseeable and unforeseeable ways in the next few years, what can teams do today to be ready for those changes?” The answers they've provided are starting to coalesce into an inventory of capabilities used to rapidly develop and upgrade existing capabilities. These metaskills (skills that help people learn and develop other skills) are the building blocks necessary for teams that can identify general change and use it to achieve their specific business goals.

Many corporate leaders acknowledge that building new workforce capabilities is foundational to effectively leveraging evolving technology. Léo Murgel, a senior vice president in the office of legal and corporate affairs for tech, data, ops innovation, and enablement at a large of a structured data company, believes that “in the new era where humans and AI collaborate, legal professionals must cultivate unique metaskills to achieve transformative outcomes and navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving landscape.”



## Today's Companies Identify 10 Metaskills to Span the Gap from Now to Next

Half of us will need to reskill or upskill in the next five years because of changes from the pandemic and growing automation. Since 2016, the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs* report has noted the unabated demand for cross-functional skills. In the last few years, corporate respondents reported the increasing need for critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving, and self-management.<sup>1</sup> By 2023, the top five desired core skills were: 1) creative thinking, 2) analytical thinking, 3) technological literacy, 4) curiosity and lifelong learning, and 5) resilience, flexibility, and agility.<sup>2</sup>

In answering this same question, McKinsey named these metaskills DELTAs, which stands for *distinct elements of talent*, because they represent a hybrid of skills and attitudes. McKinsey identified 56 DELTAs originating from “four broad skill categories—cognitive, digital, interpersonal, and self-leadership.”<sup>3</sup>

*Reviewing the results from these surveys and other sources, our group identified 10 metaskills that most recurred in the findings.*

*Those skills are data and digital literacy, adaptability and flexibility, critical thinking and problem-solving, emotional intelligence, creative and innovative thinking, collaboration and teamwork, leadership and management, cultural intelligence and diversity awareness, self-management and grit, and lifelong learning and radical curiosity.*

*On the following pages, we define these skills based on how they show up in the business of law and legal operations.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum, [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs\\_2020.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf) (35)

<sup>2</sup> The Future of Jobs Report 2023, World Economic Forum, [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs\\_2023.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2023.pdf) (39)..

<sup>3</sup> Defining the skills citizens will need in the future world of work, McKinsey & Co., [https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/industries/public\\_and\\_social\\_sector/our\\_insights/defining\\_the\\_skills\\_citizens\\_will\\_need\\_in\\_the\\_future\\_world\\_of\\_work/defining-the-skills-citizens-will-need-in-the-future-of-work-final.pdf](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/industries/public_and_social_sector/our_insights/defining_the_skills_citizens_will_need_in_the_future_world_of_work/defining-the-skills-citizens-will-need-in-the-future-of-work-final.pdf) (2).

# 10 Metaskills for the Business of Law

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## 1. Data and Digital Literacy

Data literacy and digital literacy are interconnected skills essential for navigating today's technology-driven world. Data literacy involves the ability to interpret, analyze, and critically assess data, enabling individuals to derive meaningful insights and make informed decisions. Digital literacy complements this by equipping people with the skills to effectively use digital tools and platforms to access, evaluate, and communicate information. Together, these skills empower individuals to work with data in digital environments, ensuring they can make data-driven decisions while understanding the ethical and privacy considerations of the digital space.

**Future-Ready Teams.** Teams grounded in data and digital literacy don't just work with technology—they shape it. Data and digital literacy means confidently leveraging data to drive decisions, solve problems, and innovate in ways that align with organizational goals. As AI tools begin to take over repetitive tasks, such as data sorting or basic review, it's the human ability to interpret these outputs and make sense of the subtleties that ensures AI remains a tool *in our hands*, not a replacement for it.

**In Our Industry.** Data literacy allows professionals to critically analyze and extract meaningful insights from legal data, while digital literacy equips them to navigate and leverage specialized tools to manage, review, and present this data effectively. For example, in cross-border investigations, legal teams must negotiate the intricacies of data privacy laws like GDPR, ensuring that both the data's handling and its interpretation adhere to strict regulatory standards. These combined skills allow professionals to adapt to emerging technologies, ensuring they stay ahead in utilizing the latest innovations to make data-driven legal decisions while maintaining the integrity and security of the digital information they manage.

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## 2. Adaptability and Flexibility

Adaptability and flexibility enable individuals to thrive in dynamic and ever-evolving environments. These abilities go beyond merely reacting to change; they are about thriving in environments where change is constant—proactively anticipating shifts in circumstances and adjusting strategies to remain effective. Together, these skills empower professionals to remain resilient, innovative, and capable of navigating complex situations with confidence.

**Future-Ready Team.** Teams are open to new ideas, technologies, and processes, while maintaining the capacity to pivot strategies as needed to meet evolving



organizational goals. This agility ensures that the team can navigate uncertainty and continue to perform at an elevated level, turning potential disruptions into opportunities for growth and innovation.

**In Our Industry.** Adaptability and flexibility are vital for managing the dynamic nature of legal work. Key applications include adjusting workflows in response to unexpected case developments, integrating new technologies or methodologies into existing processes, and reallocating resources to meet shifting priorities. As legal technologies evolve—whether in AI-assisted review or automated contract analysis—these teams adapt their human processes to amplify what technology offers, creating a harmony of efficiency and innovation. These skills allow teams to remain resilient, responsive, and effective in the face of constant change, supporting more agile and successful legal outcomes.

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### 3. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Critical thinking and problem-solving involve analyzing situations, identifying key issues, and developing effective solutions. These skills require questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and considering multiple perspectives to reach sound conclusions.

**Future-Ready Team.** Teams that embody critical thinking and problem-solving will temper AI's incredible data processing capabilities with human insight and experience. This approach ensures the team can address complex problems confidently, driving success through strategic action.

**In Our Industry.** Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential for managing the business of law and ensuring the efficient handling of legal cases. Legal professionals must analyze vast amounts of data, synthesize insights into actionable strategies, and implement defensible workflows that leverage technology and optimize resources. These abilities allow teams to address challenges effectively, make quick decisions, and support successful legal outcomes with thoughtful planning.

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### 4. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your own emotions while also being attuned to the emotions of others. This skill involves empathy, effective communication, and the capacity to navigate social complexities. Emotional intelligence helps individuals and leaders work through challenges effectively by fostering understanding, empathy, and communication.

**Future-Ready Team.** Fostering strong interpersonal relationships, managing conflicts constructively, and maintaining a positive and collaborative work environment are

especially important during periods of transformation when people often experience uncertainty, stress, or resistance. In the age of AI, emotional intelligence stands as a defining human quality that technology cannot replicate.

**In Our Industry.** Emotional intelligence is key to managing the pressures of high-stakes legal work and fostering productive collaboration. Key applications include managing client relationships with empathy, navigating team dynamics during stressful projects, and communicating effectively across diverse teams. Professionals with strong emotional intelligence will be essential to explaining outcomes, allaying fears, and building trust in AI-driven change. These skills can also diffuse conflicts, promote a culture of respect, pull teams through challenging situations, and lead to more effective teamwork and successful legal outcomes.

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## 5. Creative and Innovative Thinking

Creative and innovative thinking is the ability to generate new ideas, challenge conventional approaches, and develop unique solutions. This skill involves thinking outside the box, embracing change, and finding novel ways to solve problems.

**Future-Ready Team.** Creative and innovative thinking means continuously driving improvement, seizing new opportunities, and staying ahead of both industry shifts and technological advancements. This mindset fosters an environment where innovation thrives, leading to breakthroughs that propel the organization forward.

**In Our Industry.** Creative and innovative thinking is critical for integrating emerging technologies like AI into the legal landscape. Those skilled in creative thinking will be able to challenge outdated approaches and design new strategies that incorporate AI's capabilities, such as automating complex data analysis or enhancing decision-making through AI-generated insights. Rather than replacing human creativity, AI will complement it, enabling professionals to develop hybrid solutions that leverage the strengths of both human expertise and AI. These skills enable teams to stay agile, respond to changes with fresh ideas, and drive sustained success in a competitive legal environment.

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## 6. Collaboration and Teamwork

Collaboration and teamwork are two distinct concepts that seek to unify individuals to deliver extraordinary outcomes. Teamwork combines individual effort to achieve a common goal, while collaboration involves individuals completing tasks together to realize a project collectively. These skills involve clear communication, mutual respect, and the willingness to share knowledge and resources.



**Future-Ready Team.** Successful individuals will master digital tools and virtual environments across diverse, often remote, teams while fostering a supportive environment where everyone contributes to problem-solving and innovation. Collaboration between human and artificial intelligence will be a key factor distinguishing successful teams. This cooperative approach enhances productivity and ensures that the team can tackle complex challenges more effectively.

**In Our Industry.** Legal projects often span multiple disciplines, from document review and compliance to litigation and contract management. Successful legal outcomes will depend on collaboration between departments and across professions. Key applications include coordinating efforts across multiple functions and organizations to execute complex workflows, ensure compliance, and share insights that lead to better legal strategies. Professionals who excel in collaboration can also facilitate the implementation of new technologies, ensuring that all team members are aligned to meet goals and expectations. The future of law will be defined by how well diverse professions work together, both with each other and with AI.

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## 7. Leadership and Management

Leadership inspires and motivates, while management focuses on executing strategic decisions. Together, these skills create a balanced approach, where leadership provides direction and momentum and management ensures accountability and operational success. These skills involve setting clear objectives, making strategic decisions, and fostering a positive, productive work environment.

**Future-Ready Teams.** Leadership is about inspiring innovation and empowering individuals, while management focuses on effectively navigating new technologies and organizing resources to ensure strategic goals are met. This synergy drives organizational success by aligning team efforts with broader goals and maintaining focus even in challenging times.

**In Our Industry.** Strong leadership and management will steer teams through a landscape where AI is beginning to redefine roles, tasks, and outcomes. Key applications include setting clear goals for legal initiatives, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, embracing new tools like AI-driven legal analytics, and balancing legal risks with business objectives. These skills are essential for driving team success, maintaining operational efficiency, and achieving strategic legal outcomes while guiding teams to harness AI's power responsibly, ensuring that technology amplifies the human elements of judgment, empathy, and strategic thinking.

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## 8. Cultural Intelligence and Diversity Awareness

Cultural intelligence and diversity awareness are the abilities to understand, respect, and effectively collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. These skills involve recognizing the value of different perspectives, adapting communication styles, and fostering an inclusive environment.

**Future-Ready Team.** Cultural intelligence and diversity awareness mean leveraging the strengths of a diverse workforce to drive innovation, collaboration, and global competitiveness. This inclusivity not only enhances team cohesion but also broadens the team's ability to navigate complex, multicultural environments.

**In Our Industry.** Cultural intelligence and diversity awareness are crucial for managing global teams, addressing diverse client needs, and ensuring compliance with international regulations. Key applications include communicating effectively across diverse cultural contexts, understanding the implications of diverse legal systems, and creating strategies that account for cultural nuances in legal cases. Legal ops professionals with strong cultural intelligence can also foster inclusivity within teams, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. These skills are essential for building a cohesive, innovative team that can operate effectively in a global legal landscape.

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## 9. Self-Management and Grit

Self-management and grit are the abilities to regulate one's behavior, manage time effectively, take ownership of tasks and outcomes, and persevere in the face of challenges and setbacks. These skills involve setting goals, maintaining focus, and holding oneself accountable for meeting deadlines and delivering quality work.

**Future-Ready Team.** Self-management and personal responsibility mean professionals are not only self-motivated and accountable but also persistent in learning new skills, staying agile in the face of disruption and remaining committed to long-term success in an evolving landscape. In a world of accelerating change, grit ensures that we remain resilient, continuously pushing the boundaries of our skills and capabilities.

**In Our Industry.** Legal professionals often work under immense pressure, with tight deadlines and complex tasks that demand precision. Professionals must juggle multiple projects, prioritize tasks, and remain accountable even as AI handles more routine work. Key applications include managing multiple cases or projects simultaneously, meeting tight deadlines, and ensuring accuracy in document review and data handling. These qualities contribute to a more efficient, accountable team

that consistently delivers high-quality legal services and meets the rigorous demands of the legal industry.

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## 10. Lifelong Learning and Radical Curiosity

Lifelong learning and radical curiosity are the abilities to continuously seek knowledge, adapt to new information, and explore new ideas. These skills involve staying informed about industry trends, embracing new challenges, and being open to change.

**Future-Ready Team.** In a world on the cusp of an AI revolution, lifelong learning and radical curiosity are the traits that will propel us forward. Teams with a thirst for knowledge will be at the forefront of innovation, and lifelong learning will ensure that these teams remain adaptable, capable, and prepared.

**In Our Industry.** Lifelong learning and radical curiosity are vital for leading in a rapidly changing legal landscape. Radical curiosity will push professionals to ask not only **how** AI can improve their work, but also **why** certain technologies succeed or fail, driving continuous improvement in legal processes. Key applications include keeping up with the latest legal technologies, understanding new regulations and case law, and exploring innovative approaches to legal challenges. Leaders who are committed to a culture of continuous learning will be the architects that shape the future of the legal industry. These skills help teams stay agile, knowledgeable, and ready to tackle the complexities of modern legal work with a fresh perspective. The future is uncertain, but those who remain eager to learn, explore, and question will be the ones who define how AI impacts the legal industry.

### Future-Ready Teams Leverage All 10 Metaskills

Although the surveys and reports we analyzed often cited the metaskills that companies most need *single workers* to develop, it is rare that high proficiencies in all 10 metaskills exist in one person or even one role. And when all 10 metaskills are present in one resource, that worker is either expensive or a single point of failure—and usually both. For these reasons, companies should not try to develop all 10 metaskills in a single role.

Instead, companies should build teams that are adept at all 10 skills in aggregate and in relation to the demands of the business. In this way, deficiencies in one or two roles can be remedied by proficiencies found in other roles. Leveraging varied proficiencies across the entire team results in synergistic forward momentum that creates teams with net capabilities that surpass the sum of their parts.



We call teams that possess proficiencies in all 10 identified metaskills *future-ready teams*. Future-ready teams balance the 10 metaskills in accordance with the work they need done—including workflows that might otherwise be at loggerheads. For instance, future-ready teams can task some roles with traditional, status quo work that hews to tightly prescribed processes and methods to meet strict quality control demands, while simultaneously tasking other roles with the novel and off-the-beaten-path skunk works that may suffer more defects, but seed innovation.

## Adaptability Will Enable the AI + HI Complement

Examining this issue from the leader’s perspective, PwC’s report on *The Future of Work and Skills* found that the three most significant workplace challenges cited by leaders are: “Identifying the risks of replacing human work with technology. Identifying the skills workers will need in the future due to technology. Communicating clearly about the effect of automation and AI on future skills needs.”<sup>4</sup> The change management problem looms large here, and teams that can stay adaptable and pivot to new realities, new constraints, and new goals will win.

This learning curve may carry its own inherent incentive. Mary Agbovi, legal operations director at CoverMyMeds/McKesson, predicts that “tools minimizing mundane tasks and organizing information are key to future success because they shorten the time and distance to getting or offering expert advice and outcomes.” Professionals are likely to have both personal and vested motivations to “build the HI skills needed to augment AI capabilities.” Agbovi also believes that highly educated professionals are drawn to continuous development, asserting that “the space AI-driven outcomes create for higher-level, fulfilling HI work will drive exponential career satisfaction.”

AI follows the so-called Riley Paradox, named after former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley’s quote in 2006:

*“We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, in order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet.”*

The current technology is evolving so quickly that to invest in a single modality or format means to ignore all the others clamoring for attention—any one of which could be the next crucial tool. Instead of investing in the format, future-ready teams invest in the durable metaskills that underlie data, information, and knowledge.

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<sup>4</sup> “Building tomorrow’s workforce: Six no-regrets plays to make today.” From the *Future of Skills and Work Survey*, PwC, available at: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/workforce/future-of-work-and-skills.html>.

# Part Two:

## Assess to Invest: Got, Want, Need

Future-ready teams that understand the need to develop the 10 metaskills across roles still face the crucial issue of where to invest limited time, energy, and resources. After polling our practitioners, our group concluded that before a team starts reskilling its workforce, it first needs to take stock of its capabilities. Doing so should be simple enough that the team can start right away, but thorough enough that a holistic picture emerges in at least three dimensions of capability maturity: which metaskills the team has in abundance today, which skills are crucial to the team’s success tomorrow, and which skill gaps create risk in the status quo.



### Metaskills Assessment Framework

Metaskills	GOT	WANT	NEED
	<i>To what extent do we have these skills today?</i>	<i>To what extent will this metaskill drive value?</i>	<i>To what extent does not having this metaskill create risk?</i>
Data and Digital Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adaptability and Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative and Innovative Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration and Teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership and Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Intelligence and Diversity Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-Management and Grit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifelong Learning and Radical Curiosity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*To assess these dimensions, our group devised a simple and effective framework to review: 1) present capability, 2) future value to business, and 3) current risk to the business from the status quo. Teams can consider these dimensions using the simple framework of Got, Want, Need.*

*See large format framework at end of paper.*

The “Got” assessment measures the present capability in the team by considering its current state for each of the metaskills listed above. Teams should ask questions such as:

*Where does this metaskill repeatedly show up in our workflows? When there are developments, who owns the knowledge management around this metaskill? If we onboarded someone new and wanted them to grow this skill, which person in the organization would we come to first? If we hired a low-cost, high-potential resource today, how much time, effort, and energy would it take to make them proficient in this skill?*

The answers to these questions help teams understand who the metaskill “champions” are in their organization. The champions work with the metaskill daily; they are usually in charge of

tracking how the metaskill is evolving in the industry. Sometimes they are responsible for building training programs around that metaskill. Understanding who the champions are (or if any champions exist) is an effective way to think about present capability. Even if a team has someone using a skill, but no way to train or transfer that skill, then they risk institutional knowledge walking out the door or single points of failure in the production workflows.

The “Want” assessment measures how valuable each metaskill is to generating value for the business. Teams will value individual metaskills at distinct levels depending on how and in which contexts they operate. For example, while all teams value collaboration and teamwork, in general smaller teams with less well-defined processes will depend on collaboration and teamwork to ensure key tasks are completed correctly. A smaller team may have less role definition, and collaboration and teamwork will ensure individuals are working effectively asynchronously. However, a large team in a matrix-management model may depend on collaboration and teamwork to ensure that individuals aren’t drifting into each other’s lanes or to implement brand-new initiatives. In either case, there are no fixed rules, and every team must do its own analysis.

For each of the metaskills listed above, teams should ask questions such as:

*Are there core, revenue-related aspects of the business that are supported directly by this metaskill? What are they? Which metaskills are most crucial to maintain or improve our culture? Which metaskills do we most need to get right to retain, attract, and grow our talent?*

The “Need” assessment considers which skill gaps are threatening the team’s success now or will threaten the team’s success in the near term. Need is a measure of risk to the business. A team needs a metaskill because maintaining the status quo (i.e., maintaining the metaskill gap) will lead to a reduction in efficiency, proficiency, or effectiveness of the team.

For each of the metaskills listed above, teams should ask questions such as:

*What are the core, revenue-related aspects of the business that are supported directly by this metaskill? Which metaskills are most crucial to maintain or improve our culture? Which metaskills do we most need to get right to retain, attract, and grow our talent?*

Once teams engage in a discussion based on answering these questions, the priority and urgency of metaskill gaps will become immediately apparent. Then the teams will be ready to take the last step in designing metaskill maturity: deciding whether to buy, build, or partner.



# Part Three:

## Spanning the Gap: Buy, Build, or Partner

Building a future-ready team requires analysis because the ultimate development of the deficient metaskills requires time, energy, and resources. It is necessary to identify development targets before settling on development methods. Once those targets are identified—by way of the Got, Want, Need framework—teams can decide on how they will cultivate the identified metaskills.

Teams have three options: Buy, Build, or Partner to develop the metaskill.

<b>1 Buy if...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is “add-to-staff” budget.</li><li>• Team has low maturity in the metaskill.</li><li>• Metaskill is crucial for all future business.</li></ul>
<b>2 Build if...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is robust internal training.</li><li>• Trainees have time and capacity.</li><li>• Team has moderate metaskill maturity.</li></ul>
<b>3 Partner if...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediate or intermittent need.</li><li>• There are budget constraints.</li><li>• Developing metaskill is a business opportunity.</li></ul>

Teams may choose to buy the metaskill if the analysis they complete reveals they have low maturity in the skill, the skill is crucial for the business (and that isn’t likely to change), there is risk to not having the skill, and the team is well-capitalized. If those conditions are present, the team should go to market and make targeted hires that will bolster the metaskills. This is the most capital-intensive option because any candidate with proficiency will come with a higher compensation requirement. The candidate may also end up being a poor fit for the role, or the candidate may be a good fit for the role but the business needs and context change. The buy option comes with high up-front capitalization and carries a high degree of risk.

Teams may choose to build if the assessment concludes that the team has the metaskill in enough abundance to either create an internal program to reskill others or upgrade via a learning education course or intensive training. The build decision is attractive because it uses less capital. But creating an internal course or sidelining team members to complete intensive training requires considerable time and energy from the business.

If the team lacks ready access to capital and does not have either the metaskill in enough abundance to upgrade or the time and energy to create internal training, then it should consider

partnering. Service providers have offerings to help teams develop these metaskills. Partnering with providers gives the team the ability to rent the metaskill for a brief time or borrow the metaskill learning and development curriculum. The partnership option bridges the buy and build options.

## Preparing for the Unpredictable Future

Increasingly, change is the only constant, and the future of work demands flexibility, innovation, and strategic foresight. The volume, velocity, and variety of data continue to evolve, challenging traditional approaches to data intelligence and making it imperative for corporate teams to adapt swiftly. The mantra "Do more with the same resources" echoes through corporate law departments and beyond, and teams need to be agile and initiative-taking.

To meet these ever-shifting challenges, teams should adopt metaskills. Artificial intelligence, while transformative, relies heavily on human intelligence to drive true innovation and strategic decision-making, and the future-ready team is not composed of individuals proficient in a single skill set but of groups that collectively master a broad spectrum of capabilities.

To develop and mature such metaskills, teams should conduct a thorough assessment of existing skills, understand the value of future capabilities, and identify gaps that pose risks. They should use the Got, Want, Need framework to map current proficiencies, determine the skills that will drive future success, and address the status quo deficiencies that threaten business performance.

Teams will then be able to decide whether to buy, build, or partner to develop the necessary metaskills. Each approach—hiring new talent, reskilling existing employees, or partnering with external experts—offers unique advantages and challenges. The choice depends on the organization's specific needs, resources, strategic goals, and desire to be truly future-ready.

# Metaskills Assessment Framework

Metaskills	GOT	WANT	NEED
	<i>To what extent do we have these skills today?</i>	<i>To what extent will this metaskill drive value?</i>	<i>To what extent does not having this metaskill create risk?</i>
<b>Data and Digital Literacy</b> <i>Key skills: technical competence, critical thinking, synthesis, and storytelling</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Adaptability and Flexibility</b> <i>Key skills: openness, resilience, judgment, and learning agility</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving</b> <i>Key skills: observation, logical reasoning, hypothesis testing, and risk management</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b> <i>Key skills: self-awareness, active listening, empathy, and openness</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Creative and Innovative Thinking</b> <i>Key skills: brainstorming, ideation, abstraction, generalization, lateral thinking, and resilience</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Collaboration and Teamwork</b> <i>Key skills: cultural competence, interpersonal communication, influencing, and conflict resolution</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Leadership and Management</b> <i>Key skills: strategic thinking, decision-making, influencing, conflict management, and emotional intelligence</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Cultural Intelligence and Diversity Awareness</b> <i>Key skills: self-awareness, empathy, openness, judgment, and interpersonal communication</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Self-Management and Grit</b> <i>Key skills: observation, resilience, responsibility, and time management</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lifelong Learning and Radical Curiosity</b> <i>Key skills: self-motivation, learning agility and autonomy, observation, and goal-setting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>