

Amid widening talent shortages, enterprise leaders must find new ways to verify AI skills and personalize AI skills development.

Closing the Gap: Verifying AI Skills in the Enterprise

February 2025

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Introduction

Organizations have long struggled with skills shortages, but the rapid advancement of AI, automation, and other emerging technologies places new pressure on global IT and business leaders. Finding the right individuals with the necessary skills for specific roles — and retaining them — has become more challenging than ever before.

The problem with rapid technological change is it can so easily outpace a workforce's ability to adapt. The result is a yawning gap between a company's available skills and its market demands. Global organizations report to IDC that a lack of skills has led to various business issues, including delays in digital transformation initiatives (67%), reduced product quality (58%), hardware and software holdups (54%), missed revenue targets (55%), and lost income (54%). IDC predicts that by the end of 2026, over 90% of organizations will face similar challenges (source: IDC's *IT Global Skills Survey*, December 2024).

As it concerns AI readiness, the picture is even bleaker. According to 94% of enterprise leaders, AI will be the most in-demand skill in 2025 (see Figure 1). Yet the lack of time and resources for AI training is a challenge, as nearly two-fifths (39%) of respondents complain about a lack of appropriate AI education and more than a third (35%) complain about having no time to learn new skills.

Closing skill gaps requires solutions that go beyond outdated models. Real-time, verified skills intelligence ensures precise, unbiased skills verification, enabling organizations to align workforce development with business priorities. Without continuous skills assessment and verified data, enterprises risk ineffective training investments, misaligned hiring, and an inability to keep pace with AI- and automation-driven change. The ability to assess and verify skills at scale, across both technical and human domains, will set organizations apart in the AI-driven landscape.

AT A GLANCE

KEY STAT

By 2026, more than 90% of global organizations will grapple with skills shortages, costing up to \$5.5 trillion in product delays, quality problems, impaired competitiveness, and lost revenue.

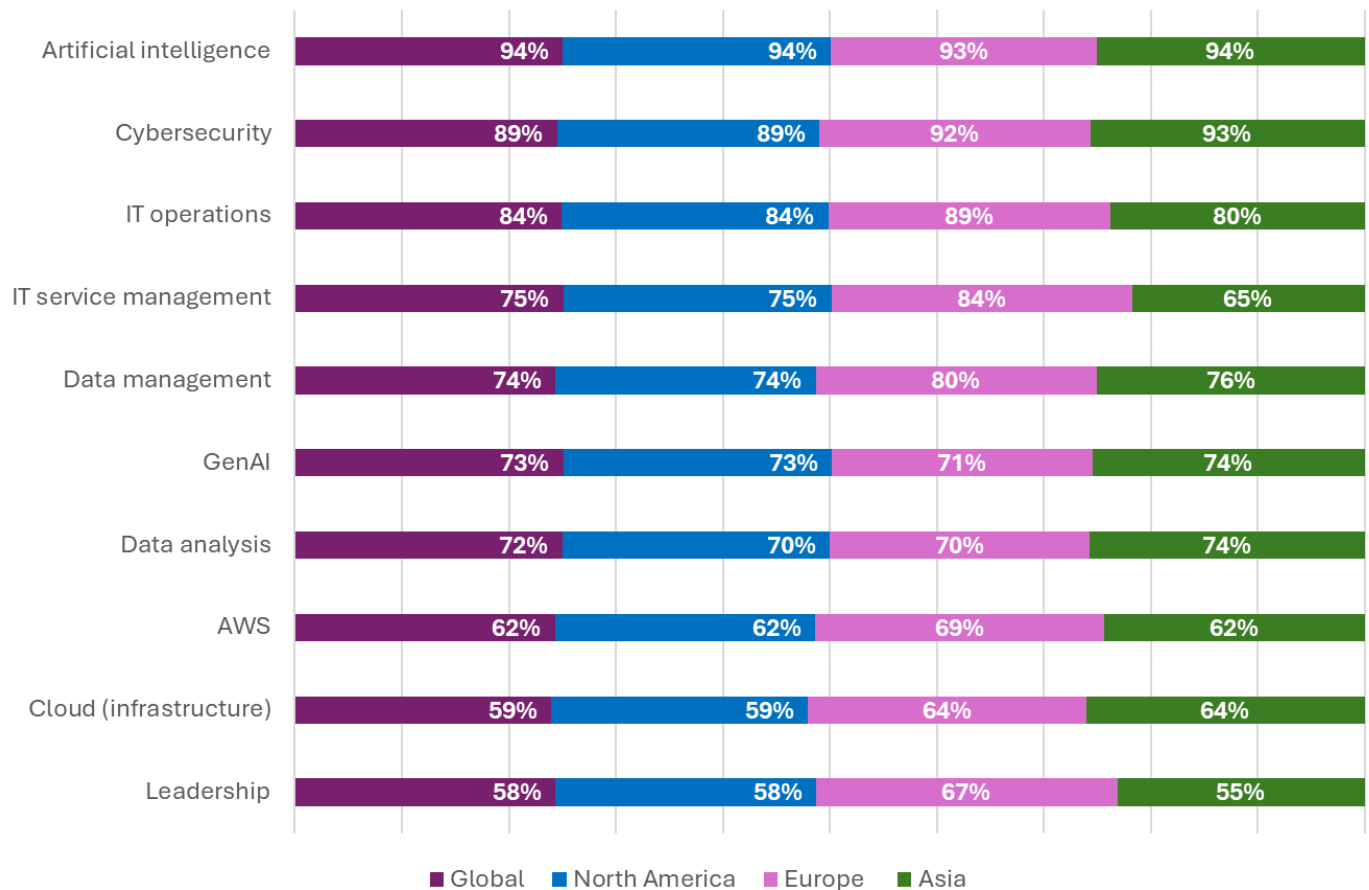
KEY TAKEAWAY

Though more than 94% of global organizations say AI is the top in-demand skill for 2025, only a third say they are fully ready to implement AI. A lack of skills, data privacy concerns, and a lack of quality data are the biggest barriers.

Organizations in all regions and sectors should reassess their current initiatives and prioritize learning as a core focus. They must create evocative and engaging programs that keep employees updated on new technologies. With IDC research showing that the half-life of skills is decreasing rapidly, enterprises must allocate the necessary time, resources, and personnel to support these efforts.

FIGURE 1: **Top In-Demand Skills for 2025**

Q What is the single most important enterprise skill for your organization in the next 12 months?



Source: IDC's 2024 Global IT Skills Survey, December 2024

Despite the importance of AI skills to organizations, a mere third of company leaders say they are fully ready to adapt to AI ways of working. When asked what obstacles are standing in their way, respondents pointed to an array of factors including a lack of AI skills (46%), privacy concerns (43%), data quality problems (40%), unclear ROI (26%), and cost of implementation (40%).

Benefits of Assessing AI Skill Gaps

In IDC's June 2024 *Global Future of Work Survey*, business and IT leaders acknowledged that their training initiatives are inadequate. Traditional learning models rely on course completions as proxies for knowledge, which can provide a clear view of workforce capabilities. With 40% of IT leaders reporting fragmented skills development, organizations increasingly require real-time, verified skills intelligence to ensure that training investments address actual gaps and align with business needs. In addition, nearly one-third of respondents noted difficulties in scaling training across different functions and almost half (49%) cited a lack of organizational support for effective skilling programs.

Such findings are concerning on their own, but they become even more alarming in light of the rapid advancement of AI and other emerging technologies. The fast pace of technological change requires a workforce that is not only proficient in relevant technologies but also resilient and adaptable. Organizations that do not address these training deficiencies risk falling behind competitors and may struggle to fully leverage AI-driven innovations and digital transformations. Worse, the fragmented nature of current training programs can result in inconsistent skill development across teams, thus compounding the challenges that new technologies pose.

Real-time, verified skills intelligence can help organizations make more effective training investments, align workforce planning, and speed AI adoption. AI-powered skills verification and benchmarking ensure that learning programs remain targeted, measurable, and aligned to actual workforce needs. The idea is to address skill gaps before they impact business performance. A robust framework for assessing workforce skills can help enterprises keep their employees abreast of AI and other emerging technologies, enabling them to strategically align individual goals with the business' goals and needs.

As companies increasingly depend on automation and AI tools, cohesive and comprehensive training strategies are essential. A unified, data-driven approach to skill development is essential for AI adoption. Organizations that connect verified skills data with HR and learning systems can make better, more informed workforce decisions. Aligning talent strategies with business goals can improve efficiency and maximize ROI on AI-driven transformation.

Considerations

AI skills verification technology can offer value to enterprises. However, enterprise leaders should carefully consider potential biases that may be embedded in such systems so they aren't perpetuating inequity in hiring or promotion processes. Look for solutions that are transparent about how their tools assess skills, so candidates can understand and address any apparent deficiencies they spotlight.

Moreover, data privacy and security are critical. Enterprises must assess solutions with robust safeguards that can protect sensitive information. Finally, as is always the case with AI, enterprise leaders should acknowledge and understand the limitations inherent in the technology. To ensure fairness and accuracy in skills validation, human oversight is important and can provide additional context and nuance.

Conclusion

There is no question that a lack of AI skills is a significant problem for most organizations in all geographies. Addressing this skill gap is critical. Continuous skills assessment can ensure that training investments are effective and aligned with business goals.

By prioritizing real-time, verified skills intelligence, organizations can stay ahead in the AI-driven landscape. Aligning talent strategies with business objectives not only enhances efficiency but also maximizes ROI on AI initiatives. As technology continues to march forward, business and IT leaders must evolve their approaches to workforce development and skilling.

About the Analyst



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As a research director at IDC, Gina Smith produces research in the IT education and skills sector. Her responsibilities include primary research, analysis, and the production of market insights worldwide.

Gina has more than 25 years of working experience in technology journalism, publishing, and tech start-up management, including New York Times bestselling author and Apple Cofounder Steve Wozniak's memoir *iWoz: How I Invented the Personal Computer* (2006/2011) and her own book *The Genomics Age* (2005), which was a Barron's Book of the Year. She was also CEO of Oracle Founder Larry Ellison's network computer start-up in 2000, the first on-air technology correspondent for ABC News, and editor in chief of BYTE Magazine.

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