THE WORLD IS CHANGING

How to make **Power Skills** accelerate your business growth?
The world is changing

The world is navigating its way through a transition from a knowledge economy to a more self-knowledge based economy. In every area of our work operations, automation and robotics are remaking the way we manage traditional day-to-day tasks.

Automation, adaptive technology, globalization... These are all external factors that shape our future. How this future will look exactly, we cannot predict for certain. But that the future of work will continuously change, is a given. Just as the challenges it will bring along.

As tasks are becoming more automated, job roles and responsibilities adapt and evolve. It’s becoming more important than ever to rely on your organization’s most important assets: your people and their potential. Human competencies are the new essentials for the workforce and workplace. Because your employees are the ones who are capable of driving your organization and making a difference, provided they have the right skills. Organizations that invest in their employees’ development have proven to achieve higher rates of productivity and innovation than organizations that do not.

As the landscape of professional development changes, so do the skills and the competencies we value.

So which skills prove to be future proof? Where most companies distinguish between soft and hard skills, we prefer to talk about Power Skills instead. A term introduced by HR guru Josh Bershin we are very fond of. We use Power Skills to focus on a number of important future-proof competencies that require both soft and hard skills. Skills that give power and help shape the future of work.

In this whitepaper you’ll read about how your organization will withstand the digitization and automation of work we do, and the changes, such as job displacement and skills shortage it brings with it, by starting an L&D-strategy that focuses on training your employees in the right Power Skills.

“Technological developments are causing skills to age faster and faster.”

RICHARD VAN HOOIJDONK - TRENDWATCHER AND FUTURIST
What are Power Skills?

The continued competitive advantage of humans over technology will come from mastering combinations of competencies and acquiring skills sets. These we call: Power Skills. Combinations of important future-proof competencies, based on market needs, that require both soft and hard skills.

Soft skills vs. hard skills?

Communicating, collaborating, leading, listening, giving feedback, negotiating, motivating; everyone has a different interpretation of "soft skills". Soft skills is often used as a collective term for personal, emotional, social and intellectual skills. These skills are often described as the counterpart of hard skills, which are measurable, functional and technical, and are often expressed through diplomas and certificates. You could say that hard skills determine what you know and can do, while soft skills determine how effectively you use that knowledge and set of skills.
However, in describing soft skills as the counterpart of hard skills we miss some nuance. Soft and hard skills are two sides of the same coin, and ought to be trained and developed equally. On the one hand employees should train functional skills. Skills your employees will have already partially mastered, such as math, coding or languages. While, in addition we believe these functional skills alone do not provide enough of a foundation for a professional to reach their peak performance. Non-functional skills are also required, such as taking initiative, creativity, managing your energy and making management reports using tools such as Excel and Power BI.

Both types of skills are essential for a successful career. For example, if lawyers do not know the law, it is difficult to set up a good defense; but if they are unable to give a strong and convincing argument, that will not help their case either.

For employees in customer service as well, it is crucial to be able to understand the needs of customers from different geographical and cultural backgrounds, deal with complex and ambiguous problems, and communicate meaningfully.

Employees need not just soft or hard skills. But the right skills for the job: Power Skills.
The 8 Power Skills

By closely following renowned institutions such as the World Economic Forum, Harvard Business Review and McKinsey, among others, in their research on future-proof skills, Lepaya has defined a set of 8 Power Skills. These Power Skills will help companies and professionals develop their L&D strategy and have the greatest impact on professional success:

**Analytical Thinking**
e.g., problem-solving behavior, prioritizing, making connections, data skills such as data analysis

**Empowering Leadership**
e.g., having difficult conversations with colleagues, giving feedback, motivating others

**Diversity & Inclusion**
e.g., being aware of (unconscious) prejudices and pointing them out to others, having sincere and open conversations/communicating in a way that makes everyone feel seen and understood

**Resilience**
e.g., dealing with change, stress management, managing your own energy

**Taking Ownership**
e.g., taking initiative/direction, working on a project basis, taking action when circumstances compromise the result, informing stakeholders, planning realistically and setting goals

**Storytelling**
e.g., communicating a vision to others clearly and captivatingly, speaking in a relaxed manner in front of an (online) group, using data to tell your story

**Collaboration & Influence**
e.g., collaboration, effective communication, empathy, conflict management, trustworthiness

**Intentional Learning**
e.g., Growth mindset, lifelong learning, being open to feedback from others
Many workplaces devote a lot of attention to developing employees’ hard skills. Soft skills, while they are equally as important as hard skills, are often ignored or not invested in. Soft skills are often not in focus as they can take more time to develop than hard skills. Time dedicated to learning is often limited, especially in the workplace where the focus is often placed on developing very practical hard skills needed for daily tasks.

Bogged down in the practicality of day-to-day work, it can be difficult to objectively determine that improvement of your employees’ soft skills is necessary and it might be even more difficult to establish both how to improve them and which skills to improve. It is also the case that not every employee needs the same skills at the same time. The learning experience of different employees can vary greatly even if their experience, job and training are similar.

**Hard skills** are soft: they change all the time, are constantly being obsolete and are relatively easy to learn. **Soft skills** are hard: they are difficult to build, critical and take extreme effort to obtain.”

BERSIN BEST-SELLING AUTHOR AND FOUNDER OF BERSIN & ASSOCIATES, A LEADING RESEARCH AND CONSULTING FIRM FOCUSED ON TALENT MANAGEMENT.
Skill gaps create real business gaps

Last year the World Economic Forum announced a huge worldwide job displacement, with 85 million jobs fading due to changes spurred by digitization and automation. Causing skills shortage up to 50% of all workers.

Not a skills shortage and subsequent job displacement happening in 100 years, but already by 2030. Professionals are not learning the skills they need to outperform, withstand digitization in the future, or even to their job well now.

Luckily, L&D has gained a place in many organizations, and has become increasingly more prominent as well as urgent. Learning budgets are increasing and higher management is putting more emphasis on continuous learning as it proves to increase employee retention, engagement and overall satisfaction. The number of roles that primarily will require Power skills is growing exponentially and by 2030, two thirds of the workforce is expected to be made out of Power skill focused roles.

Employees are looking for new personal development opportunities. Highly relevant learning experiences are sought. Employees and learners want highly personalized learning opportunities that serve the right learning purpose at the right time. They value receiving personalized course recommendations based on their career goals and skills gaps.

94% of learners said that they see the career benefits of making the time to learn.
Research also shows that Dutch employees score a good 7.5 on Inquisitiveness. But 6% do not consider themselves eager to learn, while 63% indicate that they consciously have a growth mindset, are open to lifelong learning and receive feedback. This offers a lot of perspective for the skills that still need to be worked on.

Top 8 skills of Dutch employees (from highest score to lowest score)

- Interpersonal skills
- Analytical skills
- Eagerness to learn
- Ownership
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Leadership skills
- Presentation skills
Empower your workforce by upskilling and reskilling

Across generations, the majority of professionals value knowledge sharing. They want to learn with their colleagues, to exchange ideas, share insights, and ask questions for a more impactful learning experience. Not only should learning be personalized, it should be a social and collaborative experience. Learners, regardless of their generation, are more motivated to learn in a social environment.

In addition, advancing technological possibilities are highlighting the value of soft skills. The rapid pace of business and technology changes is putting upskilling and reskilling front and center.

Consider your smartphone and the accompanying pressure to be accessible at all times and to constantly share how cool your life is via social media. There is a reason that the number of burn-outs among young people is higher than it has ever been. No less than 56% of Dutch, 67% of Belgian, 70% of British and 71% of German employees indicated that they experienced a lot of stress in the workplace. Dealing with these technological possibilities requires careful time and stress management.¹

Good news is that at 71%, European workers are more than willing to develop stress management skills. A large part of the responsibility, as 56% of employees indicate, lies with the employer. If employees want to be able to tackle this problem effectively they will need support. Many European workers therefore are asking for help, as many as 62%, especially young professionals. The next generation, with 70%, expects more support from their organization in preventing and resolving stress than they are receiving today.²

Essential functional and non-function skills will ultimately not only affect one employee, team or department, but an organization overall. To stay future-proof and support your organization’s success, it is vital to choose the right Power skills to develop and empower your employees. The skills with the greatest impact will keep your organization prepared for any changes that the future brings and equip your employees to bounce-back from and overcome any obstacle they may face.

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So we need to talk about these Power skills, assess ourselves against them, and build 'academies' to teach them."

Josh Bersin is the President and Founder of Bersin & Associates
Recognize the signals in your organization. There is always room for improvement when it comes to your organization’s L&D strategy. The most complex element of improving your organization’s L&D is identifying what exactly needs to improve, establishing the underlying root cause and determining how to solve the issue.

A lot of issues and frustrations that exist in workplaces often come down to a lack of focus on skills development. In order to determine whether this is also the case in your organization, we have set up a set of sub-optimal behaviors that can result from a lack of Power skills. So if you see many of the following points in your company, consider taking a closer look at your own skills as well as your colleagues.

**The biggest communication problem is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply.**

*Stephen Covey Author of 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'*

**In the case of career starters, for example:**
- Difficulty with prioritization: more focus on what is urgent rather than what is important
- A passive attitude in involving stakeholders
- Lengthy emails and meetings
- Focus on activities instead of results

**In the case of professionals, for example:**
- Strong focus on content, little on form
- Limited visibility in the organization despite good performance
- Difficulty presenting for a group
- Little sense of the interests of different stakeholders

**In the case of managers, for example:**
- Many meetings, few decisions
- Little attention to a positive and safe working environment
- Surprises during appraisals
- Little coaching and feedback on the job
To see real results, the occasional training is not enough. A behavioural change will prove effective after lengthy periods of practicing and developing. A learner must work on it consistently and continuously involve as many employees as possible. A holistic approach is necessary when working structurally with Power skills and for the creation of a learning mentality and culture in your organization.

To assess ourselves against these Power Skills is needed, as Josh Bersin says. First, in order to see which Power Skills are needed for which employees. And secondly, to see how we will develop them best, making the most impact and creating real changes in behaviour and performance.

This comes down to training the right skills, at the right time and in the right way. That is how Power Skills stick and can be applied directly. With the right skills, professionals will fit into the right place within your organization.

“One size doesn't fit all. You cannot simply cluster all employees together, you want employees to develop specific skills sets that are relevant to them at that moment. When do they work on which skills?”

ALEXANDRA RANKE, L & D ADVISOR AT KPMG
For starters

Starters already possess a basic set of functional skills, learned at high schools or universities as well as some professional experience through internships or previous (part-time) jobs. But, they have only just started building their knowledge of the in’s and out’s of the business. It’s so important to invest in their growth and development from the very start of their careers! Our Starters program will help them build a foundation, gain confidence, as well as discover and maximise their potential. Most relevant Power Skills: **Taking Ownership, Collaboration & Influence, Resilience and Intentional Learning.**

[Check out our Starters program](#)

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For professionals

Professionals are the driving force of any organization. They are the ones who possess the knowledge, the necessary experience and put in the work which drives the organization towards greater success. Having already obtained all the fundamental know-how, it is extremely relevant and a great opportunity to invest in their further development. Our Professionals program will help professionals reach their peak performance and it will truly set your people apart from other organizations. Most relevant Power Skills: **Analytical Thinking, Taking Ownership, Collaboration & Influence, Resilience, Storytelling, Diversity & Inclusion and Intentional Learning.**

[Check out our Professionals program](#)

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For first time leaders

Good leadership takes two to tango. At Lepaya, we believe that great leadership comes from the type of leaders who don't just lead followers — but those who empower their people in becoming the best versions of their professional selves. Our First Time Leaders program will guide your employees on the path of discovering what values form the base of their leadership, and how to adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of the organization and their employees. Your leaders will become happier, more productive employees, who are more adaptable to change and show more loyalty. Most relevant Power Skills: **Empowering Leadership.**

[Check out our First time leaders program](#)
Empower **your employees** and organization with **Power Skills**

Take into account the following three points of attention, when working on strengthening Power skills within your organization.

1. **Start today, not tomorrow.** Soft skills have a direct impact on your organization and the well-being of your employees.

2. **Skills are often seen as "habits",** the earlier and more your employees practice and start forming routines, the better they get over time.

3. **Ensure you choose the right skills for your employees' development**

Choose a form of learning that suits the current generation of (young) employees: digital, application-oriented and fast. Time is limited, while Learning is becoming more prominent. Either offline, online, or blended. Be sure to take into consideration your employees’ preferences as it can hugely affect the learning success, impact and overall experience. Whilst offline and online are most common, blended learning has become foundational to the development of employees as it is of online learning and a mix of in person training, where they can practice certain scenarios with trainers or actors.

We have unparalleled experience in training the right Power Skills at the right time to make your organization become more productive and make your employees live happier lives.
At Bynder we focus on both hard skills and people skills development, also referred to as power skills. Continued focus on expanding hard skills is important for professionals to remain the best developer, but we are also specifically interested in developing professionals’ soft skills. This is where professionals differentiate from doing their own roles well to actually outperforming and making the difference. We want all Bynder employees from marketers to developers to grow as a professional in the broader sense.

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How did other organizations experience an L&D strategy based on training Power Skills?

Read the Bynder Case study for an experience on learning and developing Power Skills:
Start investing in your talent today!

Train your employees in our set of 8 future-proof Power Skills, and make a real difference.

Questions or inquiries? Let us know

Let’s talk

Build your workforce with Power Skills.