

MTF INSTITUTE RESEARCH

Executive Skills Demand 2026-2030

A reproducible desk-based evidence review of public WEF, LinkedIn, Microsoft and OECD sources

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Executive summary

MTF Institute reviewed four current public evidence sources to identify capabilities repeatedly associated with management work through 2030. Five themes recur across the sources: analytical decision-making, cross-functional and people leadership, AI and data fluency, stakeholder communication, and operating-model redesign.

This is a desk-based evidence review, not an employer survey conducted by MTF Institute. It does not combine unlike surveys into a proprietary score and does not claim that one skill, course or certificate causes employment, promotion or salary outcomes.

Method

Sources were included when the publishing organization and date were identifiable, the dataset or analytical basis was described, the publication addressed work or skills, and the material was publicly inspectable. MTF compared recurring concepts while preserving attribution to each source.

Five capability groups

Capability	Management interpretation
Analytical decisions	Separate evidence from inference, compare alternatives and define review measures.
Cross-functional leadership	Translate between finance, customers, operations, technology and people.
AI and data fluency	Define workflows, data conditions, controls, human review and measures of value.
Stakeholder communication	Make the decision, evidence, trade-offs and request understandable.
Operating-model redesign	Change roles, decision rights, information flows, controls and review rhythms.

Source-to-capability evidence matrix

The table below is an editorial mapping of public evidence to management implications and curriculum areas. The downloadable CSV contains the complete matrix and source URLs.

Source	Theme	Management implication	Curriculum area
World Economic Forum (2025)	Analytical decision-making	Managers need to compare evidence, assumptions and alternatives instead of delegating judgment to a tool.	General Management and Strategic Leadership
World Economic Forum (2025)	Leadership and resilience	Executive learning should combine technology literacy with people leadership and adaptation.	General Management and Strategic Leadership
World Economic Forum (2025)	AI and data fluency	Leaders need enough fluency to govern AI-enabled work and connect it to business outcomes.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy
LinkedIn (2026)	Cross-functional leadership	Managers need shared decision frames and the ability to translate between functions.	General Management and Strategic Leadership
LinkedIn (2026)	Executive and stakeholder communication	Learning evidence should include concise decision memos, presentations and stakeholder requests.	General Management and Strategic Leadership
LinkedIn (2026)	Go-to-market capability	Commercial leaders should connect product, marketing, sales, experience and customer economics.	Chief Commercial Officer
LinkedIn (2026)	AI business strategy and governance	Managers should define owners, controls, quality measures and escalation for AI-supported workflows.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy
Microsoft (2025)	Human-agent teams	Leaders need to redesign workflow, permissions, review and accountability rather than add agents to an unchanged process.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy
Microsoft (2025)	Operating-model redesign	Transformation plans should include roles, decision rights, adoption, controls and measures of value.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy
Microsoft (2025)	Workforce learning	AI transformation should include role-based practice, support and evidence of adoption quality.	Strategic Human Resources and Organizational Leadership
OECD (2026)	Skills as an adoption condition	Technology investment should be paired with domain, data and complementary management capability.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy
OECD (2026)	Complementary human capability	Executive learning should combine AI fluency with judgment, communication and domain expertise.	Integrated Executive Capstone
OECD (2026)	Responsible adoption	Managers need explicit governance, data protection, human review and accountable deployment.	AI, Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy

Curriculum implications

A credible executive program should publish enough detail to show where capabilities are learned and practised. MTF maps the recurring themes across general management, strategic finance, commercial leadership, operations and supply chain, AI and digital transformation, strategic HR, an integrated capstone and an executive career launchpad.

How the evidence is used

The mapping informs curriculum questions and learning design. It does not replace lesson-level academic review, local labor-market research, individual career advice or evidence that a program produces a particular outcome.

Limitations

The four sources use different populations, methods and definitions. Their findings cannot be added into one valid demand score. The matrix records themes that recur across sources and the editorial implication drawn by MTF. Readers should inspect each primary source and its methodology before reusing a claim.

Primary sources

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025

<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/>

LinkedIn, Skills on the Rise 2026

<https://news.linkedin.com/2026/Skills-on-the-rise-2026>

Microsoft, 2025 Work Trend Index

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/2025-the-year-the-frontier-firm-is-born>

OECD, AI and Skills 2026

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/ai-and-skills_f843b352-en/full-report.html

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