SkillsRight



Insights from Hiring Managers

How Employers Can Turn a Skills-First Mindset into Sustained Impact

A SkillsRight follow-up study in partnership with Ipsos

Originally published by OneTen, now SkillsRight. The underlying research, data and findings remain unchanged.

Executive Summary

In 2023, SkillsRight's survey of hiring managers uncovered both promising and persistent realities about the widespread adoption of skills-first hiring – a strategy that prioritizes a candidate's skills and abilities over traditional criteria such as a four-year degree, years of experience or job titles. There was a broad belief in its value, but also real barriers to implementation. Nearly two years later, we revisited those perspectives amid a landscape actively being reshaped by labor imbalances, deepening skills shortages, shifting trade dynamics and the accelerating force of automation and AI. Our findings, which expand on our **previous research,** paint a clear picture: skills-first hiring is no longer an emerging idea. It is becoming a business imperative. Yet, the path from belief to sustained impact still demands focus, investment and leadership.

As employers move from early pilots to broader adoption, the question has shifted from why skills-first matters to how it can deliver measurable, and sustained, results. Belief in skills-first approaches remains strong—86% of hiring managers personally support skills-first practices. Yet consistent use remains limited, with only a third reporting regular adoption, confirming that a gap between belief and implementation persists. To better understand the challenges and opportunities shaping skills-first implementation, SkillsRight once again surveyed hiring managers to see how their perspectives and experiences have evolved.

While enthusiasm remains high, perceptions of return on investment (ROI) have declined modestly—not due to a loss of interest, but likely from real-world implementation challenges. For example, perceptions of improved quality of hire dropped from 92% in 2023 to 82% in 2025, and reported time-to-hire gains fell from 80% to 61%. These shifts reflect a reality many organizations face when moving from pilot programs to broader adoption: the process can be complex, and gaps in hiring manager training, tools and organizational alignment become clearer over time—particularly as hiring managers come face to face with the tactical complexities of recruiting, assessing and onboarding talent. Procedural, personal, and structural barriers—ranging from lack of training and unclear skill requirements to legacy systems, leadership resistance and fear of making the "wrong hire"—make it difficult for employers to build and sustain progress.

To help organizations overcome these hurdles, this report aims to deliver a clear and strategic roadmap to help employers move from skills-first believers to champions. It offers data-driven recommendations to strengthen hiring manager buy-in by equipping them to be catalysts for change, as well as scale the systems and processes required to embed skills-first practices across the enterprise. With the right infrastructure, tools and leadership commitment, companies can unlock the full ROI of a skills-first strategy—broadening talent pools, boosting retention and driving stronger overall business performance.

Research Background & Objectives

In 2023, SkillsRight surveyed U.S.-based hiring managers to gain a better understanding of their perceptions and practices around skills-first hiring. That study titled, Embracing a Skills-First Mindset, revealed strong support for the approach but also highlighted key barriers to adoption.

In 2025, as labor shortages persist and AI adoption accelerates, SkillsRight partnered with Ipsos to revisit the field and conducted quantitative and qualitative surveys. The surveys were conducted online from May 15 to June 6, 2025. This time, we sought to answer three critical questions:

- How have hiring managers' beliefs evolved?
- What's enabling—or stalling—skills-based recruiting today?
- How can companies turn interest into consistent, measurable action?

Key Findings

Despite Strong Support for Skills-First Hiring, Implementation is Inconsistent

Compared to 2023, general sentiment has improved. In 2023, 56% of hiring managers believed removing degree requirements would improve hiring outcomes. In 2025, 86% viewed skills-first positively and 82% express personal interest in the practice.

The key motivations among hiring managers for adopting skills-first practices are: improving the quality of hire (55%), accessing a wider talent pool (44%) and addressing skills gaps (42%).

In addition, more than 80% respond positively to messaging that emphasizes tangible business outcomes such as faster time-to-fill, stronger job performance and improved retention. Personal motivation also plays a role—84% say the potential for better team performance and personal achievement drives their interest in adopting competency-based hiring processes.

Despite strong interest, implementation remains inconsistent. While 74% report some level of implementation, only one-third use skills-based hiring practices regularly across their teams. Most say they use skills-based hiring practices in some capacity, but implementation often varies by job type or department. Fragmented implementation levels are not unusual, as moving from pilots to full-scale implementation requires deeper shifts in systems, processes and mindsets.

Perceived Benefits are Higher Among Organizations Implementing Skills-First Hiring

Hiring managers at organizations that have fully or partially implemented a skills-first strategy perceive stronger benefits than those still piloting or not yet implementing the practice:

- 91% (vs. 68%) report hiring more qualified candidates
- 87% (vs. 60%) say it makes the hiring process more efficient
- 86% (vs. 58%) cite improved retention

These differences highlight a clear perception gap tied to how far organizations have progressed on their skills-first journey.

Procedural, Personal and Structural Barriers Create Friction

Hiring managers report facing skills-first implementation barriers at multiple levels:

Procedural: The most cited procedural obstacle is the difficulty in assessing candidates' skills. 40% say assessing skills directly is difficult, 49% lack formal training, 30% report unclear skill requirements for open roles and 18% say they lack the right assessment tools. Training remains an unmet need—only about half have participated, but more than 70% say they would participate if training were made available. Many also cite legacy processes and systems—including ATS filters, unclear job descriptions and default degree requirements—continue to limit consistency and scalability.

Personal: Personal concerns also shape how quickly skills-first hiring takes hold. About one-third fear making the "wrong hire," and nearly half say they worry about being judged for their hiring decisions. Despite fear of mis-hiring being a common barrier, the vast majority of those implementing skills-first hiring report that it improves quality of hire. In addition, 40% lack confidence in their peers' ability to assess skills effectively. This dynamic can slow alignment across the broader team and create inertia, as hiring managers hesitate to fully embrace skills-first approaches if they believe they will be held solely accountable for potential mis-hires—especially when support structures are weak or inconsistently applied.

Structural: Structural, or organizational, barriers often create the most persistent friction in scaling skills-based hiring practices. Among hiring managers with lower interest in adopting skills-first practices, 24% report leadership resistance, 23% face peer resistance and 21% lack internal resources and expertise. These structural barriers—combined with legacy systems and processes—underscore that visible top-down support and adequate resourcing are essential for skills-first hiring to take root and grow.



Current State of Skills-First Hiring

Skills-First Hiring: Progress & Gaps

Since 2023, belief in skills-first strategies has continued to grow, yet implementation challenges remain—particularly around hiring managers' ability and confidence in assessing skills. The 2025 study builds on earlier insights with a more comprehensive view of the factors shaping implementation, intentionally uncovering the obstacles that must be addressed to advance progress. The snapshot below highlights where progress has been made and obstacles that have emerged:

INDICATOR	2023	2025
General Sentiment	56% believed removing degree requirements would improve hiring outcomes.	86% view skills-first positively; 82% express personal interest in the practice
Implementation Trends	79% used it for some roles; 19% used it more broadly.	74% report some level of implementation, though with varying consistency
Perceived ROI	Respondents reported that skills-first practices could positively impact: • Quality of Hire: 92% • Diverse Talent Pool: 62% • Improved Culture: 75% • Time-to-Hire: 80%	Respondents report that skills-first practices could positively impact: • Quality of Hire: 82% • Diverse Talent Pool: 70% • Improved Culture: 67% • Time-to-Hire: 61%
Top Barriers	• 49% worried about soft skill gaps • 48% concerned about accurate experience level and work history	• 49% need support defining skills for roles • 40% struggle to assess skills • 40% lack confidence in peer assessment • 30% cite unclear skill requirements • 27% fear hiring the "wrong" candidate • 18% lack assessment tools

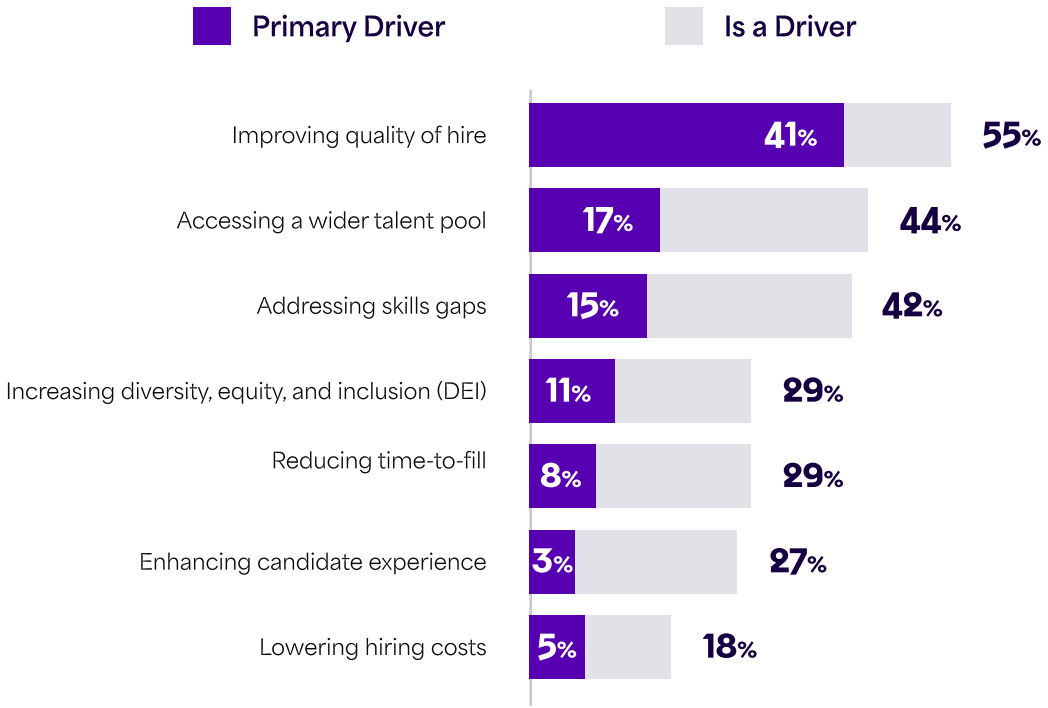


Growing Enthusiasm for a Skills-First Strategy

Today, 86% of hiring managers view the approach positively (up from 56% in 2023), and 82% express personal interest in adopting it more fully. The perceived benefits of skills based hiring—particularly improved quality of hire (55%), access to broader talent pools (44%) and addressing skills gaps (42%)—remain top drivers [Figure 1].

Figure — 01

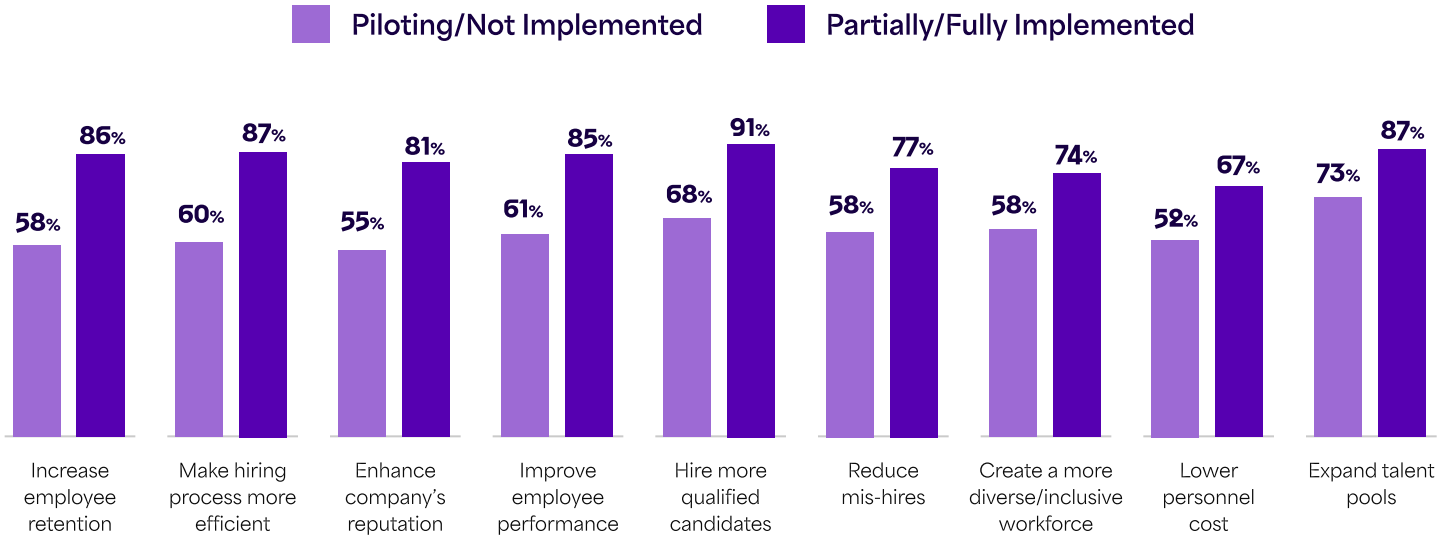
Drivers for Implementing Skills-First Hiring

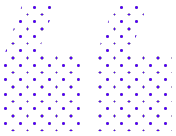


Importantly, these perceived benefits are overwhelmingly endorsed by organizations with real-world implementation experience. Among organizations that have fully or partially implemented skills-first hiring, 91% of hiring managers agree that it helps them hire more qualified candidates, compared to 68% among those who are still piloting or have not implemented skills-first practices. Similarly, 87% of those who have partially/fully implemented skills-first report greater efficiency in their hiring process, far outpacing the 60% among their less-advanced peers [Figure 2]. Hiring managers recognize that skills-based recruiting aligns well with roles where adaptability, experience and job-critical capabilities matter most.

Figure — 02

Percentage Completely/Somewhat Agreeing that Skills-First Hiring Can Achieve Each Outcome, by Implementation Level





You just want to hire the best person for the job. By evaluating the skills a person has, you're going to find a better candidate for whatever role you're trying to fill.

Perspectives from hiring managers suggest that skills-first is most suited to specific jobs and solves for job needs and candidate gaps, as well as organizational goals. They also view the approach as a way to broaden talent pipelines, increase access to opportunity and support continuous learning [Figure 3].

Figure — 03

Hiring managers say:

SKILLS-FIRST HIRING IS ADOPTED WHEN...
• **technical skills** can be demonstrated and assessed
• **experience** directly relates to the job duties and can serve as a reliable predictor of future performance
• the **ability to learn quickly** and adapt to changing circumstances is more important than formal education
• employers are focused on **improving cost and efficiency**
• the **company culture** values skills and experience over traditional credentials
• the goal is to **break down barriers** to employment and **provide opportunities** to individuals from varied backgrounds

SKILLS-FIRST HIRING DELIVERS BECAUSE IT...
• ensures candidates have the **specific skills and competencies** needed to perform the job effectively on day one
• taps into a **larger pool of potential candidates** who may possess the necessary skills and experience
• fosters and environment where employees are **encouraged to develop their skills** and adapt to new challenges
• provides individuals who are more likely to **stay with the organization long-term** and contribute to is success

Qualitative insights reinforce this enthusiasm. Many hiring managers note that removing unnecessary degree requirements sends a stronger, more inclusive signal to candidates who don't hold four-year degrees—but who have relevant skills—by meeting them where they are. This perspective is consistent with SkillsRight research which shows that skills-first job descriptions tend to be clearer and more appealing to these candidates than traditional, degree-based postings.

> I think just the wording on the posting itself, if we could get rid of the strongly preferred [degree language and] corporate wording, I think that would open it up to people.

Hiring managers also note that beyond accessing expanded talent pools, the retention benefits of skills-first hiring stand out.

> We want to retain them... with the skill-based, they tend to stay longer definitely because they need to learn the ropes, how the work is being done.

Key Insight

Hiring managers see skills-first hiring as a valuable practice that not only impacts the bottom line, but also facilitates long term organizational performance.

Friction Points in Reaching Full-Scale Adoption

Despite strong support, the depth of implementation of skill-first hiring continues to vary. Three in four organizations report some level of implementation–yet only about one-third of hiring managers use skills-first consistently across their teams and implementation varies by role or department [Figures 4 and 5]. This varying level of implementation reflects a common pattern in organizational change: initial excitement meets operational friction. Procedural, personal and structural barriers reveal themselves, resulting in fragmented progress. These interrelated challenges help explain why skills-based hiring practices frequently stall before becoming fully embedded in organizational culture, an outcome that greatly limits its potential impact.

Figure — 04

Skills-First Hiring Implementation

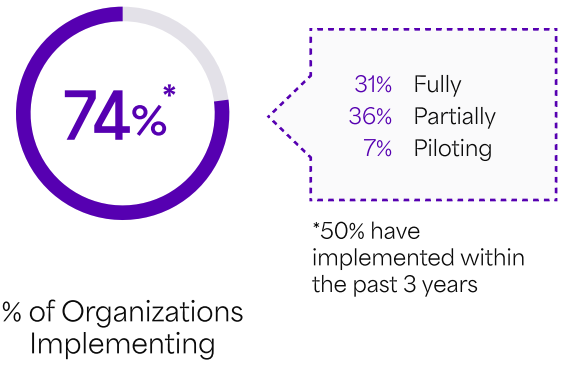
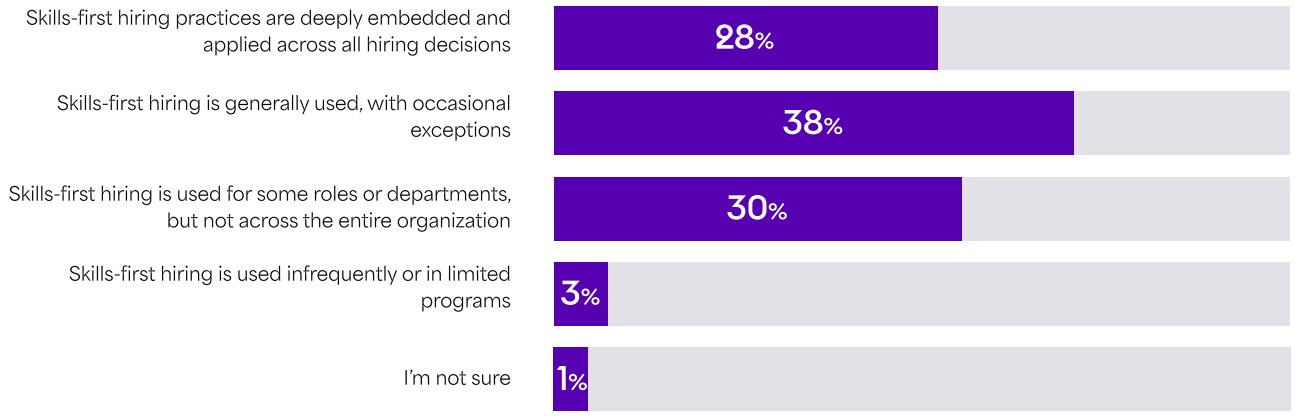


Figure — 05

Skills-First Hiring Practices Consistency

(among orgs that have partially/fully implemented skills-first hiring)



In addition, perceived benefits of skills-first hiring have declined modestly since 2023. For instance:

- The share of hiring managers who believe skills-first hiring improves candidate quality dropped by 10 percentage points, from 92% in 2023 to 82% in 2025
- Perceived reductions in time-to-hire declined from 80% to 61%

These shifts highlight why implementation remains fragmented: even when organizations report embracing skills-first hiring, legacy processes, degree requirements and ingrained practices continue to limit consistency and scalability. As show in Figure 6, most applicants still hold four-year degrees, while Figure 7 sheds light on why these patterns persist.

Figure — 06

Candidates with 4-Year Degrees

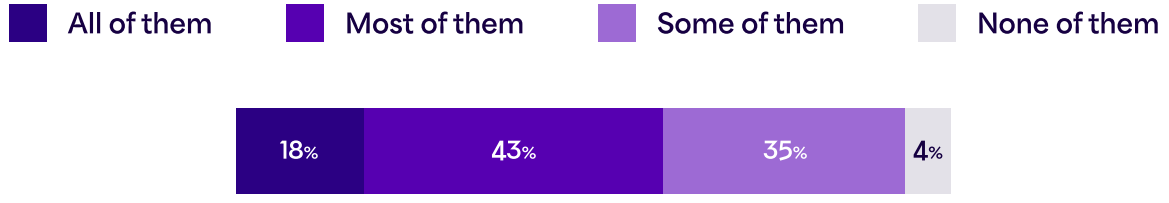
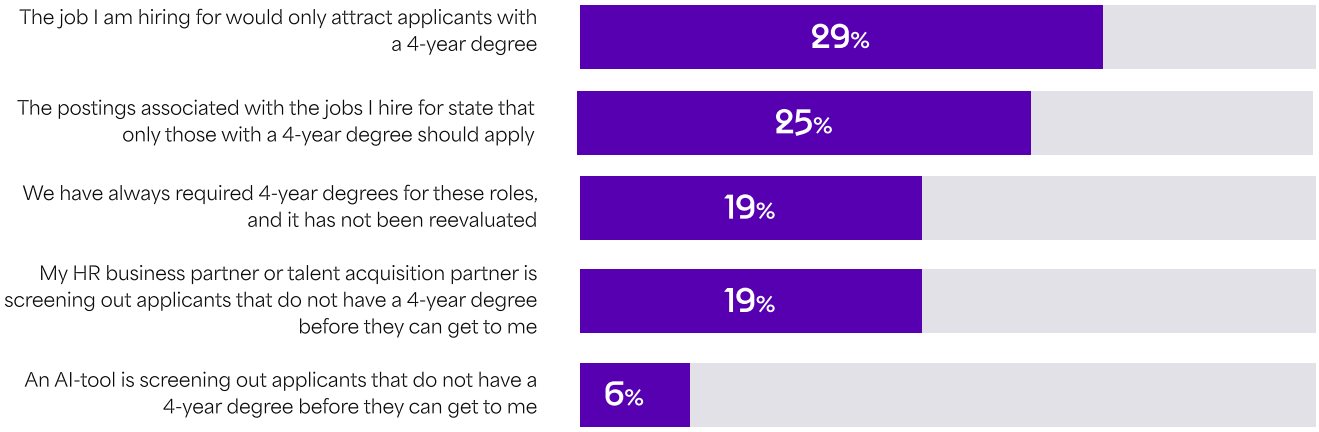


Figure — 07

Reasons for Mostly Interviewing Candidates with 4-Year Degrees



Despite interest and awareness, skills-first has yet to become an embedded organizational norm. This mirrors patterns found across many organizational change efforts. Research shows that roughly 70% of all change management efforts fail, often because organizations skip critical steps such as:

- Establishing urgency
- Communicating a clear vision
- Removing structural obstacles
- Embedding new behaviors into workplace culture

Key Insight

This pattern of fragmented implementation is not unusual. Moving from pilots to full-scale implementation is rarely linear. In organizational change, early wins can generate momentum, but sustaining progress requires deeper shifts in systems, processes and mindsets. For organizations pursuing skills-based hiring, adoption should be viewed as an adaptive process—one that requires continuous learning, flexibility and long-term commitment.

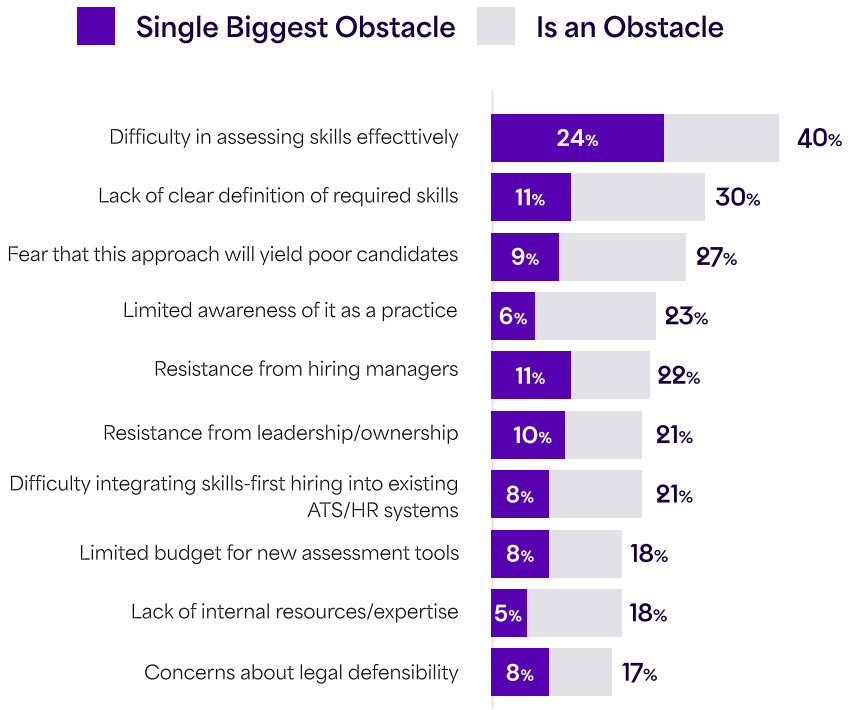
The following sections explore how procedural, personal and structural obstacles manifest for hiring managers – and what it will take to empower them to become confident, capable champions of skills-first hiring.

Procedural Barriers

Hiring managers face several procedural challenges that limit their ability to implement skills-based hiring practices effectively. The most commonly cited obstacle is the difficulty in assessing candidates' skills. Four out of 10 hiring managers report this as a challenge, and one in four name it as the single biggest barrier [Figure 8].

Figure — 08

Procedural Barriers in Implementing Skills-First Hiring

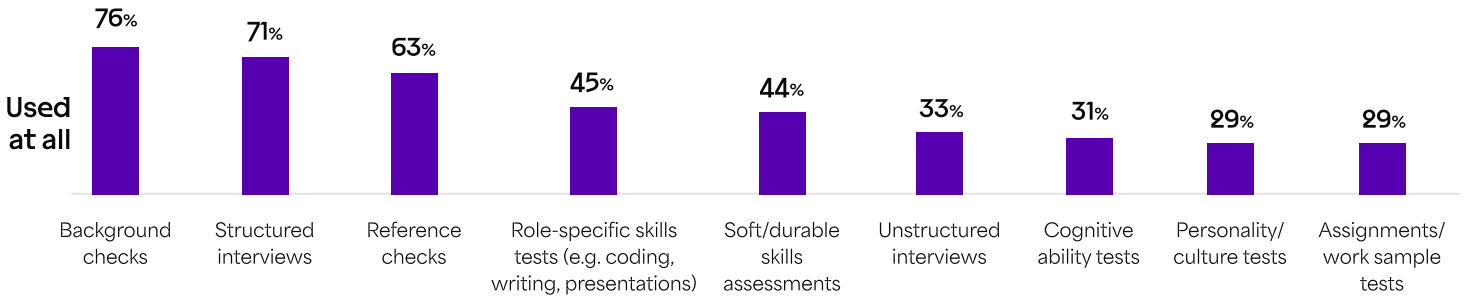


Much of this friction stems from reliance on legacy processes that weren't designed to support skills-first hiring. Traditional screening methods–such as background checks (76%) and reference checks (63%)–remain widely used, even though they rarely offer a direct measure of a candidate's capabilities.

Figure — 09

In contrast, Figure 9 highlights that the tools most directly aligned to assessing skills—such as role-specific skills tests (45%) and soft or durable skills assessments (44%)—are used far less often, despite their potential to improve hiring accuracy [Figure 9].

Current Usage of Assessment Tools

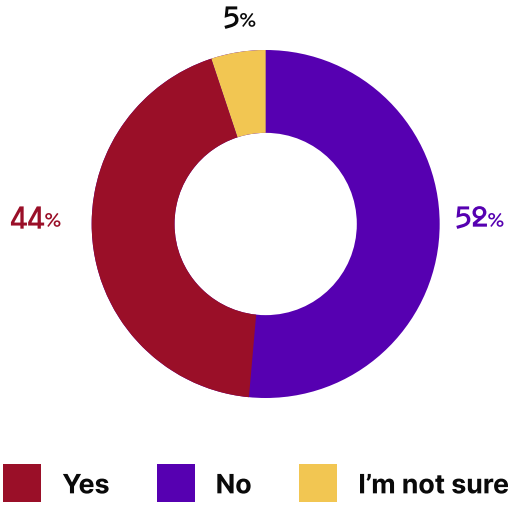


Another source of procedural misalignment lies in job descriptions and applicant tracking systems (ATS). One in three hiring managers say job postings often lack clearly defined skill requirements. Meanwhile, one in five cite challenges integrating skills-first criteria into existing HR platforms, making it harder to filter for relevant skills or non-degreed talent, as is shown in Figure 8.

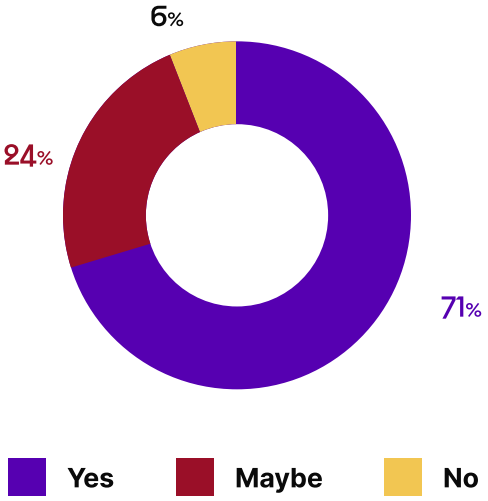
Training gaps compound these issues. Only half of hiring managers have received formal instruction in skills-based recruiting, though 71% say they would participate if training were made available [Figure 10].

Figure — 10

Participation in any Skills-First Hiring Training



Interest in Skills-First Training

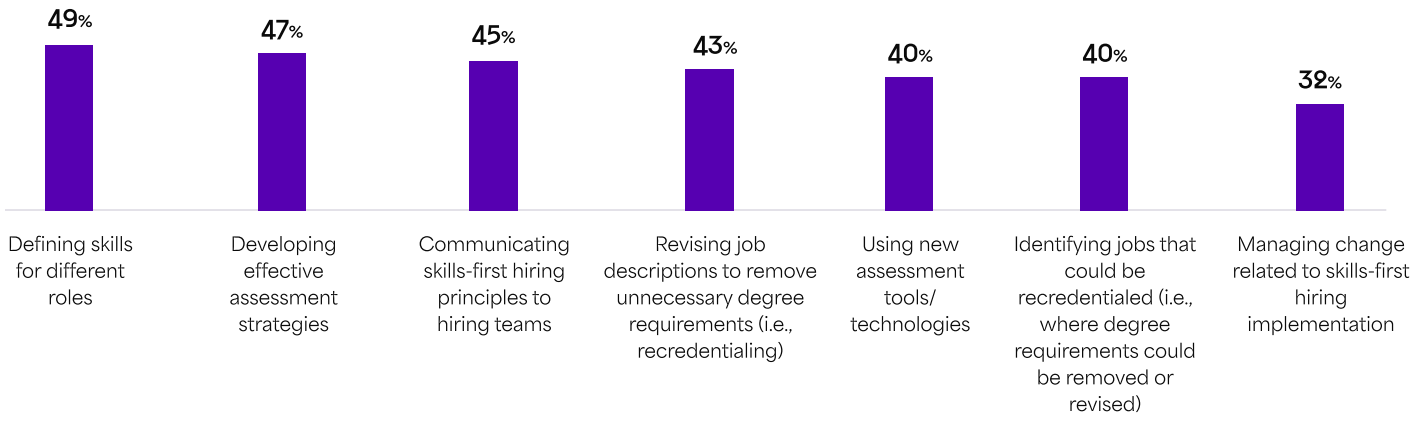


When asked where they need the most support, managers pointed to fundamentals across the hiring journey [Figure 11]:

- Defining skills for different roles (49%)
- Developing assessment strategies (47%)
- Communicating skills-first principles to teams and stakeholders (45%)
- Rewriting job descriptions to remove unnecessary degree requirements (43%)

Figure — 11

Key Training Supports Needed to Implement Skills-First Hiring



According to Hiring Managers:

> I would like for HR to roll out a comprehensive program that addresses how you test for the soft skills as well. How can you still maintain the culture of interpersonal relationships while shifting the focus from four-year degrees to just skills?

> It is making sure that the individuals who are doing the interview know how to interview, know what to listen for, know how to conduct a good interview, know how to ask behavioral questions, because it's all about how are you going to behave as part of a team.

Key Insight

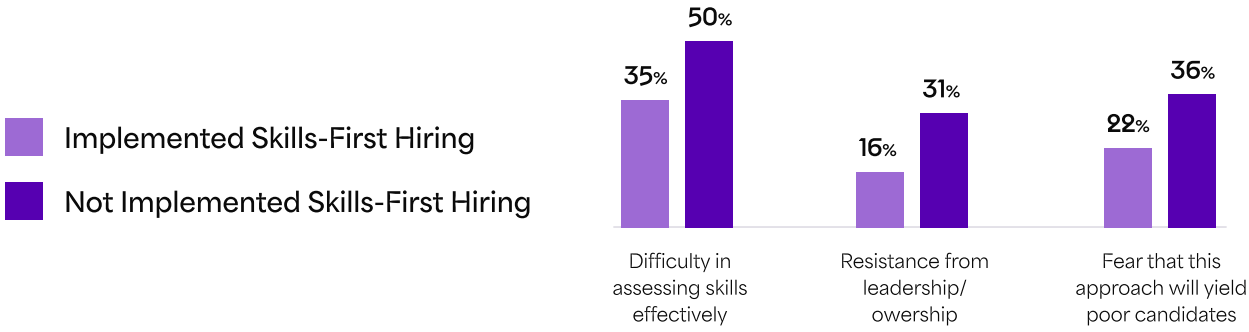
Enthusiasm for skills-first hiring is not the limiting factor—implementation is. Without proper infrastructure and clear systems in place to support them, even the most committed hiring managers struggle to turn intent into action.

Personal Barriers

Beyond procedural challenges, hiring managers face internal barriers that shape how confidently and consistently they apply skills-based hiring practices. These include fear of making the "wrong hire," uncertainty about others' abilities to assess candidates effectively and concerns about how their decisions will be judged.

Roughly one in three hiring managers report a fear that skills-first hiring could result in poor candidate selection. However, this perception appears to shift with experience. Among organizations that have not yet implemented skills-first, 36% of hiring managers express this concern, compared to just 22% at organizations that have already adopted the approach—suggesting that fear often diminishes once the practice is in place [Figure 12].

Figure — 12

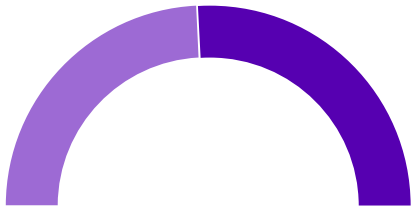


While organizations with lower implementation levels are more likely to choose these as barriers, the single biggest obstacle (difficulty assessing skills) is consistent across organizations, regardless of implementation level.

That fear is often compounded by self-consciousness. Nearly half of hiring managers say they worry about being judged for their hiring decisions [Figure 13].

Figure — 13

Self-Consciousness



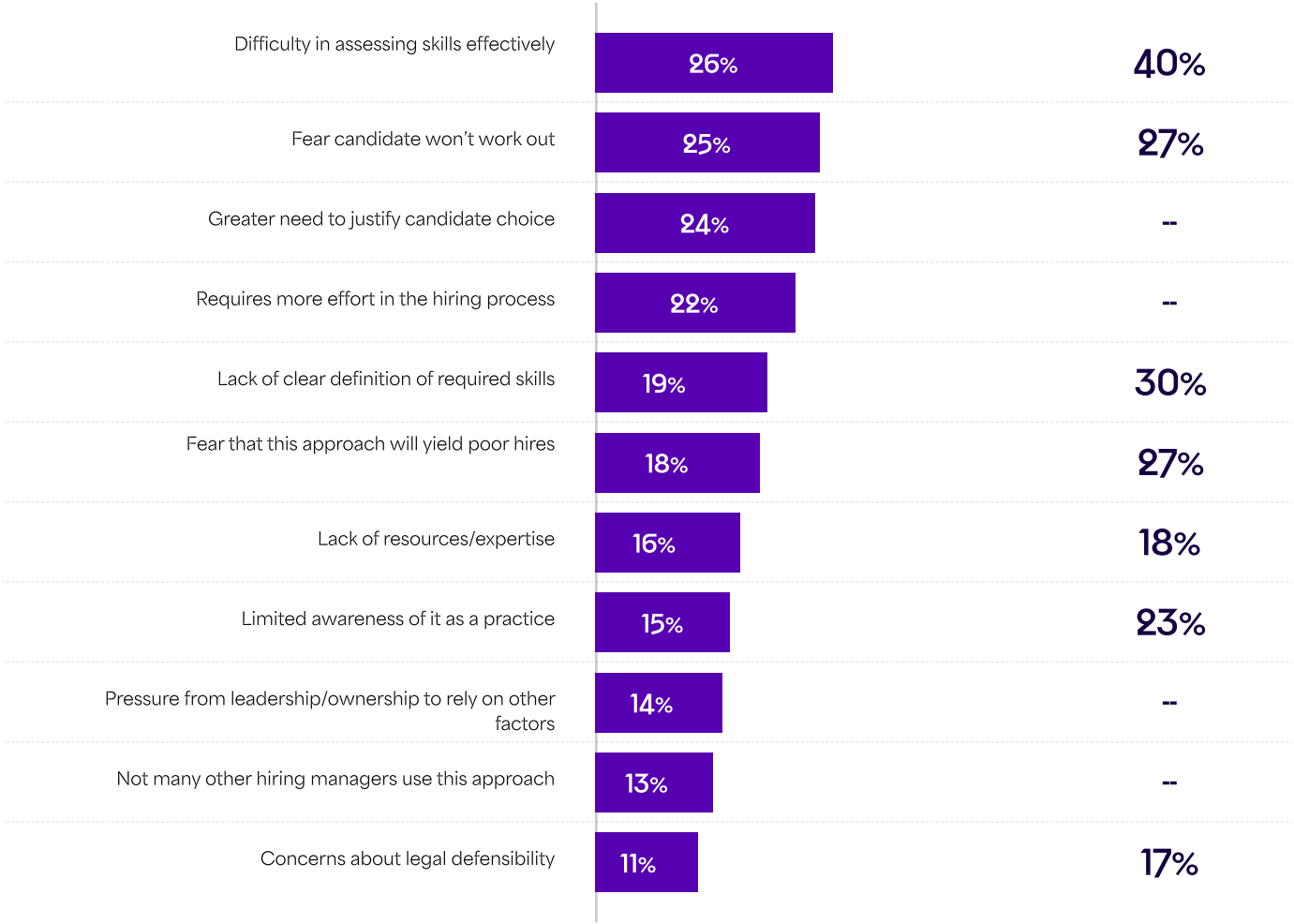
48% Low 52% High

A significant number of hiring managers worry about how they are judged by others and strive to make a good impression.

While 40% think assessing skills effectively is a barrier for their organization, only one in four say it's a personal challenge [Figure 14] – indicating that while the majority of hiring managers often trust their own judgment, they lack confidence in their peers' ability to do the same.

Figure — 14

Personal Obstacles in Implementing Skills-First Hiring



This dynamic can result in inertia: hiring managers hesitate to fully embrace skills-first approaches if they believe they'll be held solely accountable for potential mis-hires—especially if support structures are weak or inconsistently applied. One hiring manager notes:

> [It might work better] if we had more trial periods where they were temporary employees for 60-90 days...and we're able to bring them on and explain that this is part of the process to see how these individuals actually work out within whatever role we need them for.

Key Insight

Fear, self-doubt and lack of trust in the system can undermine even the most well-intentioned efforts. To activate hiring managers as confident and capable champions of change, organizations must do more than provide tools—they must create a culture of shared accountability, psychological safety and role-specific support.



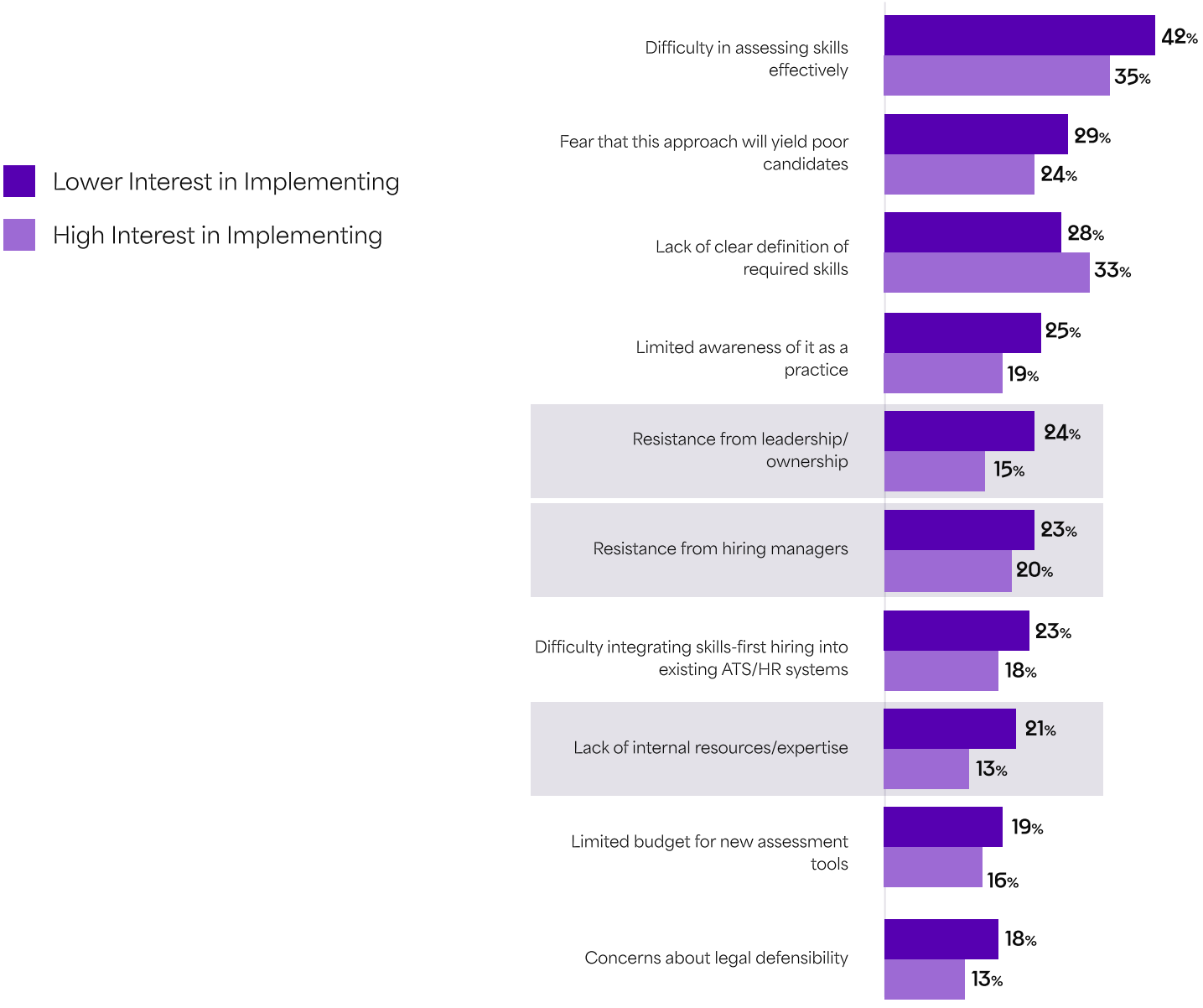
Structural Barriers

Procedural and personal challenges are only part of the picture. Structural barriers—including leadership resistance, lack of internal resources and entrenched legacy systems—often create the most persistent friction in scaling skills-based hiring practices.

Among hiring managers with lower interest in adopting skills-first practices, these organizational constraints stand out. Approximately 24% cite resistance from senior leadership, and 21% report a lack of internal resources or expertise [Figure 15]. These challenges suggest that without clear support from the top, many hiring managers see limited opportunity to advance practice change on their own.

Figure — 15

Organizational Barriers to Skills-First Hiring by Interest in Implementing

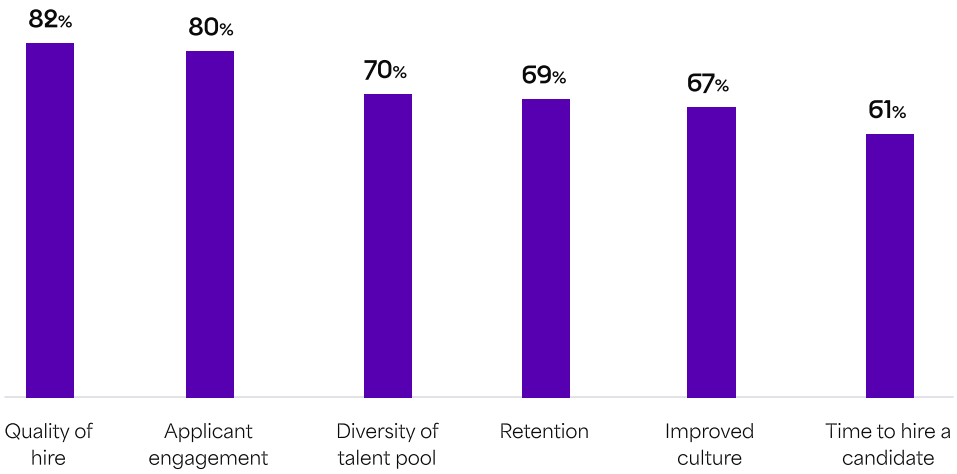


One way to reduce leadership resistance is to emphasize the business outcomes skills-first hiring can deliver. Organizations report high ROI from implementation, particularly in quality of hire (82%) and applicant engagement (80%) [Figure 16].

Figure — 16

ROI from Skill-First Hiring Practices

(% who claim High/Very High ROI)



Still, misperceptions persist. Among hiring managers at organizations that have not implemented skills-first, only 68% believe it results in more qualified candidates, and just 60% say it improves efficiency—revealing a notable perception gap compared to those who have seen the approach in action (91% and 87% respectively, as was indicated in Figure 2).

Key Insight

Senior leadership plays a critical role in eliminating structural barriers and closing perception gaps between those who have, and those who have not implemented skills-first hiring. When leaders visibly support and reinforce skills-first practices across the organization, they help shift accountability from individual hiring managers to a collective standard—enabling consistency, confidence and long-term adoption.

Messaging Matters

In the current business environment, hiring managers respond most strongly to messaging that emphasizes tangible, business-driven outcomes with data to support it. The most compelling messages focus on efficiency, business performance and potential–while aligning with values based on merit and equity. When asked what resonates most, hiring managers point to the following themes:

- **Cost and time savings** | Avoiding wasted resources on unqualified candidates
- **Economic benefit** | Aligning hiring with business goals and financial performance
- **Positive attitude and work ethic** | Valuing a willingness to learn and contribute
- **Meritocracy and equity** | Believing in opportunities based on potential, not pedigree
- **Personal experience** | Having seen success without traditional educational pathways

According to Hiring Managers:

"Probably because it had a dollar figure attached to it, and I tend to look at numbers all day long, and [the cost savings metric] is the main metric for success in my business."



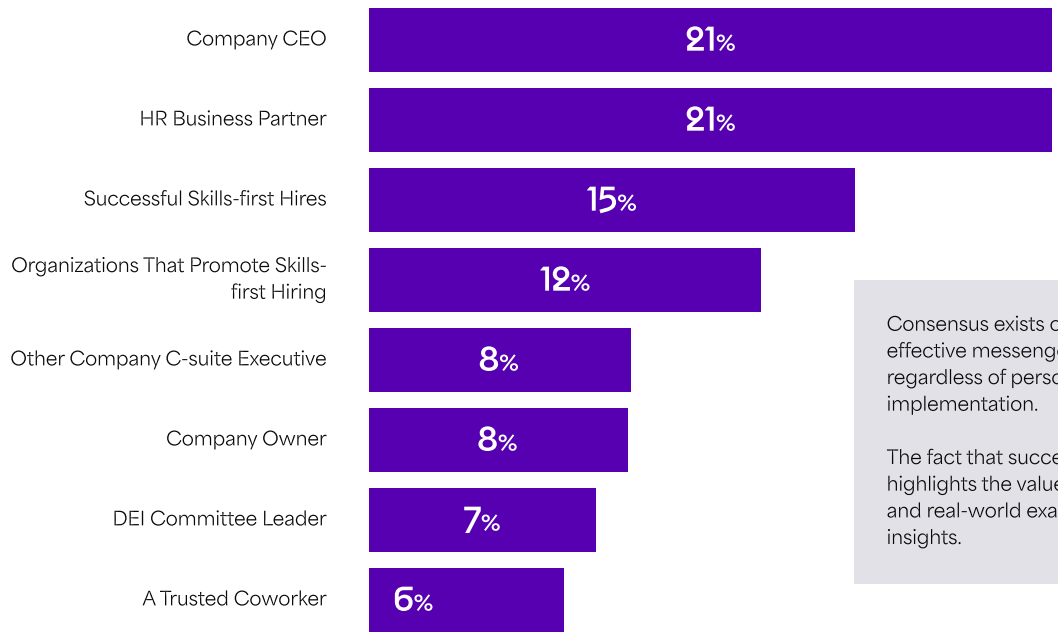
To maximize the impact of skills-first messaging, organizations should consider who delivers it. Hiring managers say the most effective messengers include [Figure 18]:

- **Senior leadership** (21%)
- **HR business partners** (21%)
- **Successful skills-first hires** (15%)

The inclusion of successful skills-first hires as one of the top three effective messengers suggests that personal stories can play a powerful role. When paired with data, real-world examples and testimonials from skills-first hires help create emotional resonance and build belief that skills-based recruiting can work in practice—not just in theory.

Figure — 18

Who Would Have to Deliver Skills-First Messaging to Make it Most Impactful?



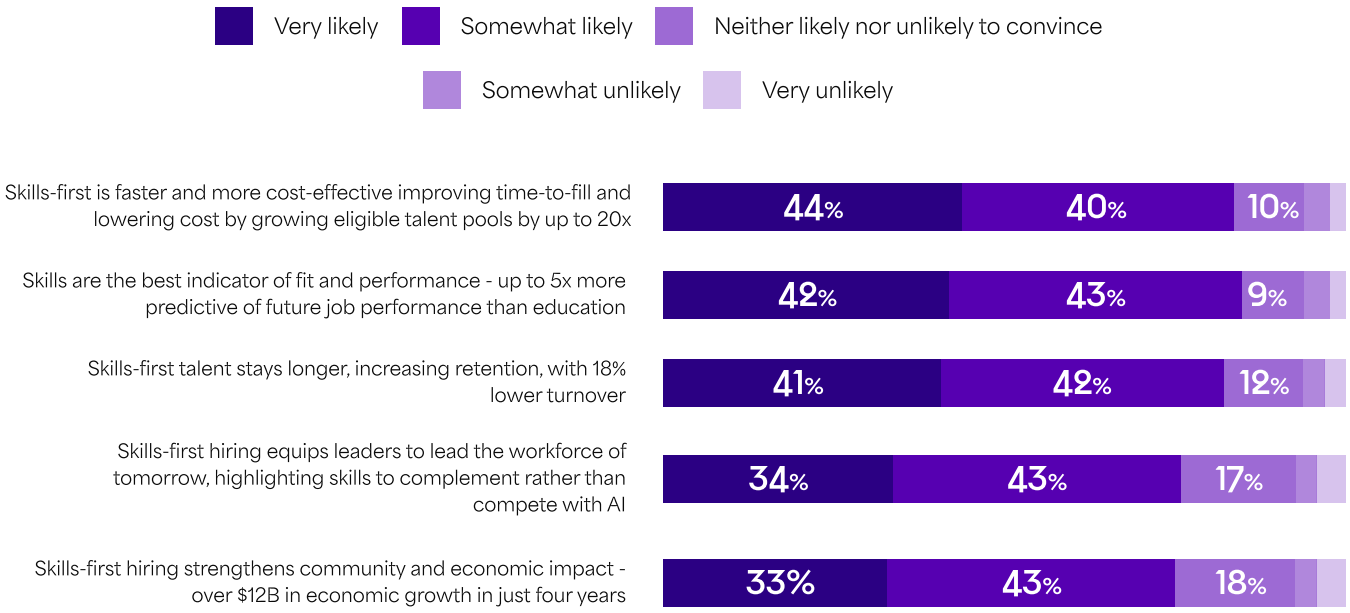
Consensus exists on who makes the most effective messengers for skills-first hiring, regardless of personal interest in implementation.

The fact that successful hires rank third highlights the value of pairing case studies and real-world examples alongside data and insights.

Because 84% of hiring managers express a promotion-oriented mindset—meaning they view hiring as an opportunity to drive team performance, innovation and success—messages that reinforce those aspirations are likely to be the most effective [Figure 19].

Figure — 19

How Likely are These Messages to Convince You to Adopt a Skills-First Approach?



Key Insight

Hiring managers aim to find the very best candidate, not just a good enough one, and seek individuals who bring fresh ideas and perspectives that can elevate their teams. When skills-first hiring is framed as a way to hire better talent, achieve stronger outcomes and grow as a leader, it aligns with the goals hiring managers already care about. Organizations should position skills-first as:

- A smarter path to better hiring decisions and business performance
- A chance for hiring managers to gain recognition and personal success for driving positive business outcomes
- A leadership opportunity to coach and develop new talent
- A more competitive approach to finding the best-fit candidates



Conclusion

As this research makes clear, belief in skills-first is not the barrier—consistent execution is. Hiring managers continue to believe in the value and potential of a skills-first approach. Yet when the rubber meets the road, structural, procedural and personal barriers can stall progress revealing that skills-first adoption is a journey rather than a one-time shift. Overcoming these challenges requires organizations to double down on change management and pursue a deliberate strategy that reinforces new behaviors, sets clear expectations and drives lasting shifts in both mindset and process.

To help hiring managers overcome structural, procedural and personal barriers, organizations must:

- Build leadership alignment and buy-in
- Modernize legacy practices that restrict consideration of talent without four-year degrees
- Equip hiring managers to lead confidently without fear of making the wrong hire

Translating belief into consistent practice—and sustaining momentum —requires organizations to take a coordinated approach. Based on our findings, the following strategies are most effective in helping hiring managers embed and expand skills-first practices across their teams:

- **Secure top-down buy-in**
  Frame the business case around leadership priorities. Use data, case studies and emotional storytelling to generate urgency and align with broader organizational goals. Assess change management efforts periodically to prioritize areas needing attention and plan for continuous improvement.
- **Equip hiring managers with practical resources**
  Provide actionable tools—such as guides and checklists—to help hiring managers identify roles best suited for skills-first hiring and remove unnecessary degree requirements.

- **Simplify skill assessment**
  Apply methods that translate vague evaluations into specific, role-relevant assessments. Lean into hiring manager expertise and conduct audits to identify procedural barriers, such as ATS filters, that may exclude qualified candidates.

- **Reinforce behavior through incentives**
  Align performance management structures with skills-first goals. Recognize and reward hiring managers who demonstrate strong outcomes, helping to normalize skills-first practices as standard.

- **Deploy strategic internal communications**
  Normalize skills-first hiring internally by emphasizing business impact and addressing common fears—particularly the fear of judgment or uncertainty in assessing skills.

- **Elevate thought leadership across the organization**
  Publish or share white papers, training materials and playbooks that highlight real-world successes. These resources help make skills-first practices tangible, credible and transferable across teams.



The roadmap below offers a visual guide to help organizations focus on the structural, procedural and personal levers of change and translate these strategies into practice across corporate strategy, hiring resources and communications.

Roadmap for Scaling Skills-First Hiring

BARRIER TYPE	CORPORATE STRATEGY	HIRING RESOURCES & TRAINING	MESSAGING & COMMUNICATIONS
Structural	• Make the business case for skills-first hiring • Build top-down buy-in by using real world examples and success stories	• Identify roles suitable for recredentialing • Provide guidance for writing effective skills-first job descriptions • Share pilot role examples	• Publish thought leadership on downstream outcomes and wins • Use data-driven communications focused on time-to-fill, quality of hire • Spotlight internal champions
Procedural	• Run audits and provide tools to evaluate hiring systems (e.g., ATS bias) • Align with goals/strategies • Standardize tools/processes	• Develop role-specific assessments • Build assessment guides co-developed with hiring managers • Creative trainings on what "good" looks like	• Show how assessments are rigorous and justifiable
Personal	• Align skills-first hiring with KPIs and incentives • Incentivize replication across units	• Develop incentive structures to cascade team buy-in • Connect to steps in the hiring process	• Leverage white papers on how skills-first hiring drives team cohesion & performance • Push internal messaging on impact, outcomes

SkillsRight is uniquely positioned to support organizations through their skills-first journey. We help companies transform how they source, hire and retain talent by implementing and scaling skills-first solutions that drive real results. We do so by offering:

1. **Access to Talent:** Provide direct pathways to vetted, work-ready candidates without four-year degrees.
2. **Strategy and Support:** Help identify and recredential key roles, design tailored integration guidance and provide career pathways for non-degreed talent.

3. **Proven Tools and Resources:** Enable companies to implement and operationalize skills-first best practices using actionable frameworks, step-by-step guides, toolkits and playbooks based on experiences from the frontline.
4. **Research and Insights:** Help businesses stay informed with cutting-edge research, data-driven insights and workforce trend analyses.

Methodology

- SkillsRight partnered with Ipsos to conduct a quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups of 400 U.S.-based hiring managers. The quantitative survey was conducted online from May 15-June 2, 2025. Behavioral Science Integration was utilized to complement the quantitative insights. The qualitative focus groups, consisting of six, 45-minute in depth interviews were conducted June 5-6, 2025. Participants represented companies of 500+ employees. Hiring managers were defined as respondents at the manager level or above with final or shared hiring decision-making authority for their direct reports. Respondents were not drawn from SkillsRight Coalition Companies.



About SkillsRight

SkillsRight is a nonprofit organization that helps companies operationalize skills-first workforces—turning strategy into systems, practices and talent pipelines that work at scale. Through workforce intelligence, role and skills analysis, job design, capability building and talent solutions, we help employers make better workforce decisions and expand access to opportunity for skilled talent. Learn more at SkillsRight.org.