



AMERICA  
SUCCEEDS



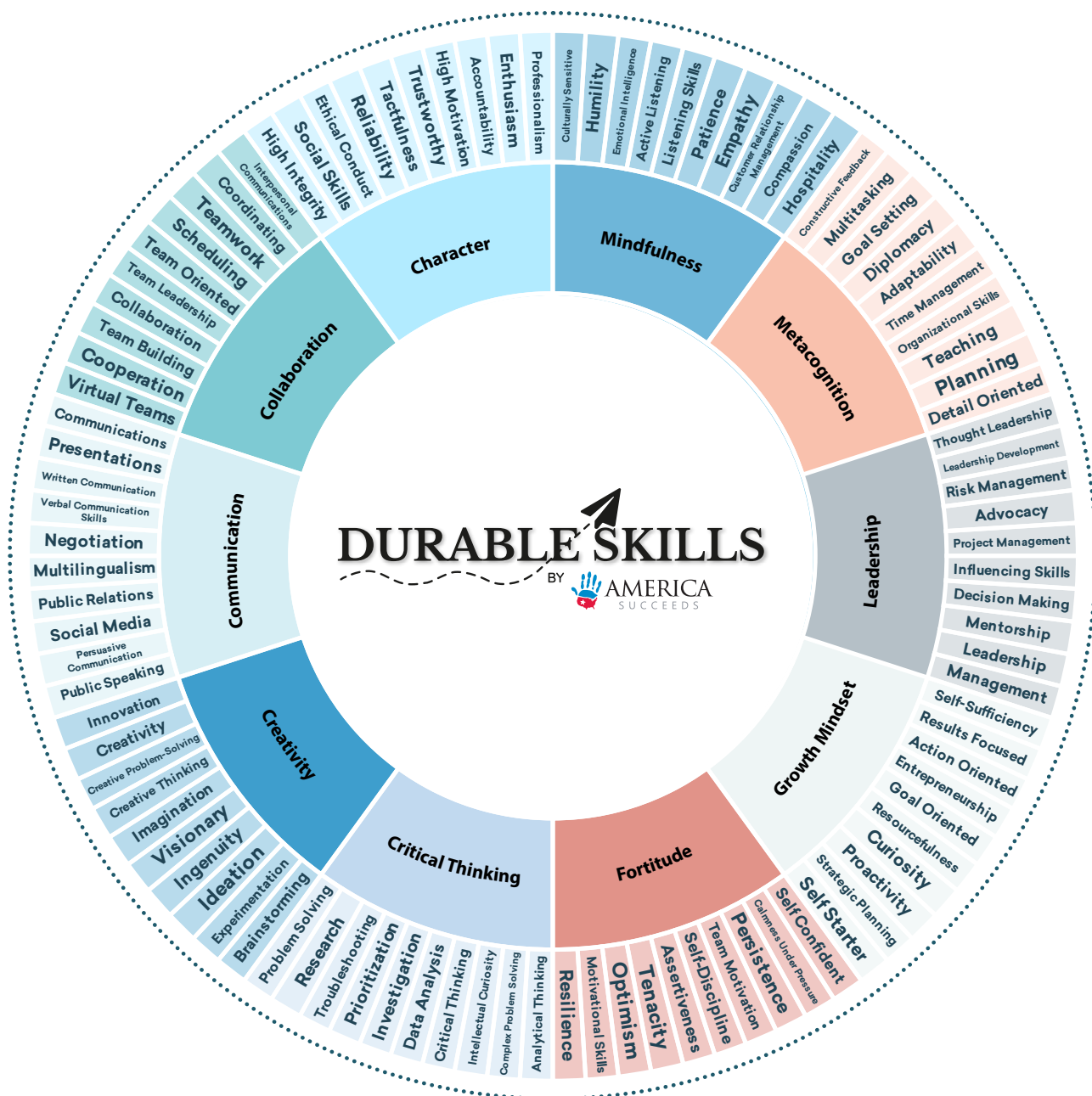
# Bridging the Gap:

A Case Study on Skillsline's Innovative Approach  
for Developing Durable Skills in the Workforce

# Introduction to Durable Skills

Technical skills are advancing at an unprecedented pace, and still, there's an important set of durable 'soft skills' that last a lifetime and across industries. **Durable Skills are a combination of how you use what you know – skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and**

**creativity – as well as character skills like fortitude, growth mindset, and leadership.** In 2021, America Succeeds released a report on the persistence and evidence of Durable Skills across millions of jobs.



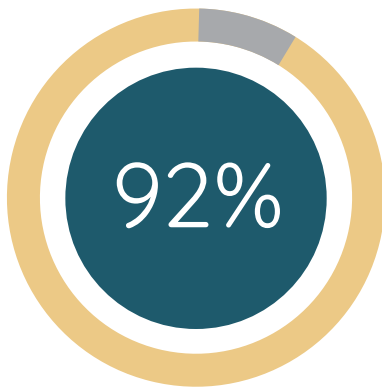
Based on our [analysis](#) alongside labor analytics firm Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass), we found that of the 80 million job postings from 2020-2021, **7 of the 10 most-requested skills are Durable Skills and the top-5 Durable Skills were requested in job postings 4.7 times**

**more often than the top 5 hard skills.** Furthermore, the analysis affirmed that Durable Skills are in demand for jobs across the workforce regardless of educational attainment level, industry, sector, or geography.



**7 out of 10** most-requested skills are Durable Skills

Beyond the Lightcast data, studies show a blatant misalignment between what employers are seeking and the skills workers actually have. The search for prepared and capable employees has become an increasingly pressing and costly challenge for companies nationwide. In fact, a recent [report](#) revealed that a staggering 92% of employers think that workers aren't as skilled as they need to be, underscoring the urgency of the situation.



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# The Power of Microlessons



Fortunately, forward-thinking organizations such as [Skillsline](#) have risen to the challenge of providing effective solutions to the urgent issues facing employers today. Skillsline is modernizing soft (durable) skill delivery by meeting learners where they are with an engaging mobile learning platform with lessons that teach students the foundations of the essential human skills they need for workforce success. Skillsline works to bridge the gap between what learners are being equipped with in educational institutions and the skills employers are demanding.

Through its online delivery platform, Skillsline provides short and engaging micro-lessons utilizing effective, learning-science backed techniques to break these complex skills down into action-oriented, practical fundamentals. **Micro-lessons are easily accessible on learners' phones and can be completed on-the-go in**

**just ten minutes each day.** Skillsline not only facilitates meaningful shifts in mindsets and behavior to help learners intentionally develop the necessary skills for academic, career, and life success, but also establishes a connection between these mindset shifts and the reinforcement users receive from their daily lessons.



Micro-lessons



On-the-go



10 minutes a day

# Addressing the Gap

The search for skilled employees is top of mind for employers and yet, far too many are waiting on qualified talent to appear. In her doctoral dissertation for Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Ana Greif concluded that addressing the skills gap is possible, as long as employers are willing to focus on their employees' needs and invest in their training.

In the first phase of her research focusing on advanced manufacturing technicians as a representative employee population, Dr. Greif examined whether their skills matched employers' needs, as well as employers' preferences for addressing any gaps. Through survey responses from 28 regional aerospace and defense manufacturers, Dr. Greif uncovered that while the employers were satisfied with their employees' technical skills, they were not satisfied with their employees' non-technical skills. After further inquiry, she discovered that while they had resources to enhance employees' technical skill development, none had a plan for non-technical (durable) skill training.



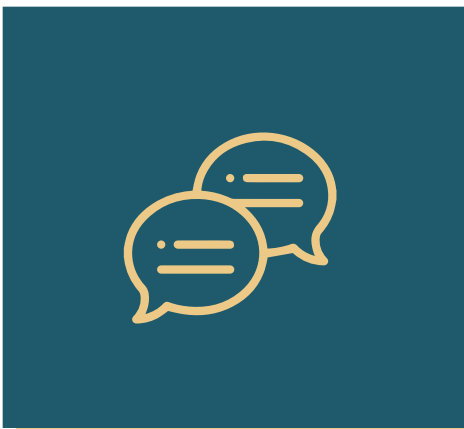
“Choosing Skillsline was not random. It was intentional because their process was backed by science” - Dr. Ana Greif



# The Study

To identify how to support this employer-driven need, Dr. Greif first looked at how non-technical skills were defined in the research, and which were most important to the manufacturing context. **She narrowed the necessary skills into three groupings: communication, critical thinking, and self management.** However, non-technical skills are interconnected, nuanced, and contextual, making them notoriously challenging to teach and assess. Recognizing

the challenge in finding a training approach that would be truly effective she vetted various platforms and curricula on their ability to provide the right content in a flexible manner using spaced learning to ensure a true shift in mindset. The Skillsline platform rose to the top of the list as the only one that met these criteria and had the added benefit of user analytics to help Dr. Greif assess both engagement and learning throughout the process.



Communication



Critical Thinking



Self Management

As the next phase of the study kicked off, manufacturing technicians from an aerospace and defense manufacturer were selected to participate in the mixed-methods study aimed at teaching communication, critical thinking, and self-management skills as well as teamwork, workplace expectations, and problem-solving, over a ten week period. The intervention included daily ten minute lessons on the Skillsline platform to teach the skills foundations in addition to instructor-led virtual synchronous sessions, and asynchronous experiential activities designed to build on the skills learned along the way.



## The Results

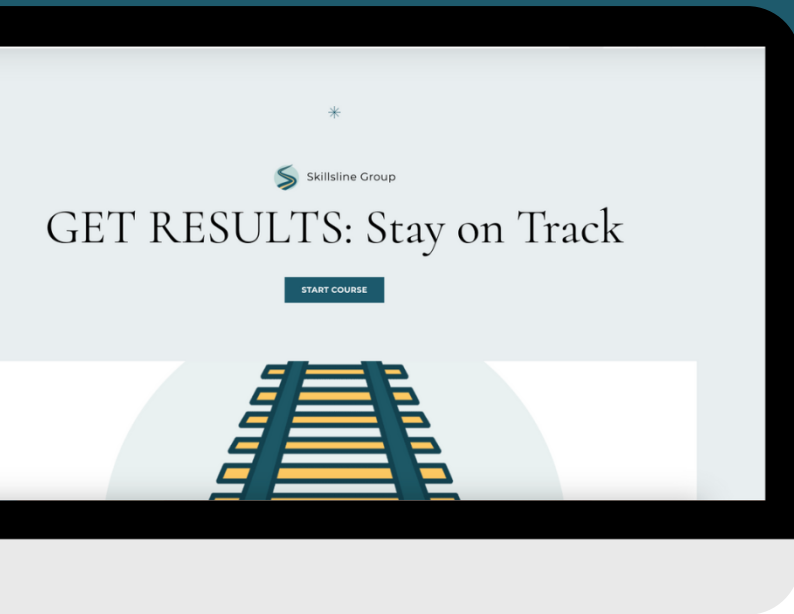


Throughout the study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected through individual participant interviews, documented interactions of the participants, session attendance, Skillsline assignment completion, and more. As Dr. Greif reviewed the data, a pressing question remained:

**did the participants effectively learn and retain the newly acquired skills?**

The results of the study were remarkable. In just ten weeks, the Skillsline platform significantly improved participants' non-technical (communication, critical thinking, self-management) skills and workplace behavior. Dr. Greif's research addressed the challenges of self-reported tests, highlighting the value of session debriefs for participants to gain insights into different thinking and communication approaches. Skillsline's flexibility

and spaced learning approach played a crucial role in participants' long-term recall and internalization of the lessons. Importantly, participants reported a noticeable shift in their approach to workplace situations, such as interacting with supervisors, teamwork, and problem-solving, resulting in increased confidence. **These findings not only translate into improved bottom line for employers but also demonstrate the teachability of non-technical, durable skills.**



10 WEEKS



Increased Bottom Line



Demonstrated Teachability of Durable Skills



The collaborative effort between Dr. Ana Greif and Skillsline serves as a remarkable demonstration of how a deliberate approach can enable individuals to acquire durable, non-technical skills and apply them to improve performance on the job.





# Takeaways

Companies are encountering unprecedented talent challenges, largely due to the lack of durable skills in emerging and existing talent, which is ultimately affecting the broader economy. Employers have the opportunity to take proactive steps towards adapting to the current needs of their workforce by rethinking their recruitment and training practices. Doing so can help them better equip their workforce and enhance their bottom line.

Fortunately, companies like Skillsline are tackling the pressing issues that employers face. By adopting a modern approach to teaching durable skills, employers can successfully bridge the gap between what learners are equipped with in educational institutions and what skills they actually need to thrive in the workforce. The

results of this study serve as a shining testament to the power of intentional effort in acquiring durable skills, and should offer hope to employers who are struggling with this challenge.

Developing skills is not a quick fix, but it is an effective one with a proven history of success. We cannot expect perfection from our workforce, but we can expect a willingness to learn when given the opportunity and resources to do so.

It is high time for employers to prioritize durable skills and make the necessary investments in training to ensure their business - and our entire workforce - is well-prepared for success in the years to come.



To learn more about Skillsline, visit their [website](#).

To read more about the study, read Dr. Ana Greif's [dissertation](#).



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