FRAMEWORK

Building a Skills-Based Learning Ecosystem

Go beyond checking boxes. This practical guide helps you shift from course catalogs to a skills-based learning ecosystem—one that's data-driven, aligned with your business goals, and built to grow with your workforce.

1. Start with business alignment

- Figure out your organization's biggest goals.
- Then connect the dots—what skills do your people need to help reach them? (e.g., digital transformation, leadership, DEI, AI adoption)
- Talk with HR, team leads, and department heads to agree on what success looks like.

TIP: Run a quick strategy sprint to identify priority roles and key skills.

2. Define and organize skills

- Start small when building your skills taxonomy—focus on the key skills your teams need based on their roles and job levels.
- You can use existing frameworks (like SFIA or ESCO) or shape one that fits your organization.
- Make it easy to connect the right training and job profiles to each skill.

TIP: Don't overengineer. Aim for 20 to 50 high-impact skills to start.

3. Audit and align your learning content

- Take a look at what you already have—what's working, what's missing, and where you can improve.
- Focus on content that builds the skills your team actually needs and the essentials that keep your doors open for business.
- Then, create learning paths based on roles, experience levels, and individual goals.

TIP: Let OpenSesame help. Our curation experts can match content to your skills strategy—so you don't have to do it alone.

4. Build the right skills infrastructure

- Pick tools that let you tag, track, and measure skills easily.
- Capture skill data whenever someone learns or applies something new.

TIP: Look for platforms that let employees rate their own skills and allow managers to weigh in too.

5. Make skills everyone's business

- Give managers the tools to talk about skill growth with their teams. Visibility is your friend here, since it allows them to have more focused coaching conversations.
- Help employees see where they can grow—and how to get there–based on the skills they have and what they're building.
- Build skills into performance reviews, career paths, and promotion conversations.

TIP: When employees see how learning ties to growth, they'll stay engaged.

6. Measure, adapt, and optimize

- Track skill growth—not just course completions—at every level: individual, team, and company-wide.
- Use what you learn to make smarter decisions about training, hiring, and internal moves.
- And keep adjusting based on what's working.

TIP: Zero in on real impact—like how ready your team is to take on new roles or tackle tough challenges.

Getting Started: Choose your path

Beginner: Focus on one or two critical roles and build initial skills pathways

Intermediate: Pilot with a department, measure impact, and scale strategically

Advanced: Embed skills data across your entire talent strategy

Helpful resources

Checklist: Are you ready to shift to skills-based learning?

Skills playbook: How L&D leaders operationalize skills

Strategy session: Get expert support for mapping skills to outcomes