

SKILLS-BASED HIRING IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Moving From Intention to Execution



HIRE HEROES USA

THE CHALLENGE: CLOSING THE EXECUTION GAP

Many organizations are exploring skills-based hiring to expand access to talent and better align hiring practices with job requirements.

However, implementation often lags behind intent.

A Harvard Business School analysis found that **fewer than 1 in 700 hires occur without a college degree**, highlighting the gap between interest in skills-based hiring and real hiring outcomes.

This gap—between policy and practice—is often referred to as the execution gap:

Employers remove degree requirements but do not change how candidates are evaluated.

Closing this gap requires more than adjusting job descriptions.

A PRACTICAL PATH FORWARD

A Phased Approach to Implementing Skills-Based Hiring

Organizations do not need to overhaul their entire hiring system at once. Most successful approaches follow a phased model that allows teams to test, refine, and scale over time.

PHASE 1: DIAGNOSE

Understand Where the Gaps Exist: Before making changes, organizations need a clear understanding of how current hiring practices operate, and where they rely on credentials instead of demonstrated capabilities.

What This Phase Solves: Many organizations assume they are already practicing skills-based hiring. In reality, most are still operating within the execution gap, where hiring systems and behaviors have not changed.

Key Actions:

Audit Job Descriptions

Review your most common or hardest-to-fill roles:

- How often are degrees listed as required vs. preferred?
- Are skills clearly defined or implied through experience requirements?

Evaluate Screening Practices

Assess how candidates are filtered:

- Are applicant tracking systems (ATS) screening for degrees by default?
- Are resumes reviewed for job titles instead of capabilities?

Assess Recruiter and Hiring Manager Readiness

- Can your team interpret military experience or nontraditional backgrounds?
- Do hiring managers know how to evaluate skills without relying on credentials?

Analyze Recent Hiring Outcomes

- How many candidates were screened out due to missing credentials?
- Were qualified candidates overlooked due to nontraditional experience?



SKILLS-BASED HIRING IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

A PRACTICAL PATH FORWARD *(Continued)*

PHASE 1: DIAGNOSE *(Continued)*

Key Outputs:

- List of roles with the largest hiring challenges
- Identified gaps between job requirements and evaluation methods
- Baseline understanding of where credential bias exists

Decision Checkpoint

→ Are we currently evaluating what actually predicts success in the role?
(For most organizations, the answer is no.)

PHASE 2: REBUILD

Redefine Roles and Evaluation Around Skills

This phase focuses on updating how roles are defined and how candidates are evaluated. This is where most organizations stall—because it requires changing systems, not just language.

What This Phase Solves

- Job descriptions that rely on credentials as proxies
- Inconsistent evaluation of candidates
- Lack of clarity around what “qualified” actually means

Key Actions

Redefine Roles Using Capabilities

Move from:

→ “5+ years of experience”

To:

→ “Ability to coordinate operations, manage workflows, and maintain documentation accuracy”

Break Skills Into Clear Categories

- Operational Skills → tasks and processes
- Technical Skills → tools and systems
- Professional Skills → behaviors and collaboration

Rebuild Job Descriptions

- Remove rigid degree requirements where not essential
- Clearly define required competencies
- Include multiple pathways (military, training, experience)

Reconfigure Screening Criteria

- Reduce reliance on degree-based filtering
- Introduce skill-based indicators
- Ensure ATS settings align with updated job requirements



SKILLS-BASED HIRING IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

A PRACTICAL PATH FORWARD *(Continued)*

PHASE 2: REBUILD *(Continued)*

Create Evaluation Rubrics

Define what “meets expectations” looks like:

- What does strong performance look like in this role?
- What evidence demonstrates readiness?
- How should credentials vs. experience be weighted?

Hiring Manager Behavior Shift

This phase requires a mindset change:

Old approach:

→ “Do they meet the requirements?”

New approach:

→ “What evidence shows they can do the job?”

Key Outputs

- Updated job descriptions
- Defined competency frameworks
- Aligned screening criteria
- Initial evaluation standards

PHASE 3: PILOT

Test the Approach in Real Hiring Scenarios

Rather than applying changes across the organization immediately, begin with a controlled pilot.

This phase allows organizations to validate what works before scaling.

What This Phase Solves

- Uncertainty around effectiveness
- Resistance from hiring managers
- Lack of internal proof points

Key Actions

Select Pilot Roles

Choose 2–5 roles that:

- Are difficult to fill
- Have clear skill requirements
- Have hiring manager support

Run a Skills-Based Hiring Process

For each role:

- Use updated job descriptions
- Apply new screening criteria
- Incorporate structured interviews
- Introduce assessments or credential verification where possible

Collect Data Throughout the Process

Track:

- Time to fill roles
- Number of qualified candidates
- Candidate progression through hiring stages
- Hiring manager feedback
- Quality of hire (early performance indicators)



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A PRACTICAL PATH FORWARD *(Continued)*

PHASE 3: PILOT *(Continued)*

Capture Qualitative Feedback

- What felt different for recruiters?
- Where did hiring managers struggle?
- What created friction in the process?

Key Outputs

- Real hiring data comparing old vs. new approach
- Documented case studies
- Identified process improvements

Decision Checkpoint

→ Did the new approach improve candidate quality or hiring outcomes?

PHASE 4: SCALE AND SUSTAIN

Expand and Embed Skills-Based Hiring

Once the pilot demonstrates success, the focus shifts to scaling and sustaining the approach across the organization.

What This Phase Solves

- Inconsistent adoption across teams
- Reliance on individual champions
- Lack of long-term integration

Key Actions

Standardize Across Roles

- Apply skills-based job descriptions across departments
- Align hiring processes and workflows
- Ensure consistency in evaluation methods

Train Hiring Managers at Scale

- How to evaluate transferable skills
- How to interpret credentials and experience
- How to conduct structured interviews

Integrate Into Systems

- Align ATS filters with skill-based criteria
- Incorporate credential and assessment data
- Ensure workflows reflect updated hiring practices

Expand Use of Verification Tools

- Digital credentials
- Certifications
- Assessments
- Work samples

Establish Ongoing Measurement

Track:

- Time-to-fill improvements
- Retention rates
- Hiring manager satisfaction
- Diversity of candidate pipelines



SKILLS-BASED HIRING IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

A PRACTICAL PATH FORWARD *(Continued)*

PHASE 4: SCALE AND SUSTAIN *(Continued)*

Support Internal Mobility

As skills are better defined, organizations can:

- Identify internal candidates more effectively
- Create clearer development pathways
- Reduce reliance on external hiring

Key Outputs

- Scalable hiring framework
- Trained hiring teams
- Aligned systems and processes
- Measurable hiring improvements

HOW THIS CONNECTS TO VETERAN HIRING

Veterans often fall into the execution gap not because they lack skills, but because those skills are not clearly recognized through traditional hiring systems.

Organizations that complete this phased approach are better equipped to:

- Recognize military experience as demonstrated capability
- Interpret credentials and training accurately
- Identify high-quality candidates from nontraditional pathways

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Platforms and Resources to Support Skills-Based Hiring

Implementing skills-based hiring requires more than shifting mindset. It also requires the right tools to support diagnosis, evaluation, verification, and long-term workforce development.

The resources below have been curated based on their relevance to employers adopting skills-based hiring across different stages of implementation.

Diagnostic and Framework Tools (Free)

These tools help organizations assess current hiring practices, identify gaps, and begin transitioning toward a skills-based approach.

Tool	Provider	Best For:
Skills Navigator	Jobs for the Future (JFF)	Strategic planning and identifying quick wins across talent acquisition, workforce development, and organizational culture
Skills-First Starter Kit	U.S. Department of Labor & Commerce	Job description redesign, compliance considerations, and employer transition
Rework America Alliance Playbook	JFF / Rework America Alliance	Step-by-step implementation guidance developed with leading employers
Credential Value Index (CVI)	Burning Glass Institute	Analyzing the value of over 23,000 credentials based on wage and mobility outcomes
Credential Engine Registry	Credential Engine	Understanding and comparing credential metadata across industries



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SKILLS ASSESSMENT PLATFORMS

These tools help employers evaluate candidates based on demonstrated ability rather than resumes alone.

Platform	Primary Use Case	Best Fit For
TestGorilla	Pre-employment assessments across cognitive, technical, and behavioral skills	Broad use across roles and industries
Vervoe	Job-based simulations where candidates perform real tasks	Roles with clearly defined outputs or deliverables
HackerRank	Real-world technical challenges	Software engineering, IT, and data roles
Codility	Scalable technical assessments	High-volume technical hiring

CREDENTIAL VERIFICATION PLATFORMS

These tools help employers validate credentials and reduce uncertainty when evaluating candidate qualifications.

Platform	Primary Use Case	Integration
EduVault	Real-time academic and certification verification within hiring workflows	Workday, Greenhouse
TrueCred	Secure, tamper-proof digital credential verification	API-based integration
National Student Clearinghouse	Large-scale verification of degrees and workforce credentials	Widely supported across ATS platforms

RETENTION AND INTERNAL MOBILITY PLATFORMS

Skills-based hiring does not stop at hiring; it extends into employee development and retention.

These tools help organizations build a more adaptive, skills-driven workforce.

Platform	Primary Use Case	ROI Driver
Together Platform	Mentor matching based on skills and career goals	Retention and accelerated development
Degreed	Skills tracking, learning pathways, and capability development	Internal mobility and skill growth
TalentGuard	AI-driven talent marketplace mapping employee skills to career paths	Retention and succession planning

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HIRE HEROES USA

HOW HIRE HEROES USA SUPPORTS EMPLOYERS

Hire Heroes USA provides several employer services designed to help organizations connect with skilled military-affiliated talent and strengthen hiring initiatives.

1. **Talent Connections:** Hire Heroes USA works with employers to connect them with qualified veteran and military spouse candidates through its nationwide network. This can be through our targeted email campaigns, Military Talent Connect, Building Career Connections networking events, or our job board.

Employers can:

- Share job opportunities with transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses
- Connect with candidates whose experience aligns with operational, technical, and leadership roles
- Access talent across a wide range of industries and career levels

This helps employers expand their candidate pipelines while supporting meaningful career transitions for military-connected talent.

2. **Support and Advisory Assistance:** Hire Heroes USA collaborates with employer partners to support long-term hiring initiatives.

This support may include:

- Collaboration on veteran hiring strategies
- Workforce insights related to military talent
- Engagement opportunities with transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses

These partnerships help employers strengthen their ability to identify and recruit skilled military-affiliated candidates.

3. **Career Events and Employer Engagement:** Hire Heroes USA works with employers to create opportunities for direct engagement with military-connected candidates.

Examples include:

- Virtual career events and hiring opportunities
- Employer Spotlight webinar sessions
- Industry-focused discussions highlighting career pathways

These events allow employers to introduce their organizations, highlight career opportunities, and connect with motivated military-affiliated candidates.

4. **Employer Education and Hiring Resources:** Hire Heroes USA provides resources designed to help employers better understand military experience and how it translates to civilian roles. This is provided through our Employer Training offerings.

Examples include:

- Veteran- and military spouse-friendly job description best practices
- An interview guide for military-connected candidates
- Skills-based hiring resources

These tools help hiring managers and HR teams better interpret experience during the hiring process.

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HIRE HEROES USA

COLLABORATING ACROSS THE SKILLS-BASED HIRING ECOSYSTEM

Hire Heroes USA collaborates with organizations across workforce development, credentialing, and industry to help translate military experience into recognizable workforce skills. These organizations include:

- **The Manufacturing Institute** – Workforce development initiatives supporting manufacturing careers
- **Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)** – Industry certifications for manufacturing and logistics competencies
- **Solutions for Information Design (SOLID)** – Skills translation and workforce competency mapping
- **Map My Future** – Digital credentialing and workforce skill validation through badges and learning experiences



OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ADVANCING SKILLS-BASED HIRING

These organizations are also helping employers better recognize workforce skills and expand access to talent through skills-based hiring practices.

- **Opportunity@Work** – Promotes skills-first hiring through the “Tear the Paper Ceiling” campaign
- **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation** – Supports employer adoption of skills-based hiring and advancement practices
- **National Association of Workforce Boards** – Helps employers and workforce boards implement skills-first hiring strategies
- **SHRM Foundation** – Provides guidance on integrating skills credentials into hiring practices
- **National Skills Coalition** – Advocates for workforce systems that support skills-based employment pathways



Connect With Hire Heroes USA

Organizations interested in connecting with military-affiliated talent or learning more about Hire Heroes USA employer engagement opportunities are encouraged to visit our website and complete the **“Let’s Connect”** form.