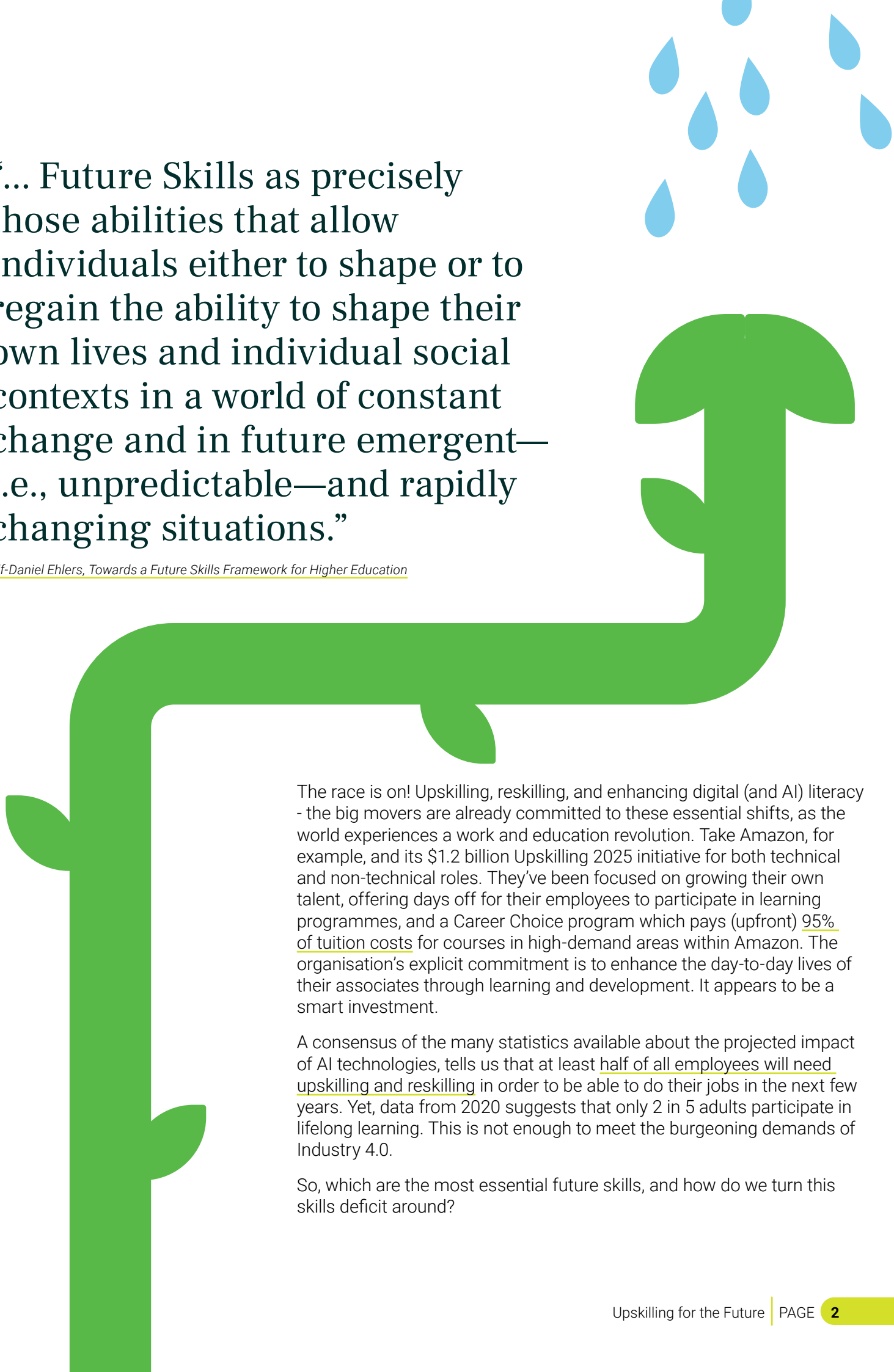


# Upskilling for the Future

Anticipating Industry Change





“... Future Skills as precisely those abilities that allow individuals either to shape or to regain the ability to shape their own lives and individual social contexts in a world of constant change and in future emergent—i.e., unpredictable—and rapidly changing situations.”

*Ulf-Daniel Ehlers, Towards a Future Skills Framework for Higher Education*

The race is on! Upskilling, reskilling, and enhancing digital (and AI) literacy - the big movers are already committed to these essential shifts, as the world experiences a work and education revolution. Take Amazon, for example, and its \$1.2 billion Upskilling 2025 initiative for both technical and non-technical roles. They've been focused on growing their own talent, offering days off for their employees to participate in learning programmes, and a Career Choice program which pays (upfront) 95% of tuition costs for courses in high-demand areas within Amazon. The organisation's explicit commitment is to enhance the day-to-day lives of their associates through learning and development. It appears to be a smart investment.

A consensus of the many statistics available about the projected impact of AI technologies, tells us that at least half of all employees will need upskilling and reskilling in order to be able to do their jobs in the next few years. Yet, data from 2020 suggests that only 2 in 5 adults participate in lifelong learning. This is not enough to meet the burgeoning demands of Industry 4.0.

So, which are the most essential future skills, and how do we turn this skills deficit around?

An illustration at the top of the page shows a hand in an orange sleeve holding a dark green watering can. The can is tilted, and several blue water droplets are falling from its spout. Below the watering can, a green plant with a thick stem and several leaves is growing. The background is white with a purple curved shape on the left side.

## Which Skills are In Demand?

According to the [World Economic Forum's](#) predictions, we can see a clear signalling of the need for adaptive thinking and learning skills such as:

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Creativity, originality, and initiative
- Leadership and social influence

Their estimation is supported by an even broader sample of 13 future skills studies collated in 2024, which arranges in-demand skills profiles into:



**Digital Competence** including digital communication, digital and data literacy and digital learning



**System Competence** including problem solving skills, process understanding, and willingness to adapt



**Initiative and Performance Competence** including perseverance, enthusiasm/motivation, and personal initiative

Upskilling is one way to prepare the workforce to meet these needs, and necessitates a strong commitment to continuous inhouse learning, such as Amazon has demonstrated. However this alone will not be enough. New learning pathways must be reflected in our higher education curriculums, so that the knowledge and skills are developed before individuals reach the job market.

However, there is a sense that universities have been [slow to adapt their curriculums](#) to align with relevant future skills, putting even more pressure on workplace training. We are, though, seeing a definite trend to greater self-organised learning and a blend of formal and informal education. Perhaps this will increase the numbers of self-actualised life-long learners.

Emerging learning technologies will also have a direct bearing on become more adept at autonomous learning at earlier ages.

The background of the page features a stylized illustration of several hands in shades of orange and yellow, holding dark green glasses. The glasses are arranged in a way that suggests a toast or a celebratory gesture. The hands are positioned at various points around the page, with some holding the glasses from above and others from the side. The overall aesthetic is modern and vibrant, with a purple background.

## Emerging Technologies

In the higher education and the workforce learning spaces, it is difficult to exactly predict which specific technologies will take hold and which will lose traction. Virtual reality (VR), for instance, has taken a long time to become an economically viable option and may well be overtaken by Smart Glasses.

Where there is a significant trend though, is towards *in-house* workplace learning. So, whichever platforms emerge as the ed-tech winners, the current movement is towards using the following groups of technologies:



**Immersive learning** – this means active, multi-sensory and experiential learning styles



**Highly personalised digital learning** – bespoke, individualised, and iterative



**Intelligent tutoring** – for example, systems supported by AI and Machine Learning such as *predictive analytics* systems that can schedule learner interventions based on data analysis



**Location-based intelligence technology** – this can be adapted to suit the nature of the workplace needs e.g., workplace engagement and learning prompts and tracking resources

A large, stylized green plant graphic is positioned on the left side of the page. It features a thick, light green stem that curves upwards and then downwards, ending in a dark green pot. Several large, rounded green leaves are attached to the stem, some pointing upwards and others downwards. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on natural elements.

## Industries set for Growth

Any discussion about workforce learning, upskilling and reskilling, should also encompass the sectors in which the highest growth is likely to occur, giving us a glimpse into what will be the most coveted skill sets. For instance:

### Technology:

**Cybersecurity** – according to Forbes, the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics believes that jobs opportunities will grow 32% by 2032. By comparison, the average job growth rate for all US jobs is only 4%.

**Data Analytics** – similarly the job outlook for data scientists in the next decade has been estimated at 36%.

### Industries:

**Green Industry**– this includes jobs that cannot be performed without knowledge of green skills in fields such as engineering, construction, marketing, banking, manufacturing, infrastructure. From 2023 – 2024 the demand for green talent grew twice as quickly as supply (demand -11.6% and supply - 5.6%). By 2050, it's predicted that the world will have only half of the green talent that will be needed.

**Healthcare and Social Assistance/Welfare** – over the next decade this will be the industry with the highest growth rate, “driven by both the aging population and a higher prevalence of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.”

We are already in an era marked by various skills shortages, and this is set to escalate. So here are some key takeaways for leaders:



Invest in reskilling – inhouse learning will be your answer to talent needs and retention

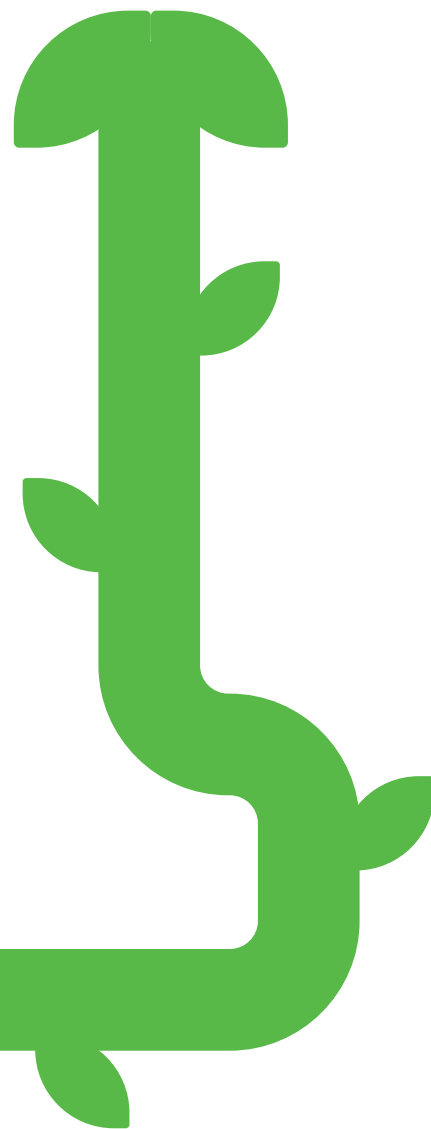


Tac your strategic direction – think internal, personalised, and autonomous



Skills not knowledge – it's about how we think, not what we "know"

As the future unfolds, it's clear the idea that education and learning is largely synonymous with secondary school and young students, is an outdated myth. Lifelong learning is really the only answer to managing the future of work and the economic and mental health of the world's workforces.



**Performance  
Frontiers**

Suite 1E, 19 Lang Parade  
Milton QLD, Australia 4064

[P] +61 7 3870 8433

[E] [info@performancefrontiers.com](mailto:info@performancefrontiers.com)

[performancefrontiers.com](http://performancefrontiers.com)

© Performance Frontiers.



We kindly request you read the content of this document on screen rather than printing. We can collectively contribute to a greener more responsible approach to our work.