

Michelle Ockers:

Welcome back to another episode of Learning Uncut, listeners. In the spirit of reconciliation, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia, the connections to land, sea and culture, and to pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. And a very warm welcome to Peter Sheppard, the head of global L&D ecosystem at Ericsson. Welcome, Peter.

Peter Sheppard:

Thank you so much, Michelle. Absolute pleasure to be here.

Michelle Ockers:

It's a delight to have you here and talking about pleasures to be somewhere. You've worked at Ericsson for 27 years, is that right?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, I think it's 27 years this year. I only meant to be here probably four years, but the opportunities I've got and so on means I've stayed 27.

Michelle Ockers:

Well, and that's the thing about the bigger global organizations, right? You do have opportunity to have multiple careers within the one organization because it is a big organization, right? Would you like to introduce us to Ericsson?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, some people may know us, some people may not know us. We're an organization of a little over 100,000 people. We're in a lot of 180 countries. And what we do is we sell and create the 5G mobile networks. So whether it be 4G, 5G, and then probably 6G, that is what we do. I often explain what we do as if you think of a mobile, one mobile phone and another mobile phone, we do all the bit in between.

Michelle Ockers:

Thank you very much for that. I appreciate that service tremendously.

Peter Sheppard:

That's good. Because, yeah, literally what we do is we connect people.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Speaking of people, the kind of workforce I imagine you have a very technical workforce, a lot of engineering people, as well as you'd have R&D, you'd have sales and all your normal corporate functions. Is the bulk of your workforce engineering or technical?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, we are fundamentally an engineering technical company. So we often say we are a technology first company. And that's because Our technology leadership is so important to our success as a company, and without that we won't continue

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successfully in the future. We've been around since 1876, so we are a company that has started as a telephone repair shop in Sweden and we have gradually migrated and changed what we do. We're always pivoting and changing as a company. Our latest pivot is to get more into APIs and enabling developers to upload to the actual network.

Michelle Ockers:

So we're going to talk today about the shift to a skills-based organization. And I think you've laid some good seeds there as to why this might be important for a company that's at the leading edge of tech and tech leadership. But first, what is a skills-based organization? Can you lay that out in plain language for us?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, and I think in simple terms, we describe it as putting skills to work. And that means that you go beyond the infrastructure and you start to improve the employee experience through running skills through all of your different people, processes, and activities. So whether it be recruitment, whether it be career development, whether it be upskilling and learning, workforce planning, all of these, if you're migrating towards being a skills-based organization, and we wouldn't pretend that we're there yet, but we're on the journey and you are starting to see a common thread of skills around decision-making. So at its heart, a skills-based organisation for me is about that you start to make decisions in all of those processes based on skills more than any other piece of information. So that's it for me.

Michelle Ockers:

Thank you, and where does your team fit into this? Introduce us to your role, your team, and where they fit into this shift to being a skills-based organisation.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, so Michelle, the sexy way I describe my role is that it's about creating the environment of learning across Ericsson. And what that means is that I'm responsible for innovation in learning. I create the technical infrastructure around learning and also look after our job and skills architecture. And we also do things like learning analytics, try to improve what we're doing around the delivery and administration of learning and also responsible for digital learning as well. So it's all those elements around learning infrastructure which includes all the work that we do around jobs and skills. And as well as my line team, I lead a program team as well from different parts of the organization focused on this whole job and skills architecture.

Michelle Ockers:

So you were obviously around when someone came up with the idea that it would be a good idea to start this shift to a skills-based organisation around three years ago. Where did the idea come from? Was it multiple people having the same thought and bringing it kind of coalesced? Was there someone who was advocating for this? Talk to me a little bit more about where it came from.

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Peter Sheppard:

Came probably from a couple of places. One is that we wanted to connect skills to strategy and we were finding, so like so many things, new ideas and programs that start, they start with problems, how to solve problems. We started first with saying, okay, well, the learning planning that we've got is not quite working and we want to be able to better connect skills to strategy. So, and how do we identify specific critical skills? And secondly, we also started to see that there were a number of issues aligned with some of our day-to-day people processes. Things like our current job and skills architecture hadn't changed for many years. It was completely static. We had a competence catalogue that hadn't changed for many years. We'd had some job roles that hadn't changed for five plus years. So we saw that as an issue. We recruit over 9,000 people a year. What some heads of people were complaining to us about was we spend all this time assessing people's skills, we buy in those skills, and then we kind of throw away the receipt and we don't know the skills that we've got in the organization. So, to some extent, we started to debate some of these issues within our global learning team. And then we started to see that other people functions, so reward, a TA, talent acquisition, was starting to come up with and starting to see some of the same issues. So at that point, we decided, yeah, we've got to do something about this.

Michelle Ockers:

Of course, there was a lot of noise. It was sort of in the zeitgeist at the time. Skills was bubbling to the surface during the pandemic off the back of talent shortages and people realizing we were living the experience of a lot of rapid change. You're a tech company. Change has been going on for a long time, I would imagine, around a lot of your services, products, the kind of skills you need. So, you know, there was probably an element of bringing the outside in as well, I expect, when you were thinking about skills as an approach, Peter.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, there was, in that one of the things that we say around what skills helps with is that it helps us to pivot as a company. And, you know, I mentioned one of those pivots that we've done earlier, and as you pivot as a company, then new skills become relevant. And then your skills have to be dynamic. And you have to be constantly thinking about what are the new relevant skills. You know, that was one of the reasons. We also wanted to create, you know, which is buried in the kind of why we wanted to do this. We wanted to create a visible simplicity, as I call it, we had different sets of skills or different sets of competencies in the old world that we used to use in different processes, and different organizations saying, oh, they want these types of skills versus another organization wants to describe it in a different way. You know, we just create way too much complexity. This whole world, this whole world of competence, we used to wrap up skills, behaviors, mindsets, tasks, all under this term competence, and probably confuse the hell out of people. What we wanted to do was also create this visible simplicity, run the same set of skills through all systems, through all processes. Now, we're not completely home and dry with that, but we are certainly well on the way.

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Michelle Ockers:

It's a great principle to bring everyone together around, right, and to test your work against and make decisions against visible simplicity. I really like it.

Peter Sheppard:

And, you know, the third thing was, I think it also helps with retention and so on, in that people can see the kind of basic fairness of that. And this plays towards recognising the importance of diversity decisions in a skills-based organization around people's skills, not which university they went to, not which, you know, whether the network they necessarily have. So, it builds on that kind of obvious fairness and that we think helps with retention and inclusion.

Michelle Ockers:

You've touched on improving the employee experience being one of the objectives, and you've talked a little bit more there about retention and equity. Let's start with employee experience. In what ways is the employee experience different today than it was three years ago as a result of the work you've done in this shift to being a skills-based organisation?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, we are starting to gradually see that. And this is what we call putting skills to work. Internally, we don't actually talk about a skills-based organization. What we talk about is putting skills to work. You know, if you're going to invest all this effort creating infrastructure and so on around skills, then you need to reap the value. And that value comes through putting skills to work. Now, what do we mean by that? Basically, means if you look at the key people, processes and activities, then you start to put skills into it. So, for example, so in upskilling, what people will see now is that there are seven very clear global critical skills that we value in the business that we think is important to the future of the business. And there are clear learning journeys associated with that, there are the skills that are associated with people's jobs. We are building out upskilling journeys for those people in those different jobs. So whether you're aspiring towards a specific job or whether you're doing a specific job and want to improve your performance, then you can see the learning that is associated with that. So it works there in upskilling, but it goes beyond just the usual kind of learning space towards recruitment, for example. So when we create adverts now, recruiting adverts, we put skills in there. Those skills come from the base of the job profiles. And, you know, that is not without its issues. So, you know, I'm not going to pretend that this is all smooth and easy to do. But when employees look at and they're interested in a vacancy, they see the same skills required for that vacancy that are in the upskilling journeys in RLXP, so it all starts to connect together. If they then go into our career hub, so if you look at this in terms of whether through a career development lens, and you want to assess your suitability for a particular vacancy and where your gaps are and so on, it's the same set of skills that are appearing. That does have some challenge in that sometimes when you're recruiting, you need a higher level of specificity around skills when compared to, say, planning, which tends to be at a higher level. So that can introduce some issues and we are starting to work through some of those issues. So it could be that you have, if you like, a set of skills at one level and then you have some skills that are related at a more specific level. So in terms of the employee experience, then you start to see

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that all those same skills running through the different processes and then you know, when it comes to another area we're looking at at the moment is when we have structured interviewed processes around people's readiness for a promotion. Again, we thread in the same skills. So it all sounds a bit repetitive when I start to say it now, but actually that's the point. You start to see the same set of required skills whether you are going through career development, whether you're upskilling or whether you're recruiting.

Michelle Ockers:

In terms of the employee experience, I would expect, I'm just trying to picture if I was an employee at Ericsson and what I would go through seeing the skills in this way, coherently across such a big organisation, all of a sudden I start getting a sense of the possibilities that might be open to me. It makes things feel a lot more accessible and potentially there are new career pathways or development opportunities I hadn't been able to even see, let alone access before. Is that part of the experience?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, yes, it is. So, you know, let me kind of give a feel for how this works in practice. So, for example, I could, at the end of each year, like many organizations, we have a wrap up, we call it, where you talk through your development and your performance with your line manager. In there, we ask employees to identify four focus skills that they want to concentrate on in the following year. And those focus skills drive your feed in RLXP. And the skills that you select from come from the skills, again, in your job profile. Or they could come from those global critical skills, those seven skill areas that we said were of vital importance across the whole company. So you start to see in that particular instance, then, OK, well, it could be that where I want to concentrate on is related to the job I want to do next. Then I go into our career hub where I can assess my gaps based on the skills required for that target job that I'm interested in. Then if I want to, at some point when I think I'm ready for that next job, then I apply for a job where the skill requirements are put into the advert for that job. So it all starts to connect together. We are going to do, of course, the same, because learning isn't just about content. It's about experiences, which I'm sure you know. I don't know why I'm telling you, Michelle. I'm sure you know.

Michelle Ockers:

Now, you know, I don't think we can say it enough, Peter, honestly, because, you know, we're a profession where there are no barriers to entry. We've got new people coming in all the time and content is easy to get your head around and it's easy for us to control and manage. But you've got to have the experience. You've got to have the practice. You've got to get the feedback. There's no substitute for it, is there?

Peter Sheppard:

Completely agree. And that's why actually, this year we are focusing on introducing, and this is the last element of our talent marketplace that we are introducing, which is to introduce projects. Again, I can be matched against specific projects. If I want to do a project to, say, 20% of my job, then I can be matched against that project on the basis of skills. And not just learn from content, but learn from that experience that I get.

Michelle Ockers:

Fantastic. Thank you for painting a picture of where you're at now and the possibilities that are opening up for people. Three years in the making though, what has it taken to get here? If you can talk us through the key things that your team in collaboration with us has had to do to make this kind of shift possible over the past three years, just take us through some of those key pieces of the work and how you've actually managed to achieve this.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, you know, when we do presentations on this, we sometimes subtitle it the pain and the progress. It doesn't come without a lot of investment and time and pain. And so what are the sorts of things that we've had to do to try and achieve some of this? So I started off talking about connecting skills to strategy, and particularly in learning functions, this is often a big ask. Ever since I've been doing learning, which is quite a long time, there's always been this desire to connect learning to what the strategy and business priorities are. Now we've done that through, I mentioned earlier that we're a technology first company, so of course the natural person to go to is our chief technology officer and actually the head of strategy reports into the chief technology officer. So we have worked with the CTO to identify those skills that really matter. And actually, this is one of the things that matters along this whole journey of skills, is that whichever part you want to focus on, that you're totally engaged with the business. Now, there's nothing new there. It's same old, but it is critical because, of course, it buys you in the credibility of what you come up with. So we refresh that every year, and of course it doesn't change fundamentally, but nevertheless we do look at it every year and refresh the learning journeys from that. So that's one area, and that to some extent, and this is to a great extent a top-down and a bottom-up story. So that is the top-down part where we identify these global critical skills. The bottom-up piece is then to say, okay, well, let's look at the work that people do across Ericsson, which we've got at through our job roles. And just as we have on the top down piece, we engage the business with that. So we have over 90 job role owners. These are people out in the business who know their jobs better than we do.

Michelle Ockers:

Were those job role owners already in place when like three years ago when you started work on this?

Peter Sheppard:

Yes, they were. And that's where I put my hand up and say we were quite fortunate in that we did have some of that infrastructure already created.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, that's fabulous, because in a lot of organizations, like even having any current position descriptions is a blessing. So let alone some sort of formal sense of ownership over those. So it's great that you're able to work with them from the bottom up. Tell me more about how you work with them.

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Peter Sheppard:

To some extent, when we took this work on a few years ago, they were a bit of a neglected group. So we wanted to engage with them immediately and we started creating monthly sessions with them. We then explained that one of the key pieces we wanted to do here was to bring skills into the core of describing jobs. So we redesigned our job profile, as we call it now. We identified up to 15 critical skills per job profile. We then worked with them over a, I think it was around a three or four month period, where we literally drove through and redesigned all the job profiles. And we created a job profile with those 15 skills at a proficiency level. So we put in a proficiency level as well. And we created one of those for every combination of job role and job level, what we call job stage. So, if a particular job role has four levels to it, then you have four job profiles.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Where did that skills list come from that, you know, to be able to map into the job roles?

Peter Sheppard:

So the skills catalogue that we have, or skill taxonomy, if you want to give it its proper term, this we put in place as part of the key changes as well. So half of that comes from our product skills. So as you imagine, we create 5G and so on. There's quite a few unique skills that we have that are very proprietary to Ericsson. So we source those, and there's actually a group that we partner with internally to help create those. And they were actually part of our core group. Another example, I suppose, where we're connecting with the business. The other half have what we call market-driven skills, and they come through an external company that we partner with. I don't mind saying that that company is TechWolf, and we source those skills through scraping the web and together they form our skill taxonomy. Now that taxonomy has been updated every month. So the middle of every month we put out a new version and then we identified 20 skill area owners essentially out there in the business to help us manage that skill taxonomy.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, so that update is again, is that being done via web scraping? That's a tech enabled that update?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, completely tech enabled. And the market-driven side, I should say, is tech enabled.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, I understand.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah. So that was another change. So that together, and also what we did with the job profiles was we put those into our HRIS, which is success factors, and that enabled us to digitalise the job roles. So we also put in one proficiency scale, so a four-point proficiency scale across the whole company and into all of our systems. We put in new governance as well because then it comes, well, okay, you got all

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this, how do you govern it? And we put two types of governance in, traditional kind of quarterly governance to where we have a governance board, and they're responsible for managing the structure, the overall structure and the whole architecture piece. And if we change the design, then we have to propose that to our governance board. But all of the adding new job roles, adding new skills, that is all done in what we call governance in the flow, which means that basically provided skill area owners and job role owners keep to the rule sets associated, they can update more in real time. when it's right for the business. We didn't want the kind of tail wagging the dog here. It should be the business led. So that was another change. We updated our behaviors. So we also have 20 behaviors that we work with. And we also updated, created a simpler skills model and also the factors that determine someone's job stage, we updated those.

Michelle Ockers:

Can you talk a little bit more about that? What do you mean by factors? Give us some examples of factors that define or update someone's job stage.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah. So things like the complexity of a role, the leadership content in a role, the level of knowledge required in that role. We updated those to five main factors that then determine whether you are a job stage six, seven or eight and so on.

Michelle Ockers:

Got it.

Peter Sheppard:

A lot of infrastructure and actually one of the things that we've not touched on how you also leverage the data because we also wanted to ensure that we really had good skills intelligence as well. So that was another piece that we put in place. A huge amount of infrastructure work, but as I say earlier, it's kind of only worth doing all that in the end if you're going to put skills to work and you're going to get beyond the infrastructure.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. You're a big organisation. Was it 180 countries that you operate in?

Peter Sheppard:

Yes, business-wise, yes.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. There's a lot of different groups and people all over the world you would have needed to get on board with making these changes, getting everybody using a single skills model, getting everybody aligned about around common job roles, things like this. Did you struggle with that at all? Were there any challenges or resistance or any shifts in how people saw their role in managing all of this or, you know, people thinking, well, we're different, we're special, we can't go along with kind of this common approach and common framework. Did you struggle with any of that or not?

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Peter Sheppard:

Yes. So from a couple of angles, yeah, this is infrastructure type work. So unless you demonstrate the value of it, it's sometimes difficult to get people to see, oh, this is important to me. So getting time on leadership agendas and so on can be actually quite challenging with this. Undoubtedly the secret is to show the value and what the end point looks like. But what often came up through the process was, well, what's going to change and by when? And then you have to talk about, well, this is what's happening with our talent marketplace. This is what is happening with our LXP. So you have to show what's changing in the processes to get the attention. So that was one challenge. A second challenge, of course, is around employee relations. And we still don't have this infrastructure implemented in Germany and the Netherlands. And that's because we are slowly working through with works councils to try and get that in place. We have done that in Sweden, where, as you imagine, we have quite a lot of employees, being a Swedish company. So, it takes quite a lot of commitment with works councils and so on to take them through what the changes are and so on. That's the second big area. What helps with this, of course, is that we had a whole change plan that was driven from the core team and that in trying to firstly engage our global people HR function, we call it People Function. So that was important, but it starts actually with no one HR function just trying to drive this by themselves. You know, the core team that I had around this, you know, involved Total Reward, so our Comp and Bends function, TA, talent management, you know, we had all of the different functions involved, as well as some of our people business partners as well, who kind of kept us grounded as this is what it's like in the real world. This is what you'll have to convince out there in some of our business units. So engaging the whole breadth of the people function was important to us.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. I want to come back to that point about value. And you published a LinkedIn article in January, which I'll pop into the show notes if people are curious about some of the key lessons you've learned along the way. And that was, of course, six months ago now. So there might be some new ones you've learned in the last six months in this sort of journey of pain and progress, Peter. But value, you know, the first lesson you started with is that value is the start and the end point. And in that article, you said that you started by considering the design of your job and skills architecture and that this was a mistake, that that wasn't the right start point, potentially in retrospect. If you could start this over again, this whole journey, what do you think a better approach might have been and why?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, I would have started actually in the second phase of what we did, which was the testing phase. So we spent quite a lot of time designing and thinking, this is the way we want to do it and so on. And actually, just trying things out is really important. The reason that it's important is because then it gives you the examples to share with the stakeholders that you want to convince that this is the right direction. So, for example, in recruitment, we looked at if we included skills in the job advert, and did a kind of A-B test, which we did, do we get better candidates if we include skills? And funnily enough, we found out that we did. Those sorts of tests, I think, are super important to proving the case. Yeah, proof of concept. Exactly. You can write a traditional business case, but that's in the end just on paper. If you can start to show

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we've demonstrated in a small way that this makes a difference, then you've demonstrated some value at the start of the process. And then the value at the back end, where we're at at the moment, is that we are starting to put in place now OKRs against some of these people process changes that we are making. So are we getting a higher level of matching of people to vacancies because we're using skills as part of that matching? And you can do that in quite specific ways that allows you to really test. So proving the value through measurables like OKRs against those changes to your people processes is quite important. So I think value at the end, it starts to become really important because that is a key part of putting skills to work.

Michelle Ockers:

Is there anything that you've kind of tried, tested out, you thought was going to work and it didn't work or it didn't quite work the way you thought it would and you've kind of had to make some adjustments or course correct?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, great question, Michelle, because it's never a simple journey. Yeah, if I give an example of one that we're working through at the moment, which I touched on earlier, which is in the recruitment space, where what we found is that if you have headcount job roles, as we call them, so you've got a lot of employees backed off against one single job role, the skills tend to get identified at quite a high level, as you'd expect, because they're covering a whole range of different positions. When it comes to recruiting, you want to recruit at the position level. What we found is that by putting skills into the job advert for some job, not all, but for some jobs, the skills are not specific enough. You want, for example, specific programming languages like Python, R, and so on, and those aren't necessarily in the job profile skills.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, because if you go to that level of granularity in your taxonomy, it becomes very unwieldy, right?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, we can in the taxonomy. So all of those skills, you know, we've got 16,000 skills in our taxonomy. So all of those detailed skills are in the taxonomy. But what we say in the job profiles, you can only pick 15 of them. And they've got to be the really ones that make a big difference. But sometimes if that job roles at a high level, then of course that skill is a little bit too generic. So what we are having to course correct on in that one is to say, OK, can we have different variations of one, you know, if you pick one job role, so say a software developer, you can have different variations of that. And those different variations come with some additional skills.

Michelle Ockers:

So it's very context specific to the position of the software developer.

Peter Sheppard:

Correct. And that means that you've got when the recruiter then is down with the practical task of, you know, I've got here, I've got 50 candidates for this job. I can start to assess against those more specific skills.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yeah.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, that's an example of where we've kind of found we've had to course create correct a little bit.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, yeah. But it's great like this is fine tuning stuff though right this isn't stuff at the heart of the solution that you're working towards and at the heart of the architecture. It's the fine tuning around the edges to make it work right.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, it's really about once you start to apply your architecture to specific processes, then you start to find out, of course, that some of these, you do have to make a little bit of these corrections, but you're absolutely right. It's not throwing out the whole architecture itself or making fundamental changes to it. So I think one of the areas that I don't know we're course correcting on, but I think is left for us to do is around the skills profile an individual has, because we've talked a lot about taxonomies, but actually one of the most important things is what are the skills that I've got? And how do I ensure that I am able to show the best skills I've got in the different systems? Now, when you've got a, I use a Swedish word here, a smorgasbord of different systems, then you can have different profiles in different systems. And therefore, I could have five variations of me and my skills. And actually, for things to have that visible simplicity, you want one.

Michelle Ockers:

Ideally, a single profile that feeds into all of the systems would be really nice, right?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, exactly. And that's so easy to say and so hard to do.

Michelle Ockers:

Look, as a customer of a big bank here in Australia and as someone who's moved around a little bit, I spent almost two hours one day with someone like a customer service person in a bank branch who was going through all of their systems to try to correct and line up my profile on their system. So it's a similar thing inside organizations, right? Big organizations with multiple systems, they don't all connect to each other and talk to each other.

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah. And you really feel just as well, you started around the employee experience, people putting their hands and say, here comes a new system with yet another new profile. So what we are trying to course correct on this is can we feed all the existing profiles and look at people's learning history and look at their career history and infer one profile from all of those different data sources. So we're not there yet. We're only at the stage of testing. But if you can do that, then you can start to put that one profile through all the systems. And the only challenge with that is, and I'm sure many of the listeners will be familiar with this, is the issues around data privacy,

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particularly across Europe. So we would, even if you do that, we would need to request the permission of individuals to say, we've got this one profile for you. Do you want to use it across all the systems and get the permission? So you have to opt in effectively to that solution.

Michelle Ockers:

Right, that's a lot of work. So in terms of what's next for putting skills to work at Ericsson, then you've given us a few teasers. One is trying to sort out this skills profile. Another is, you know, the talent marketplace and introducing projects to the talent marketplace. What are the other key things you're working on, let's say, over the next year with putting skills to work at Ericsson?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, I mean, that's those two are big ones for us, which is projects and also on the infrastructure side, the one profile. The one we haven't really tackled much yet in terms of the skills-based people processes, as we call them, is planning. We're doing an okay job with those global critical skills, so we have a target set and plan set for those global critical skills. But when it comes to strategic workforce planning, going through all the main units, then we are some way off firstly incorporating the global critical skills, and even further off, I would say, identifying then bringing skills into that workforce planning. Now, in an ideal world, of course, you'd start with that because your planning should set your goal as to what you want to achieve, but we are probably furthest behind in that space. So that is probably a big one for us. I think the other one that we really want to build out is the job role upskilling. We have not yet completed on all of the upskilling plans. And by plans, I mean the learning journeys that exist in DeGreed to enable people to upskill. And that's important to us because we have our career hub, Eightfold, connected to our LXP. So it's important that if you are identifying, you know, that this is the job you want to do, that you can source that learning associated with that job. So getting those upskilling plans for all of the different skill, the top skills required for the different jobs is super important to us. So, yes, still a lot to do, Michelle.

Michelle Ockers:

But you've come a long way and laid a lot of great foundations. I have one last question for you, Peter. Along the way over the past three years, is there anything that you or your team have either had to embrace or to let go of as you've worked on this shift to being skills based?

Peter Sheppard:

Yeah, I think to embrace the fact that this may take longer than you think, and so being patient is important, but also recognising that this putting skills to work is something that you have to embrace, that this is driving the value out of skills, is what truly matters. In terms of letting go, I think one that we've had to let go is that skills in recruitment is perhaps one of the most important areas, but we've had to let go that some skills that you identify in some of the job profiles can't always be used in a recruitment circumstance. So we've had to let go of that one a little bit, which makes it tough in terms of the You know, we want skills to be one red thread going through the through the whole organization.

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Michelle Ockers:

Yes. Maybe it's a little bit pink in some places instead of being read all the way through, Peter. Thank you so much for joining us today to share the experience of your journey with skills. I know that there are many listeners who are going to get a lot out of this. I really appreciate it, Peter. Thank you.

Peter Sheppard:

Thanks so much, Michelle. It was it was great conversation. Thanks so much.



Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that help Learning and Development leaders and their teams become a strategic enabler so that their businesses can thrive. We work in evidence-informed ways to drive tangible outcomes and business impact and are strong believers in the power of collaboration and community. We specialise in helping to build or refresh organisational learning strategy, update their L&D Operating Model, enable skills development, and conduct learning evaluation. We also offer workshops to shift learning mindset and practices for both L&D teams and the broader workforce – as well as speaking at public and internal events.

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About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the co-founder and Chief Learning Strategy at Learning Uncut. She is an experience, pragmatic organisational learning strategist, L&D capability builder and modern workplace learning practitioner. She also delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D *Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development*
- Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – *for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning*



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