



HRDIGITALPLAYGROUND • JOB ARCHITECTURE 101

The Skills Layer

Jobs tell you what work exists. Skills describe what people need to do it.

IN THIS DECK

Jobs and skills

Types of skills

Proficiency

Role skill profiles

Careers

The market

Changing work

Governance



September 2026
© 2026 HRDigitalPlayground | Job Architecture

Before You Start

What you will be able to do, the example we use, and the words you will meet.

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- ✓ Explain what skills add to a job architecture
- ✓ Tell jobs, skills, and proficiency apart
- ✓ Build a simple role skill profile
- ✓ Explain how skills support careers and workforce decisions

MEET THE EXAMPLE



Brightside Bakery

About 350 people making fresh bread and cakes. It grew fast without a plan for its jobs.



Bakery plant



20 shops



Delivery team



Head office

Made-up example

WORDS YOU WILL MEET

Skill

A capability needed to do the work

Proficiency

How deeply a skill must be applied in a job

Role skill profile

The skills and proficiency a job needs

Skills gap

The difference between a person and a job's needs

Skills library

An organized list of the skills a company uses

The colored tag on each page tells you what it is: an idea, an example, a practice, a warning, or a check.

Jobs and Skills Are Different

The architecture says where a job fits. Skills say what it takes to do it.



JOB ARCHITECTURE TELLS US

Where does the job fit?



SKILLS TELL US

What capabilities does it take?

HOW THEY CONNECT, AT BRIGHTSIDE

JOB

**Supply Planning
Analyst**

Logistics, P2



RESPONSIBILITIES

**Builds the weekly
ingredient plan**

For the bakery plant



SKILLS

Demand forecasting
Inventory planning



PROFICIENCY

Inventory planning at 3
On a 4-level scale

Responsibilities are what the job does. **Skills** are what it takes to do them well. **Proficiency** is how deeply each skill is needed.

Job architecture places the job. Skills describe what it takes to perform it.



Skills Sit On Top of the Architecture

Each job keeps its place. Skills add a layer of detail on top.

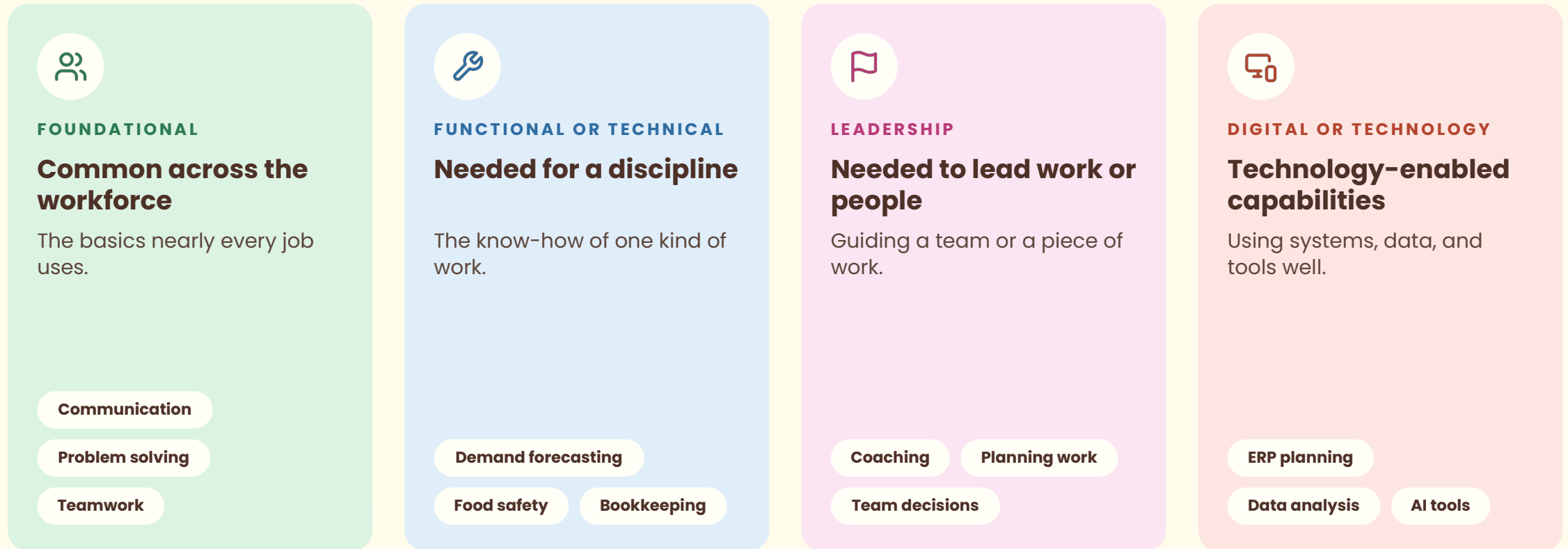


The job keeps its place. Skills and proficiency are attached to the job, on top of the architecture.

Skills add detail to each job. They do not replace families, tracks, or levels.

Four Types of Skills

Keep it simple. Four groups are enough for most companies to start.



The groups overlap a little. That is fine.

Four simple groups are enough to start. Add detail only where decisions need it.

Skill vs Proficiency

A skill names the capability. Proficiency says how deeply the job needs it.



SKILL

What capability is needed?



PROFICIENCY

How deeply must someone apply it in this job?

Illustrative four-level model

1



Awareness

Knows the basics and the language

2



Working

Applies it to routine tasks, with support for unusual cases

3



Advanced

Applies it independently, including unusual cases

4



Expert or Strategic

Shapes how the organization uses it and teaches others

Every skill in a profile carries a proficiency. The scale is a company choice.



Proficiency Is Contextual

A more senior job does not simply need more skills. It applies them differently.

A BIGGER JOB MAY MEAN

-  **Deeper application**
-  **Greater complexity**
-  **Broader scope**
-  **Teaching others**
-  **Using judgment**
-  **Designing the approach**

ONE SKILL **Inventory planning**

P4**Lead Supply Planning Analyst**

Designs the planning approach across locations

P3**Senior Supply Planning Analyst**

Solves exceptions and builds forecasts

P2**Supply Planning Analyst**

Creates routine plans independently

S2**Stockroom Associate**

Follows set ordering schedules

Illustrative path

Bigger jobs apply skills more deeply, more broadly, and with more judgment.



Build a Role Skill Profile

The profile belongs to the job. People can then be compared with it.

ROLE SKILL PROFILE

Supply Planning Analyst

P2

CORE

Communication

2, Working

Problem solving

2, Working

FUNCTIONAL

Demand forecasting

2, Working

Inventory planning

3, Advanced

ERP planning

2, Working

Data analysis

2, Working

The profile belongs to the job, whoever holds it.

THEN COMPARE ONE PERSON: SAM

Inventory planning

Job Sam

To build

Data analysis

Job Sam

A strength

ERP planning

Job Sam

Ready

This guides development. It is not a performance rating.

Profile the job first. Then compare people with it to plan development, not to judge the job.

 © 2026 HRDigitalPlayground | Job Architecture

8

Where Skills Come From

No single source is enough. Good profiles combine evidence from several places.



Job descriptions



Manager input



Subject matter experts



Work and task analysis



Existing competency libraries



External job postings



Market skills taxonomies



Employee profiles



AI inference

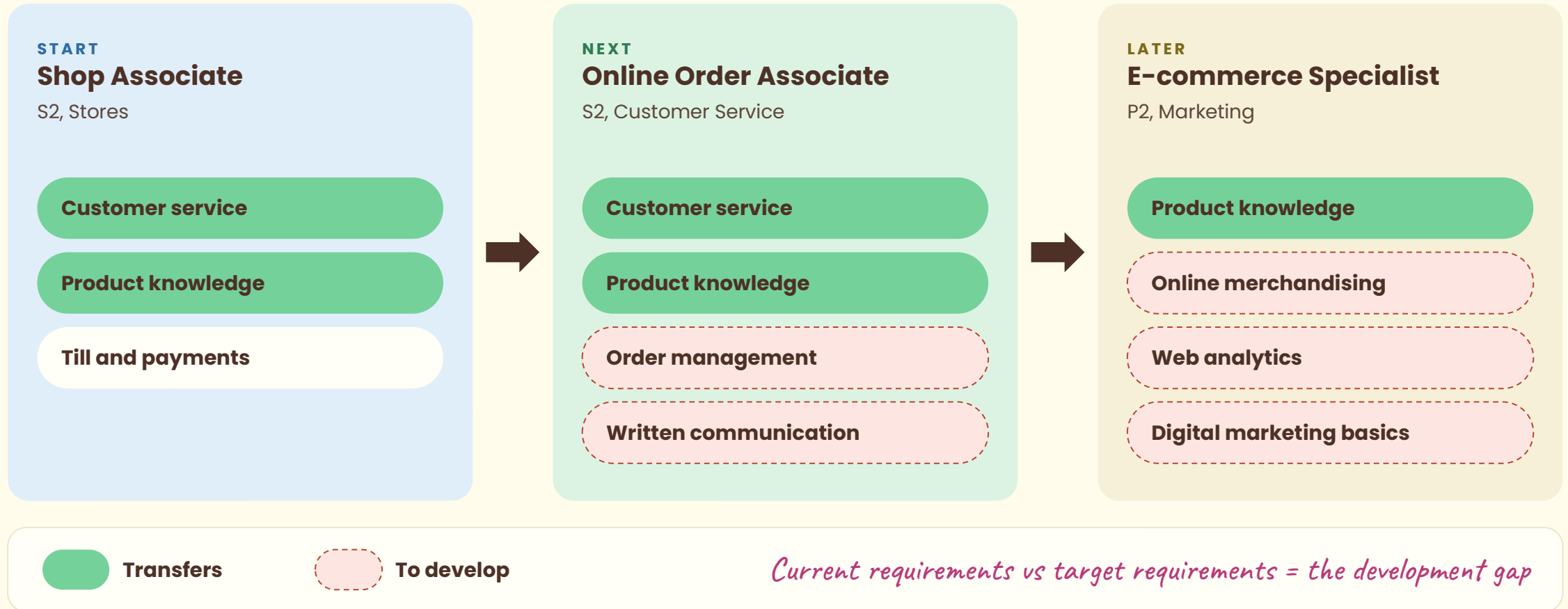


AI may propose skills. People validate material decisions.

AI may propose skills. People validate the decisions that matter.

Skills and Careers

Compare the skills of the job you have with the job you want. The difference is the gap.



Current job requirements versus target job requirements equals the development gap.

Skills and the Market

The market tells you which skills are in demand. It does not tell you how big a job is.



THE MARKET CAN TELL US



Which skills appear often



Which skills are emerging



What employers compete for



Supply and demand signals

At Brightside: data analysis skills are hard to hire locally.

BUT

A scarce skill should not automatically change a job's level.

IT MAY INFLUENCE

Recruiting

Development

Pay premiums

Market pricing

Workforce planning

Brightside's call: the Supply Planning Analyst stays P2. A small premium, training for current planners, and an early start on the next hire.

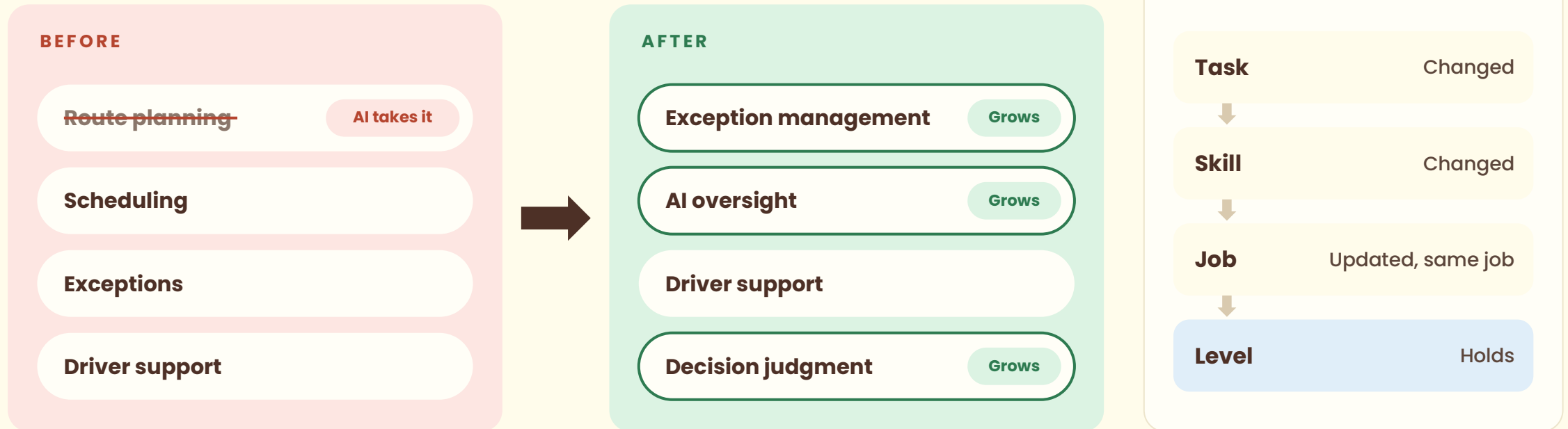
A scarce skill should not automatically change a job's level. Handle scarcity with market tools.



Changing Work Moves Skills First

When AI or automation takes a task, the skills shift before the job does.

THE DISPATCHER JOB AT BRIGHTSIDE



Relevel? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Check scope, complexity, and decision authority against the level descriptions.

Task, then skill, then job, then level. Check each step before you relevel.

Keeping Skills Current

Skills can go stale even faster than job descriptions. Give each part an owner.



HR OR JA OWNER

Maintains the framework, the library, and the scale



FUNCTIONAL EXPERTS

Validate skills and proficiency for their area



MANAGERS

Flag when the work in their team is changing



EMPLOYEES

Contribute evidence of skills they use



DATA AND AI

Flag emerging changes for people to review



Regular review

For example, once a year for each family. Catches slow drift.



Event-driven review

When a new system, process, or automation changes the work.

Illustrative

Review skills on a regular rhythm, and again whenever the work changes.

Try It: AI-Assisted Forecasting

Brightside adds AI-assisted demand forecasting for its supply planners. Decide, then turn the page.



THE SCENARIO

An AI tool now builds the first demand forecast each week. The Supply Planning Analyst reviews it, corrects it, and explains big swings to the plant.

PART 1

Which changes first?

- A** Job family
- B** Required skills
- C** Executive grade
- D** Company name

PART 2

Name one of each

A skill that shrinks

An emerging skill

A proficiency change

Reconsider the level?



Decide on your answers before you turn the page. The model answers and the reasons are on the next page.

Start with the tasks and skills. Only then ask whether the job or its level changed.



AI-Assisted Forecasting: Model Answers

Compare with what you decided. The reason matters more than the label.

1 Which changes first?

B, required skills

The tasks changed, so the skills change first. Family and grade do not move because of a tool.

2 A skill that shrinks

Building forecasts by hand

The tool now produces the first forecast each week.

3 An emerging skill

Reviewing and challenging AI forecasts

Including checking the data behind them.

4 A proficiency change

Data analysis rises from 2 to 3

The analyst must judge when the model is wrong.

5 Reconsider the level?

Review it, likely stays P2

Scope and decision authority are about the same. The profile is updated.

Skills can change without the job's level changing.



Quick Check

Three questions. Answer from memory first, then look back if you need to.

1 QUESTION 1

A role skill profile belongs to...

- A** The person in the job
- B** The job
- C** The person's manager

2 QUESTION 2

A skill becomes scarce in the market. What happens to the job's level?

- A** It rises automatically
- B** Nothing automatically. It may affect premiums and hiring
- C** It falls

3 QUESTION 3

What is proficiency?

- A** How many skills a job needs
- B** How deeply a skill must be applied in a job
- C** How long someone has had a skill

Answers, with the reason behind each one, are on the next page.

Remember

The whole deck in three lines, plus the quiz answers.



THREE THINGS TO KEEP

1

Jobs organize the work.

2

Skills describe the capabilities needed to perform it.

3

Proficiency explains how deeply those capabilities must be applied.

Skills sit on top. They never replace the map.



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1B

The profile belongs to the job. People are compared with it.

2B

Scarcity changes the price and the hiring plan, not the size of the job.

3B

Proficiency is depth of application, not the number of skills.

Skills can change without the job's level changing.





Job Architecture 101: The Skills Layer

© 2026 HRDigitalPlayground | Job Architecture. All rights reserved.
Published September 2026 · hrdigitalplayground.com



Keep learning. More plain-language guides at hrdigitalplayground.com.

Brightside Bakery is a fictional company, and every name, number, and example in this deck is illustrative. This material is general education. It is not legal, tax, or financial advice. Laws and practices change, so check current rules before acting.