

Smarter Hiring with Data-Driven Insights

Quality & Skills Edition - India

Skills, Expectations, Gaps, AI & Success



The Foreword

In the evolving symphony of India's workforce, it is no longer enough to simply "hire right"—we must hire with purpose. As someone who straddles both the analogue past and the digital now, I've seen hiring evolve from handshake deals to algorithmic screenings, from loyalty to learning agility. What hasn't changed, however, is our collective aspiration: to find meaning in work and to build teams that thrive, not just survive.

This report arrives at a timely juncture. India's job market is brimming with potential, yet also with paradox. Employers crave agility and innovation. Jobseekers invest in learning. Yet somehow, the connection often misfires. Why, because quality is no longer a fixed trait. It's contextual. It's human. And it's powered by skills, not just CVs.

This report offers a mirror and a map. It reveals where expectations diverge, where systems need upgrading, and where employers and candidates can find common ground. The goal is smarter hiring that is skill-first, data-informed, and human.

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Executive Summary

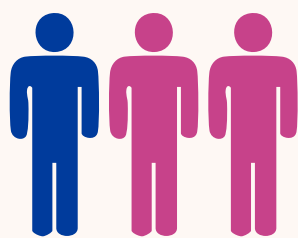
In a competitive Indian job market, quality of hire is no longer just about experience. It’s about finding people with the skills, mindset, and adaptability to grow into tomorrow’s roles. This year’s data reveals a sharp pivot toward skill-centric, growth-oriented hiring. However, perception gaps between recruiters and jobseekers continue to hinder progress.

What This Report Covers

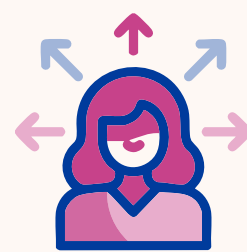
- How Indian employers define a quality hire in 2024
- The emerging skills that matter in real hiring decisions
- Perception gaps between employers and jobseekers
- Actionable insights to improve hiring outcomes with skills-based practices
- How AI, learning, and feedback are reshaping expectations

The insights aim to support HR and TA leaders across sectors in making better-informed, fairer, and faster hiring decisions.

Key findings show us:



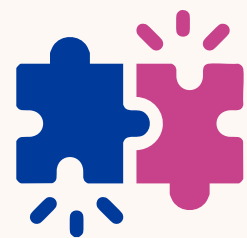
9 in 10 Indian employers, about 92% of Indian employers, lay emphasis on the quality of hire being more important than it has been in current times.



Skills-first hiring is accelerating with over 70% of recruiters now assessing candidates on soft and transferable skills - like adaptability, communication, and critical thinking - and not just by their experience.



However, only 42% of jobseekers feel confident that their current skills are enough for today’s job market.



The biggest mismatch? Employers value problem-solving, communication, and learning agility, while jobseekers prioritize stability and role fit.



Jobseekers increasingly look for clearer expectations, structured feedback, and upskilling opportunities during hiring.



This disconnect results in missed opportunities, inefficient processes, and longer time-to-fill roles.



The Indian Hiring Landscape

Misaligned Expectations in a Crowded Talent Market

Employer criteria and candidate signalling continues to widen

A Competitive But Evolving Talent Market

India's hiring landscape in 2024 continues to reflect post-pandemic recalibration—with a renewed emphasis on skill development, workforce adaptability, and employer-brand clarity.

While hiring volume remains steady across tech, healthcare, retail, and BFSI sectors, employers are shifting from quantity to quality, with sharper focus on role readiness, retention potential, and value alignment.

In our survey, 58% of Indian employers reported that hiring has become more difficult over the past three years. The top reasons cited include a mismatch between job descriptions and applicant skills, and an oversupply of candidates lacking relevant experience or soft skills. Over 60% of recruiters said they receive a high volume of applications, but fewer than 1 in 3 believe most applicants are quality fits.

This highlights a growing disconnect between the supply and demand sides of hiring. Companies are now investing in employer branding and skill-specific outreach to filter for fit earlier in the process. Recruiters also report being more open to non-traditional career paths, provided candidates can demonstrate value through outcomes or transferable skills.

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India isn't lacking talent,
it is lacking translation.

Until skills are spoken in
the same language by both
employers and applicants,
great hires will keep slipping
through the cracks.

Rohan Sylvester
Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed

The Indian Hiring Landscape

Jobseekers in India are facing a hiring landscape where clarity, not just competence, makes a difference. According to our July 2024 survey, 42% of Indian jobseekers report being unsure how to showcase their skills to employers. Only 26% felt that job listings clearly stated the skills required, and over half found interviews overly focused on academic qualifications or pedigree. These challenges have real-world consequences. Many jobseekers, especially recent graduates and those from non-metro regions, apply broadly in hopes of landing interviews. But without transparency in hiring criteria or timely feedback, most are left guessing what went wrong. 51% say they never receive meaningful feedback after interviews.

This contributes to a growing sense of exclusion from quality roles, especially among first-generation professionals. Meanwhile, companies cite candidate fit and readiness as their main filtering criteria, but without better communication, these standards can feel arbitrary to applicants.

The positive takeaway and what is promising is that both sides want improvement. Employers increasingly recognise that poorly framed job descriptions and outdated hiring scripts can cost them good talent. In fact, 63% of Indian employers agree that clearer communication of skills expectations could reduce the number of irrelevant applications.

In Short: Macro Trends Shaping Hiring in India

Skills Not Titles Are Gaining Priority

Employers are reevaluating degrees and years of experience. 79% of Indian hiring managers now say they value demonstrated skills over qualifications when assessing candidate fit.

Entry-Level Hiring is Shifting

With the rise of digital-first roles and hybrid work, junior candidates are expected to show soft skills maturity early on, particularly in communication, initiative, and resilience.

Experience Gaps are Widening

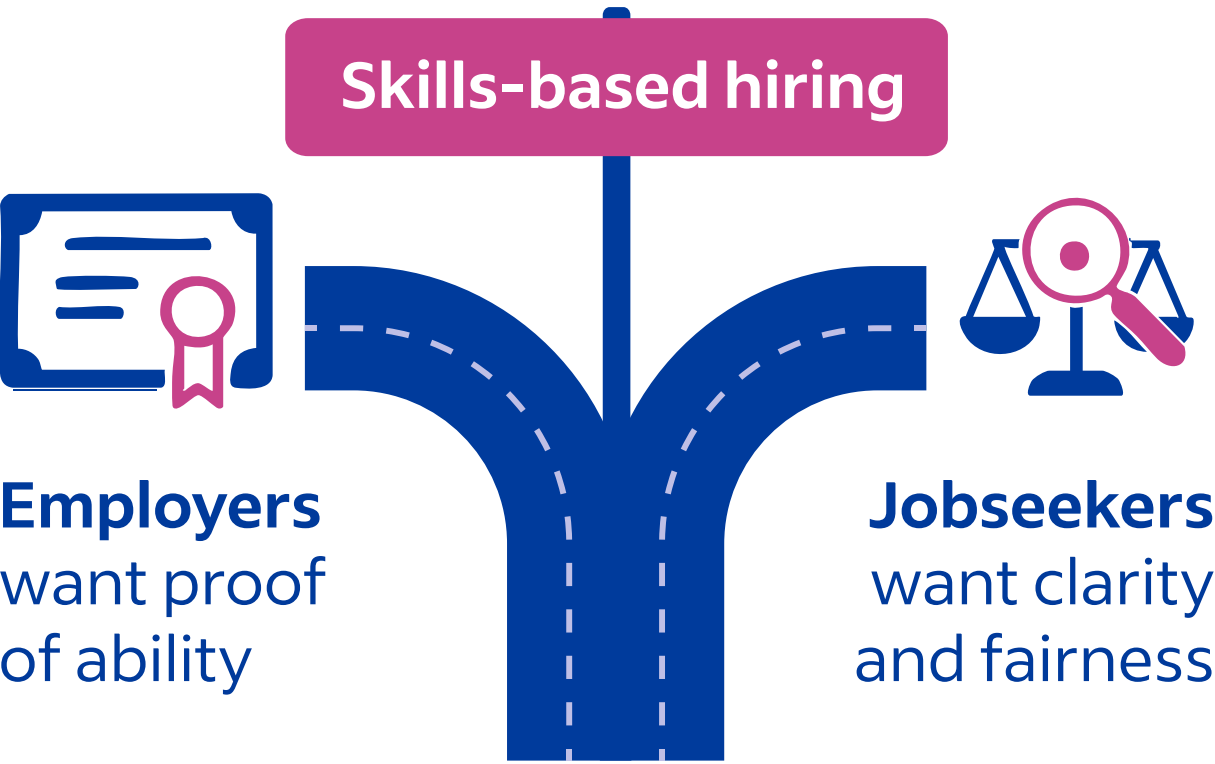
Despite a high volume of applications, recruiters report a lack of quality matches. Nearly 1 in 2 hiring managers struggle to find applicants who meet both skill and culture criteria.

What Jobseekers Are Facing:

42% of jobseekers in India are unsure how to demonstrate their true value to employers.

26% say job listings clearly state the skills expected.

60% believe interview rounds are too focused on qualifications, not capability.



Key Insight
The Indian hiring ecosystem is ready for a reset



How Employers Define Quality of Hire in 2024

The Evolving Definition of Talent in India

A quality hire today is someone who can grow with the team, not just meet the brief

Redefining Quality in Indian Recruitment

In 2024, Indian employers are moving beyond CV checklists to evaluate what truly predicts success in a role. This year’s research reveals a shift toward holistic candidate assessments where adaptability, problem-solving, and cultural fit outweigh conventional metrics like education pedigree or even prior role titles.

What’s Losing Relevance?

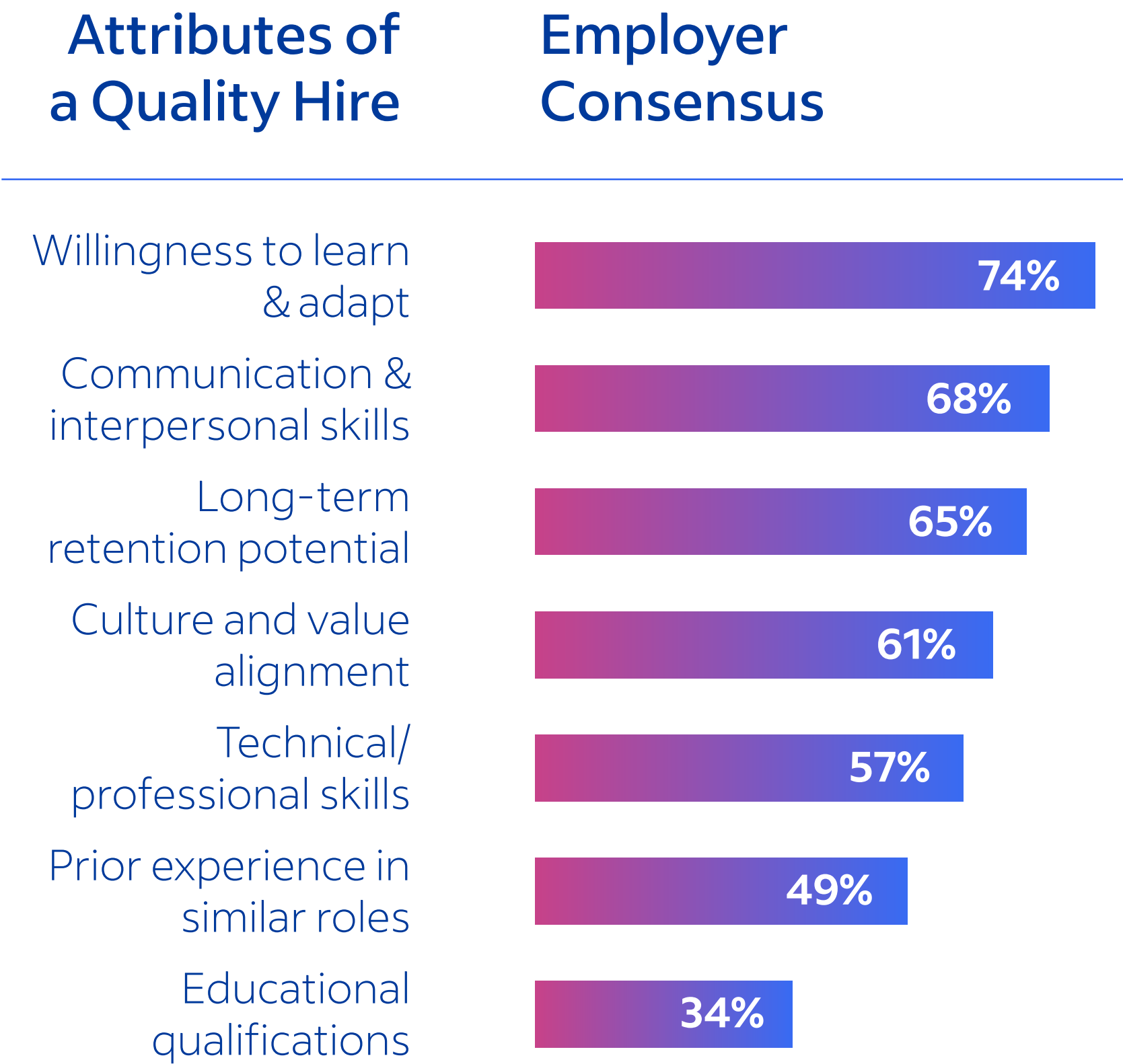
- Only 1 in 3 employers see academic background as a strong quality indicator.
- The reliance on years of experience is softening in favour of potential and problem-solving capacity.

When asked what defines a quality hire, 74% of Indian employers cited willingness to learn and adapt as the top trait, followed by communication and interpersonal skills (68%), and long-term retention potential (65%). These responses signal a broader shift away from rigid credentialism toward evaluating candidate potential, motivation, and alignment with company culture. Interestingly, only 34% of employers in India consider educational qualifications a strong quality indicator, and just 49% view prior experience in a similar role as essential. This challenges long-held

hiring assumptions and underscores the importance of a skills-first mindset in talent acquisition.

This also changes how success is measured. Beyond initial performance, employers now look at retention beyond six months, the ability to work cross-functionally, and how quickly a new hire becomes productive. A quality hire is no longer just someone who meets the brief. They are someone who can evolve with the role and the team.

What Matters When Hiring to Employers - Hiring Managers, India:



How Employers Define Quality of Hire in 2024

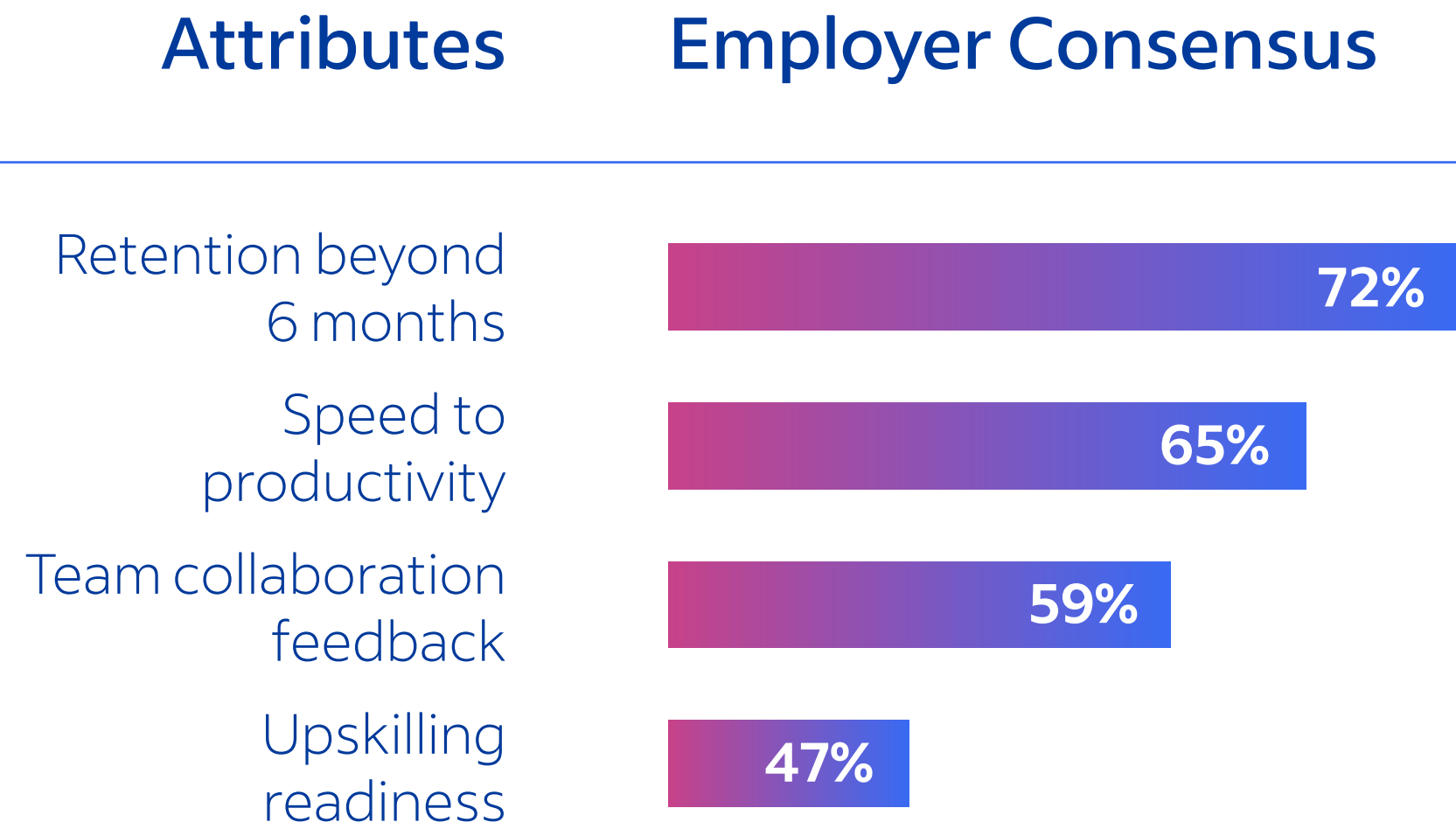
To measure quality in hiring, Indian employers are also revisiting the post-hire metrics that truly reflect value. When asked how they evaluate the success of a new employee, 72% of hiring managers said retention beyond six months is a key signal. It’s not just about hiring fast—it’s about hiring right.

Other high-ranking indicators include speed to productivity (65%), feedback from team collaboration (59%), and readiness for upskilling (47%). These dimensions reflect a broader evolution in HR thinking that quality is not static. It is contextual, dynamic, and tied to a candidate’s ability to thrive in the environment they are brought to, and not just survive it. This redefinition has practical consequences. It drives a rethink of the hiring funnel, resume screening practices, and the role of referrals. Companies are beginning to invest more in scenario-based interviews, case tasks, and trial periods that reflect job realities.

Finally, there’s a growing push to link quality of hire to business outcomes like team morale, innovation, and customer satisfaction. As more companies seek long-term value from talent, this shift toward human-centred, performance-oriented hiring will continue to gain ground.

As companies compete for adaptable, future-ready talent, these redefined criteria are becoming key differentiators in employer strategy.

Metrics That Matter Post-Hire - Success of a hire after onboarding



This reinforces the growing view that quality is contextual and must be measured both pre- and post-hire.



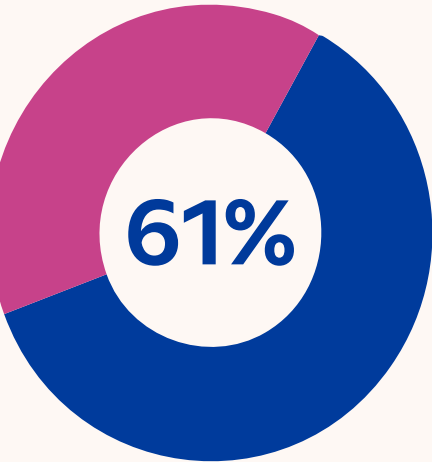
What Skills Do Employers Actually Hire For?

What Employers in India Really Hire For
India's talent strategy is shifting toward human skills
that drive cross-functional success

Skills Are the New Hiring Currency

To measure quality in hiring, Indian employers are also revisiting the post-hire metrics that truly reflect value. Across sectors in India, employers are placing increasing weight on soft skills and learning ability; specific skills that signal a candidate’s ability to collaborate, solve problems, and grow into future roles This shift reflects the need for agile talent in roles that evolve fast, particularly in tech, BFSI, retail, and startup ecosystems.

This signals a decisive turn from hard credentialing to behavioural competencies. While domain expertise still matters, especially in technical fields, employers are far more likely to choose a trainable candidate with strong fundamentals over someone with narrowly focused deep experience.



Additionally, 61% of Indian recruiters now rank time management as a top-five hiring priority, especially in hybrid or fully remote roles.

Adaptability and resilience (59%) also scored high, reflecting the increasing volatility of job environments in tech, BFSI, and retail.

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Technical skills may get your foot in the door, but it’s your adaptability, curiosity, and clarity of thought that decide whether you stay and grow.

Rohan Sylvester
Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed

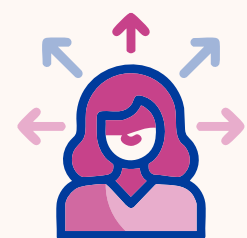
Top 7 Skills Indian Employers Value Most

Skill	Employers Who Prioritize It
Communication & collaboration	73%
Problem-solving	71%
Willingness to learn	69%
Time management	61%
Adaptability & resilience	59%
Domain/technical expertise	54%
Team leadership	45%

What Skills Do Employers Actually Hire For?

While soft skills dominate hiring priorities, the expectations vary across career stages. For entry-level roles, Indian employers focus on communication, curiosity, and learnability. These candidates may lack formal experience, but are often evaluated for their energy, cultural fit, and growth mindset. At the mid-career level, the focus shifts to decision-making, cross-functional collaboration, and managing ambiguity. Here, hiring managers look for professionals who can step up and drive outcomes without extensive hand-holding.

For senior roles, leadership skills take precedence. Traits like team management, adaptability to scale, and emotional intelligence top the list. Employers want leaders who not only understand the business but can also build and sustain high-performing teams.



This indicates that skills-based hiring is not just for junior roles; it is scalable across the hiring funnel.

A Shift Across Job Levels:

Level

Entry-level roles

Mid-career roles

Senior roles

Where Employers See Gaps

Despite this shift, 58% of hiring managers still report challenges in evaluating soft skills during the hiring process. Interviews and resumes are considered poor proxies for gauging real-world behaviours. As a result, many firms are experimenting with behavioural assessments, work simulations, and even AI-assisted screening tools to better match skills with role demands.

This growing emphasis on capabilities is not just an HR trend, it is a strategic response to how work is changing. As job roles become more fluid and fast-evolving, hiring for static experience is no longer enough. Hiring for potential and having the right tools to spot it is becoming business-critical.



That being said, we can conclude that employers are ready to hire for skills but they need better ways to identify, verify, and trust those skills during the process.

Focus of Employers

Communication, curiosity, and learnability

Problem-solving and decision-making under pressure

People leadership, agility, and adaptability to scale



The Jobseeker Lens: Are Skills Enough to Get Hired?

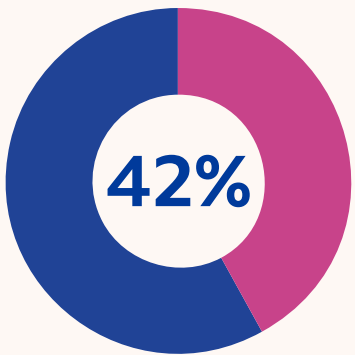
Skills Need Visibility, Too

Without better signalling and evaluation, jobseekers struggle to convert capability into opportunity

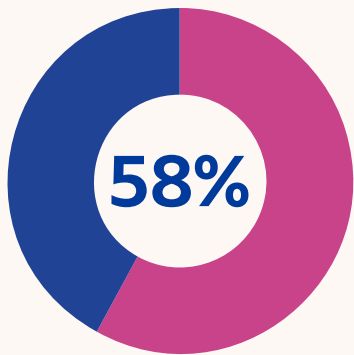
What Skills Do Employers Actually Hire For?

While employers in India increasingly emphasise skills, jobseekers don't always feel that skills are enough to land a job. Many believe hiring still favours prior experience, referrals, or brand-name degrees, leaving many capable Indian jobseekers feeling left behind.

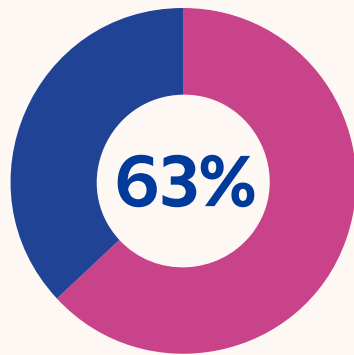
According to Indeed's survey:



jobseekers believe their current skills are sufficient to land a job



feel employers still prioritize degrees and job titles over ability



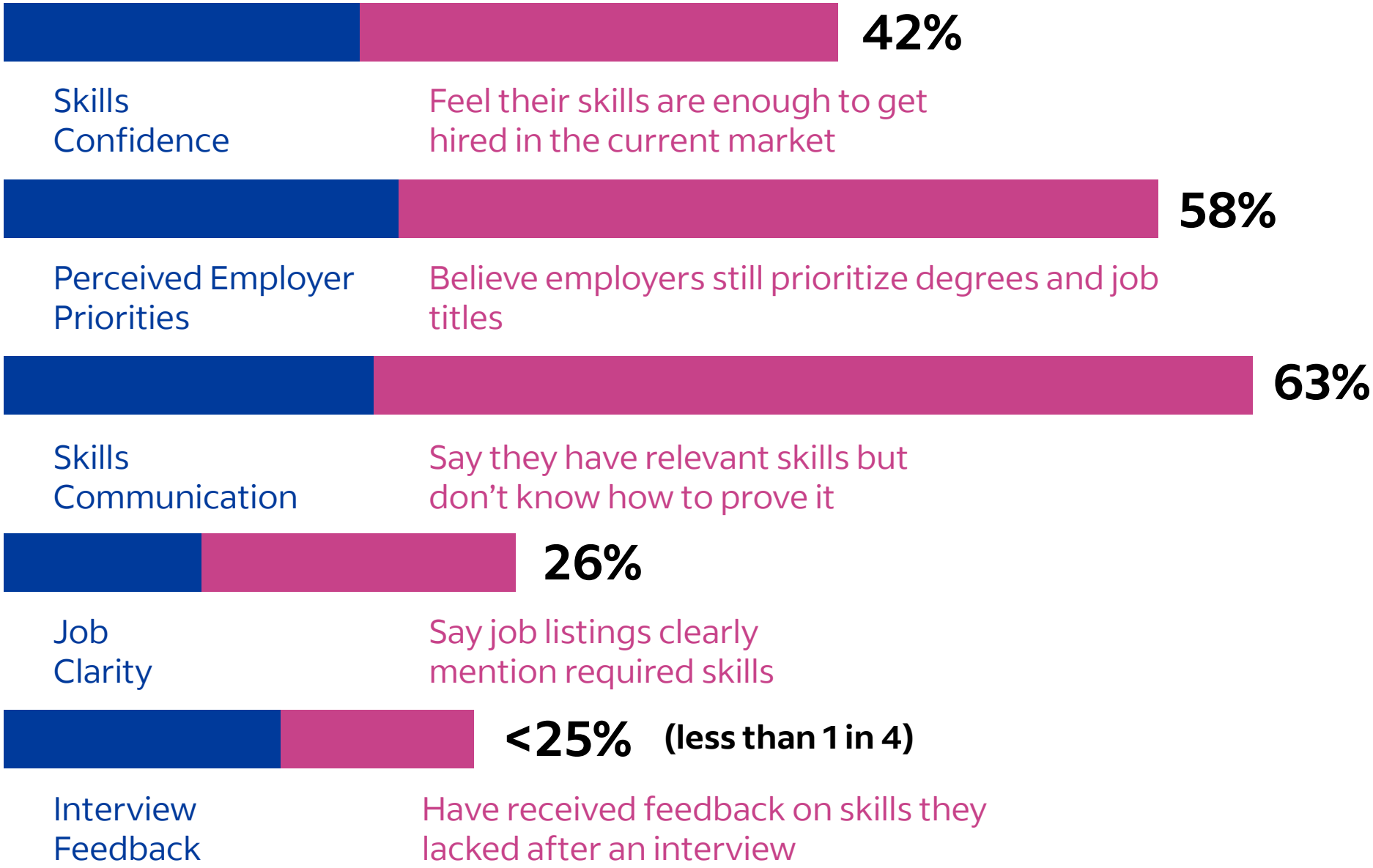
say they have the skills but don't know how to demonstrate them effectively

These perceptions fuel widespread frustration. Candidates invest in upskilling, yet feel disqualified due to irrelevant filters like college pedigree or lack of MNC exposure. Many believe they are not even making it past resume screening tools. This is particularly true for women returning to the workforce, freshers, and professionals from non-metro cities. Jobseekers want to be evaluated for what they can do and not just where they come from. But without transparency in role expectations or feedback loops, many feel invisible in the hiring process.



This signals an urgent need for hiring systems to evolve—not just in mindset but also in process design, communication, and tools.

Jobseeker Insight Quoted Response Jobseeker Alignment



“
Jobseeker
We keep telling people to learn skills but what's the point of upskilling if the system still judges you by your college or connections?”

Rohan Sylvester
Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed

The Jobseeker Lens: Are Skills Enough to Get Hired?

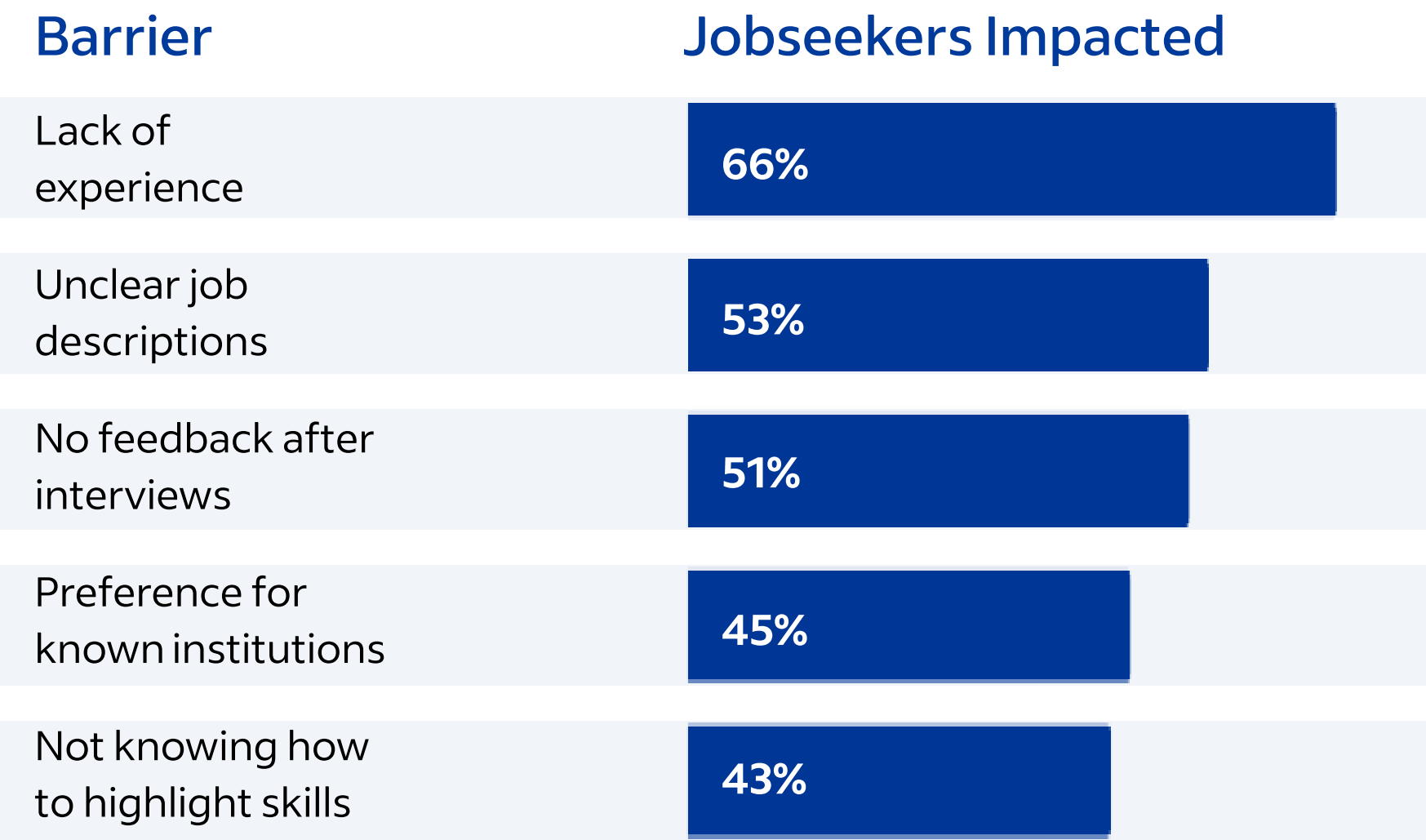
Beyond skill relevance, jobseekers in India face several practical and emotional barriers in the hiring journey. These barriers paint a picture of a broken feedback loop. Talented candidates are applying for jobs without knowing what employers truly value. They don't receive constructive responses, and as a result, can't improve their chances in future applications.

Interestingly, jobseekers' expectations around skills mostly align with employers. However, the disconnect lies in how these skills are signalled, evaluated, and rewarded during hiring.

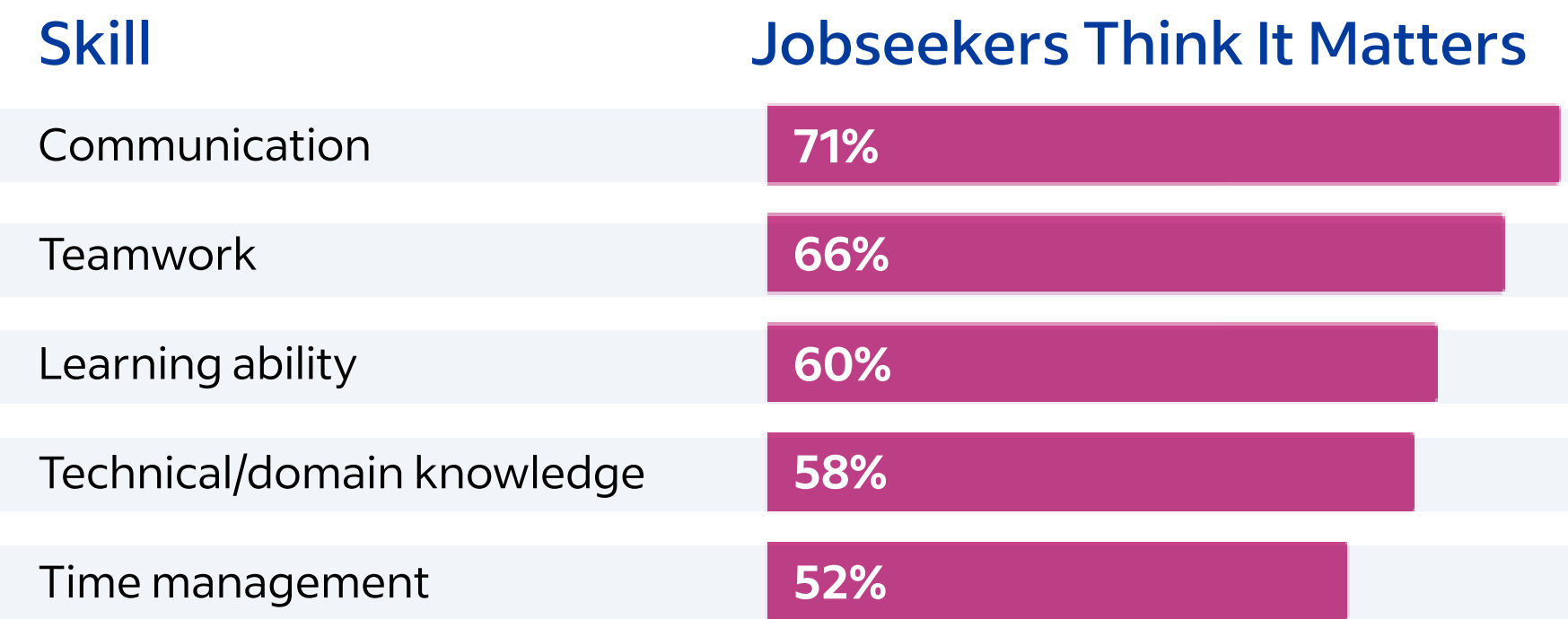
In Short: Macro Trends Shaping Hiring in India

Skills alone aren't enough as jobseekers need guidance, transparency, and tools to present them effectively and confidently in today's hiring process.

Barriers Jobseekers Face



Skills Jobseekers Believe Employers Want:





The Perception Gap

One Job, Two Realities

While employers prioritise soft skills, jobseekers still believe degrees and resumes dominate assessments

Same Skills, Different Stories

Though both employers and jobseekers in India broadly agree on the importance of skills like communication, learnability, and problem-solving, there is a clear disconnect in expectations, evaluation, and perceived fairness in the hiring process.

This perception gap often results in missed matches, where capable candidates are overlooked, and employers struggle to find the right fit. This misalignment creates tension and inefficiency. Over 60% of jobseekers say they don't understand why they were rejected. Employers, meanwhile, complain about poor fits even among technically qualified candidates. Fixing this gap requires action on both sides: jobseekers need better tools to demonstrate their value, and employers need to make their criteria more transparent, and more skill-forward.

When asked about the most important factors in the hiring process, Jobseekers believe their resume particularly with respect to work experience and education, is the primary tool for assessment. Employers, on the other hand, believe the interview gives them the clearest picture especially when it comes to adaptability, collaboration, and learning potential.

Where the Gaps Lie

Gap	Employer Perspective	Jobseeker Perspective
Signalling vs. Screening	Expect candidates to clearly signal skills in resumes or interviews	Often unsure how to showcase skills or lack access to structured feedback
Perceived vs. Actual Evaluation	Value soft skills most	Believe they're still judged by education and job titles
Transparency in Job Descriptions	Believe job listings are clear	Only 26% agree that listings specify required skills
Feedback and Fairness	Most don't offer skill-based feedback post-interview	Say lack of feedback hinders improvement and reapplication



The Perception Gap: Employers vs Jobseekers

When Intentions Don't Match Outcomes

A shared focus on skills exists, but hiring systems
still filter out potential

Hiring Can Be Fairer - If We Align on Process

At its core, the expectations gap is rooted in perception versus reality. Jobseekers assume they are being evaluated based on qualifications and achievements. Employers, however, are increasingly hiring for traits that are difficult to reflect on a resume like adaptability, team alignment, and future growth potential. This divide becomes especially evident in high-volume hiring environments. Recruiters often use automated filters or proxies like university or past employer names, even when their intention is to hire based on potential. As a result, many capable candidates are inadvertently screened out.

What’s needed is a systemic change in how both sides approach hiring:



Employers must adopt skills-first job descriptions that clearly define expectations.



Jobseekers need access to tools that help them showcase transferable skills and value through portfolios, assessments, or story-based interviews.



Feedback mechanisms must be improved. Today, 51% of jobseekers say they never receive feedback; making improvement impossible.

In our survey, 63% of Indian employers said they would be open to providing structured post-interview feedback, especially if tools made the process easier. That’s a signal of progress and an invitation to rethink the hiring funnel altogether.

Alignment is possible, but it starts with clarity, empathy, and a shared commitment to making hiring not just faster, but fairer.

Where Employers & Jobseekers Align

Skill

■ Employers Who Prioritize
■ Jobseekers Who Recognise



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How to bridge the gap
Jobseekers are playing one game, employers are scoring by another. Until we align the rules, we’ll keep losing out on perfectly capable talent.

Rohan Sylvester
Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed



Hiring Confidence: What Drives Good Decisions?

Hiring Is Stronger When Skills Are Clear

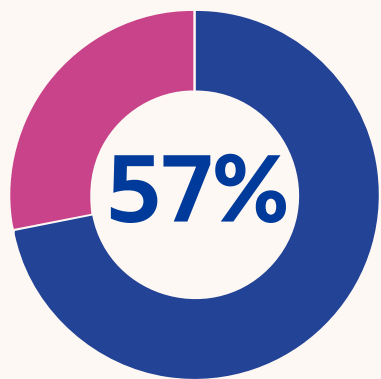
A shared focus on skills exists, but hiring systems
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The Anatomy of a Confident Hiring Decision

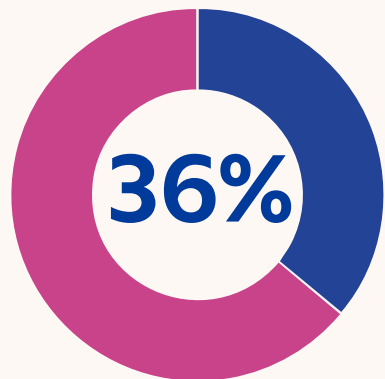
In 2024, Indian hiring managers are increasingly confident when they can validate skills early and feel alignment on expectations and values. However, many still lack structured tools and consistent signals, leading to a gap between intent and outcome. The conversation around skills-first hiring has moved from theory to urgency. In India, where millions enter the workforce each year, evaluating people based on demonstrated competencies rather than degrees is not just progressive, it is practical.



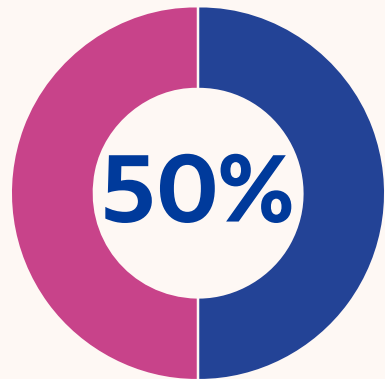
According to our survey:



Indian employers say they are at least somewhat familiar with skills-first hiring



implemented it in a structured way



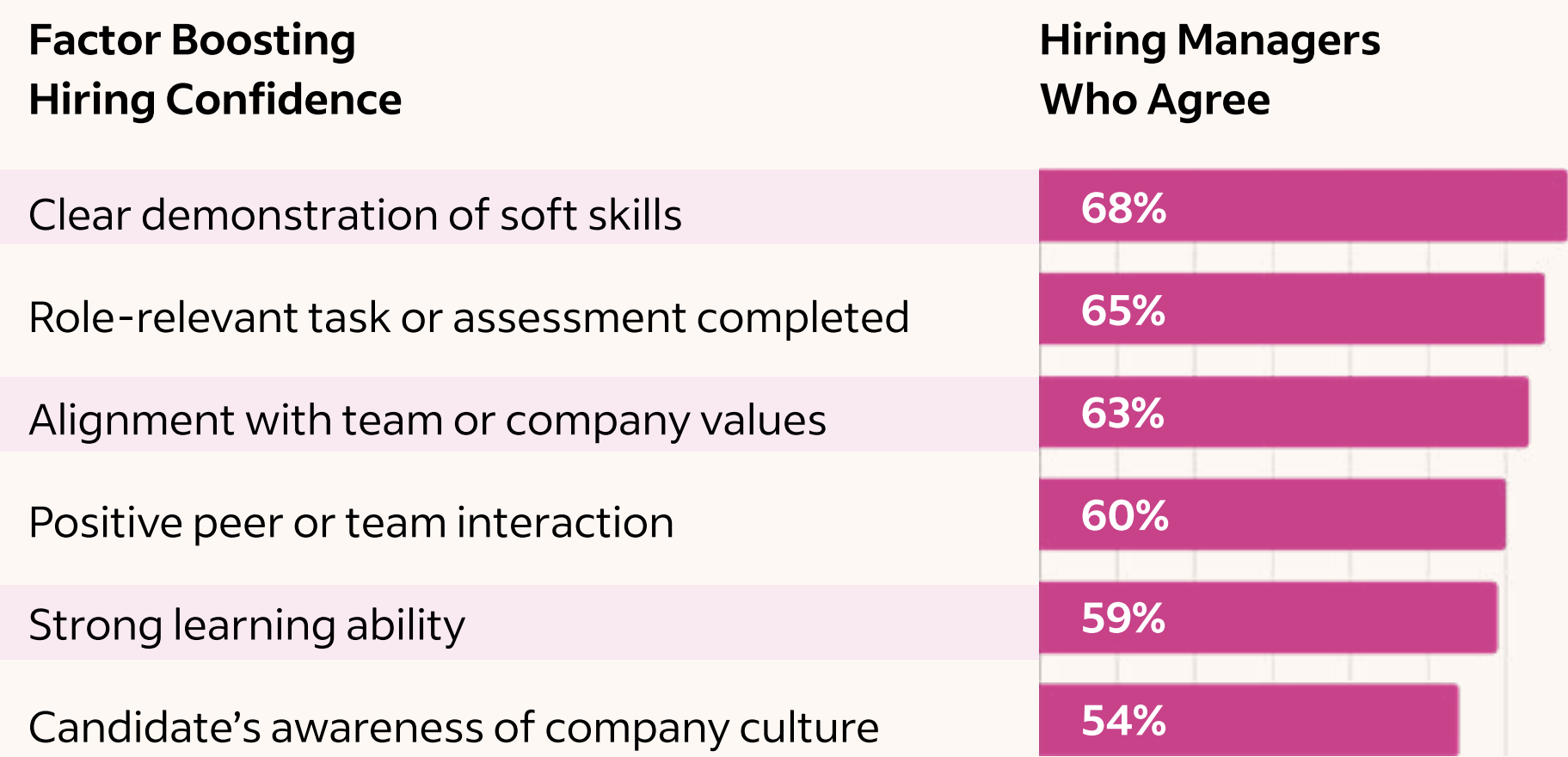
Nearly half of jobseekers say they have never applied to a job that explicitly prioritised skills over experience or qualifications

So why the gap? For employers, the biggest challenge is inertia. Many recruitment systems are built around legacy filters like college, tenure, or job title. Even those who believe in skills-first often fall back on traditional criteria because they are easier to scale. From the jobseeker’s perspective, it’s about confidence. Many are eager to be evaluated on skills but lack the tools, language, or evidence like portfolios or case studies, to make their competencies visible.

Still, the intent is there. Both sides recognise that skills-first hiring is the future. The task now is turning that intent into habit by redesigning job descriptions, changing ATS filters, and empowering candidates to showcase their real value.

What Boosts Hiring Confidence?

According to Indian hiring managers, confidence increases when the following are present during the hiring process:

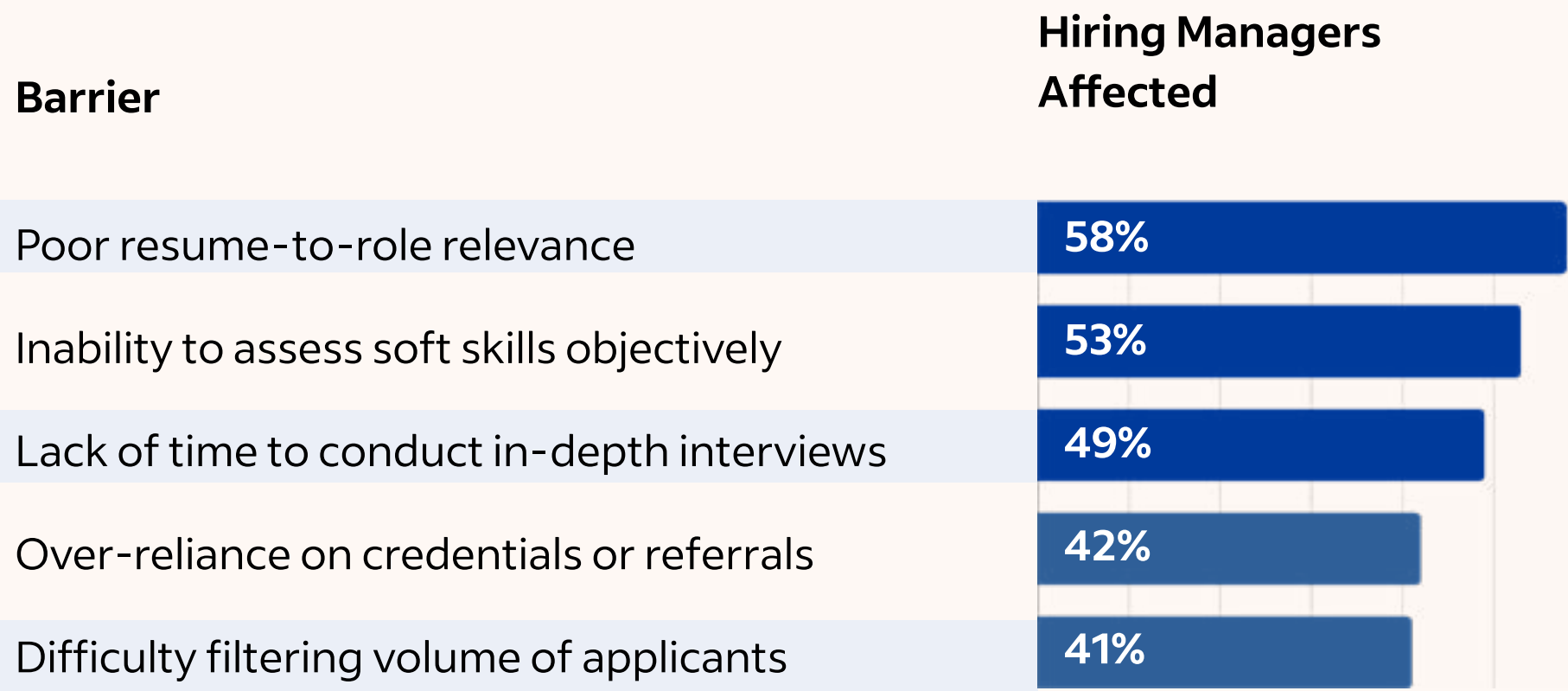


What Boosts Hiring Confidence?

Hiring confidence translates to better post-hire outcomes, especially when structured evaluations like skill tests or job simulations are used.

Yet, only 1 in 4 employers in India use standardised skill-based assessments at scale.

Barriers to Confident Hiring



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Confidence comes when you see the real person behind the resume, how they think, collaborate, and grow, and not just where they’ve worked.

Rohan Sylvester
Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed



Closing the Gap: Skills-Based Hiring in Action

Hiring That Sees Beyond the Resume

Indian employers who embed skill signals into hiring workflows report stronger performance and reduced attrition

From Resume Filters to Real Capabilities

Skills-based hiring offers a clear path forward for Indian employers looking to bridge the gap between job requirements and candidate potential. When done right, it ensures fairer, faster, and more accurate hiring decisions. But adoption remains uneven, largely due to a lack of tools, time, or training in assessing soft skills at scale.

What does the implementation of skills-first hiring look like in practice? Among the Indian employers who have adopted it, the most common strategies include:

- Redesigning job descriptions to highlight skills instead of degrees
- Creating assessments or tasks tied to actual work scenarios
- Removing educational filters in screening tools
- Partnering with platforms or bootcamps to access alternative talent pools

These changes are already yielding results. Employers who've implemented skills-first approaches report:

- Better candidate-job alignment (61%)
- Improved diversity of applicants (57%)
- Faster time to fill in key roles (44%)

Yet barriers persist. Many hiring managers say they lack the internal alignment to overhaul their systems. Others fear that dropping degrees or experience requirements might lower quality, despite data showing the opposite.

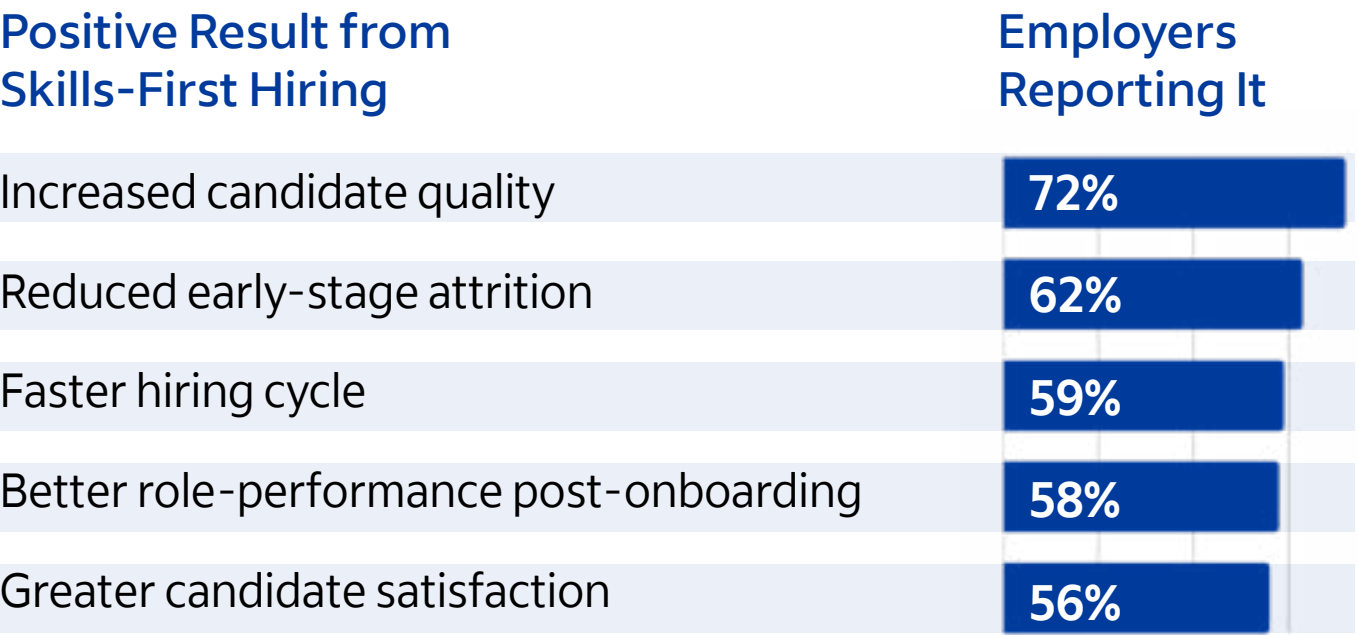
For jobseekers, the issue is still exposure. Many don't know what skills-first means or how to tailor their applications to highlight competency over background. This calls for better communication from companies, both in their employer branding and in the way roles are marketed.

As demand for digital, creative, and remote-first skills continues to grow, the shift to skills-first isn't optional but inevitable. The winners in this transition will be those who build processes that see potential where others see pedigree.

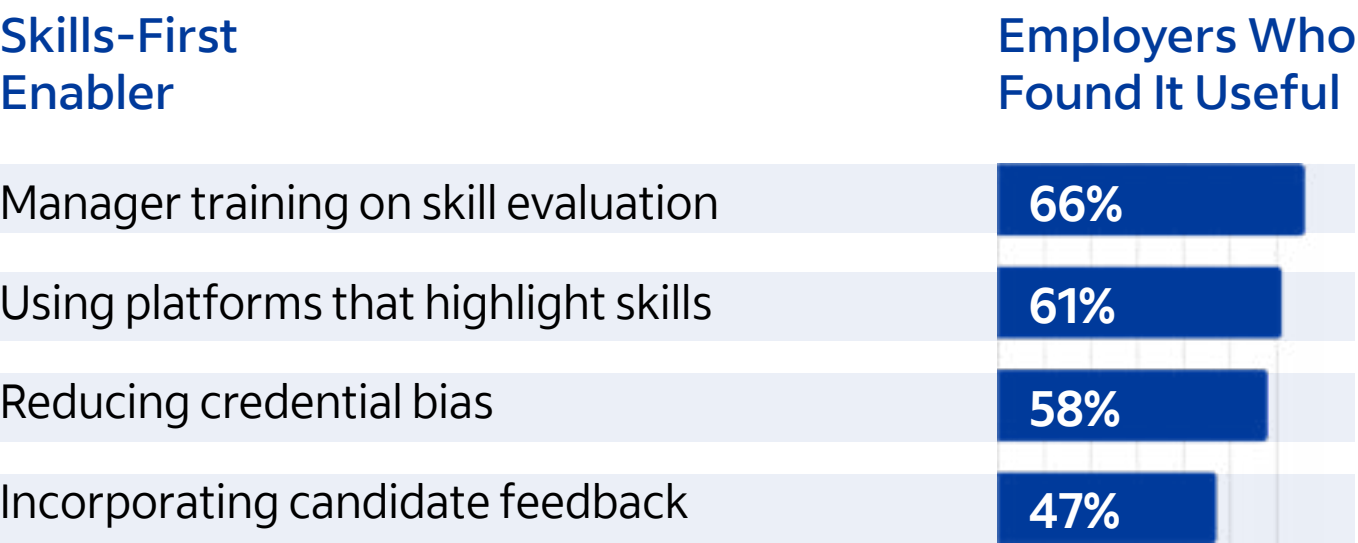
Common Practices Used by Skills-First Employers

- Role-relevant tasks or case studies
- Structured interviews focused on behaviour and problem-solving
- Skills-based job descriptions with clarity on expectations
- Internal hiring from cross-trained teams
- Soft skill checklists or scorecards

Early Adopters Are Seeing Impact



What Helps It Work?



Skills-based hiring is not a trend but a transformation. The Indian market is ready for it, as long as both employers and candidates are empowered with the right tools.



The Role of AI in Smarter Hiring

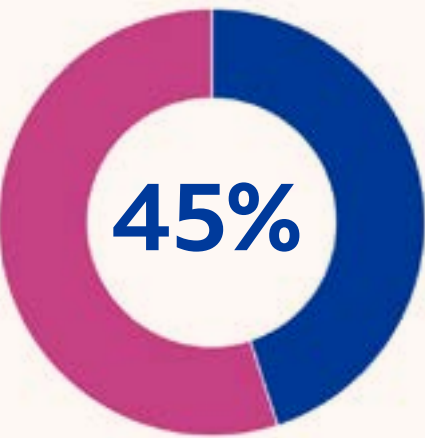
A Tool, Not a Replacement

AI adoption is rising, but responsible use must balance speed with equity and candidate trust

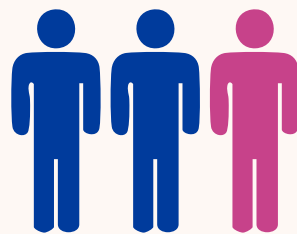
AI's Real Impact On Hiring

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming how companies source, assess, and hire talent and India is no exception. While AI tools are still in the early stages of adoption, they're already reshaping key stages of the hiring funnel.

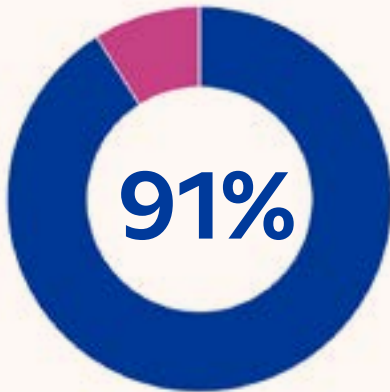
According to our survey:



Indian employers say they have used AI tools in recruitment



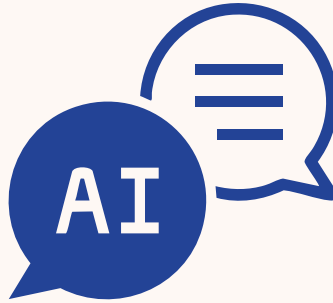
Among them, the most common use cases include personalising the candidate experience, shortlisting resumes, and automating communication workflows



Nearly all of them say they are willing to invest time to train these tools

Employers see AI as a way to reduce time-to-hire, improve candidate matching, and free up recruiter capacity for higher-touch tasks. AI can also help identify transferable skills and pattern-matching in candidate experience that may not be obvious to human screeners. However, jobseekers are more sceptical. Many believe AI leads to impersonal experiences or

biased filtering. Only 36% of jobseekers say they trust AI-based screening to evaluate them fairly, and even fewer (22%) feel they know how to optimise their applications for such tools. This trust gap needs to be addressed. Transparent use of AI, coupled with fair evaluation frameworks and human oversight, will be essential for building equitable hiring systems.

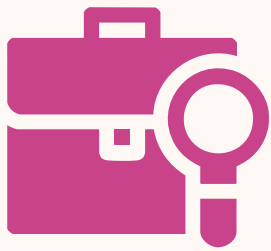


The growing use of AI in recruitment presents both opportunity and risk. Done well, it can help reduce human bias and unlock efficiency. Done poorly, it can entrench inequality and alienate qualified candidates, especially those from non-traditional backgrounds.

Employers using AI in India report the biggest benefits in:

- Candidate personalisation when highlighting relevant roles and content
- Improved resume parsing and ranking
- Faster initial screening for volume roles

However, challenges remain. Many hiring teams lack the training or data governance to implement AI responsibly. Without careful calibration, AI may unintentionally favour candidates with conventional credentials or communication styles, amplifying existing biases.



For jobseekers, especially early-career professionals, AI introduces new uncertainties. Should they tailor their resume with keywords? Can creative or portfolio-based applicants stand out in an algorithmic scan? These are valid concerns that employers need to address through clearer instructions and human checkpoints in the process.

Fortunately, most Indian companies are approaching AI as an augmentation and not a replacement for recruiter judgment. Over 90% of employers using AI say they continue to rely on human interviews and culture fit assessments before making final decisions.

As AI becomes more embedded in hiring systems, the priority must be transparency, explainability, and empathy, ensuring technology supports better, fairer decisions rather than just quicker decisions.



Recommendations: Smarter Hiring Strategies for Indian Employers

From Hiring for Fit to Building for Growth

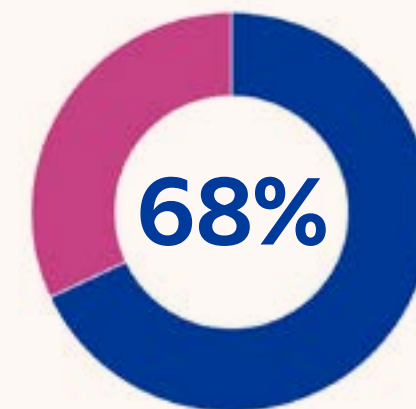
Learning and development are no longer perks -
they're competitive hiring advantages



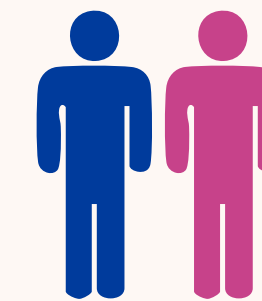
Learning, Upskilling & Retention

Learning and development (L&D) has emerged as a cornerstone of modern hiring and retention strategy in India. As industries shift rapidly due to automation, AI, and digital transformation, employers are looking beyond hiring for perfect fits and instead building systems to develop talent from within.

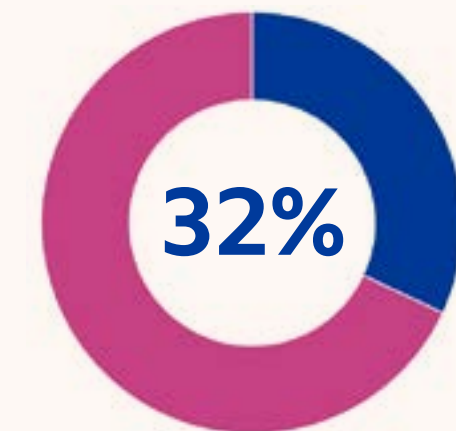
According to our survey:



Indian employers say upskilling is essential to long-term workforce strategy



Nearly 1 in 2 employers have already updated their L&D programs to help new hires close skill gaps



A further 32% plan to do so in the next 12 months

The most common L&D investments include structured onboarding, mentorship programs, cross-skilling between departments, and access to external learning platforms. These aren't just seen as HR perks, they are central to productivity, retention, and culture-building.

From the candidate's side, the appetite for learning is equally strong. Over 75% of jobseekers say opportunities for skill growth are very important when deciding whether to apply. In fact, more than half would accept a lower-paying role if it offered better development opportunities.

This shift marks a redefinition of what a competitive employer looks like. It is no longer just about brand name or salary, it is about the learning journey offered to every new hire.

Recommendations: Smarter Hiring Strategies for Indian Employers

In a hiring landscape that increasingly favours skills and adaptability, the ability to continuously learn is seen as both a candidate trait and an employer obligation. Indian jobseekers expect companies to be partners in their growth and not just evaluators of their past.

47% of jobseekers said during the interview process

31% said they rely on information shared in job descriptions or career pages

14% said employers proactively highlight L&D in outreach or employer branding

This presents a missed opportunity. Companies investing heavily in learning infrastructure often fail to communicate it effectively, reducing their ability to attract future-focused candidates. Just as jobseekers must learn to showcase skills, employers must learn to showcase development pathways. Retention is also directly linked to upskilling. Employers who support learning report higher satisfaction scores, reduced early attrition, and stronger internal mobility. And as remote and hybrid roles proliferate, L&D has become essential for building culture and capability across dispersed teams. Ultimately, in a skills-first era, hiring doesn't end at offer acceptance. It continues through every training, project, and promotion. Smart companies know that building a great workforce doesn't mean finding perfect people, it means helping good people grow in the right direction.

“ We can't just hire for skills, we must also communicate how we grow them. Development isn't a benefit anymore. It is your biggest brand message.

Rohan Sylvester | Talent Strategy Advisor, Indeed

What Employers in India Can Do

To bridge the gap between expectation and experience, Indian employers must reimagine hiring as a skills-first, human-centric, and feedback-driven journey. Based on our findings, here are six key recommendations to help talent acquisition leaders hire with more clarity, confidence, and quality.

Tactic	Recommended Action	Supporting Insight Why It Matters
Write Job Descriptions That Signal Skills Clearly	Replace jargon-heavy listings with clear, role-relevant technical and soft skills	Only 26% of jobseekers say job descriptions clearly communicate skill requirements
Incorporate Skills Demonstration into the Process	Use assessments, simulations, or tasks early in the funnel to assess real ability, not just resumes	65% of confident hiring decisions include task-based evaluation
Train Hiring Managers on Skills Evaluation	Provide interviewers with scorecards or structured prompts to objectively evaluate soft skills	Only 1 in 4 employers use standard tools for soft skill assessment
Provide Candidates with Feedback & Transparency	Share feedback on performance and improvement areas to build trust and promote re-engagement	51% of jobseekers say that no feedback as a top frustration
Use Platforms That Surface Skill Signals	Leverage assessment tools or skill tags to match based on skills, not just credentials	Majority of employers found it improves hiring confidence
Measure Hiring Outcomes Beyond Offer Acceptance	Track long-term success via onboarding, retention, and growth readiness—not just time-to-fill	The top metric for quality is retention beyond 6 months



Conclusion & Recommendations

A New Chapter for Indian Hiring

India's next hiring advantage lies in unlocking hidden talent through skills-first design



Final Thoughts: Skills-First Hiring: Hire for Potential over Pedigree

The 2025 hiring landscape in India is undergoing a paradigm shift. The traditional markers of quality degrees, designations, and years of experience are giving way to a more dynamic set of criteria centred on skills, adaptability, and growth potential. This change is both timely and necessary.

Our research shows that while 92% of employers agree quality of hire is more critical than ever, they're still fine-tuning what that means in practice. Meanwhile, jobseekers are eager to be evaluated fairly, yet many feel excluded or unsure of how to signal their value. Bridging this gap requires collective action.



Skill-first hiring is gaining ground in India and it is reshaping how employers connect with talent. Instead of checking boxes for degrees or past titles, more recruiters are looking for potential, adaptability, and real-world capabilities. This report echoes what many jobseekers and hiring teams already feel.

Things are changing and we are moving from rigid job requirements to flexible, skill-based expectations. From resumes to real performance. From gut feel to data-backed decisions. The future of hiring is fair and powered by skills.

Here are five actionable strategies for smarter, skills-first hiring in India:

1. Redesign Job Descriptions:

Focus on core competencies and transferable skills. Remove unnecessary filters like degree or years of experience unless truly essential.

2. Invest in Skill-Based Assessments:

Simulations, case studies, and task-based evaluations offer clearer insights than resumes or credentials alone.

3. Provide Transparent Feedback:

Create lightweight, automated ways to share post-interview feedback. It improves candidate experience and builds trust.

4. Showcase L&D Clearly:

Make upskilling a visible part of your employer brand. Candidates value growth as much as compensation.

5. Use AI with Accountability:

Ensure AI systems are audited for bias, and always pair automation with human oversight.



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