

Close the Gap That's Actually in Your Way

You know roughly where you're headed. The question is which skill to build first, and the expensive mistake isn't choosing an unpopular one. It's choosing a valuable one you can't realistically finish before you need it.

THE ROLE I'M BUILDING TOWARD

BY WHEN

WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

Rate each Skill twice: how strong you are now, and whether you want to use it regularly. A skill you're good at but don't want to use should not automatically drive your next role. Levels: strong, working, rusty, none.

SKILLS I HAVE	LEVEL	WANT TO USE IT?
Communication presenting, writing, stakeholders		
Analysis & data Excel, reporting, research		
Operations planning, process, budgets, teams		
Tools & software systems you actually use		
Applied AI what you use it for, honestly		

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING FOR

Open three real postings for the role you want, similar in level, function, and industry. Not summaries. The actual listings.

APPEARS IN ALL THREE

APPEARS IN TWO OF THREE

I ALREADY HAVE THIS

THE REAL GAP

Do I need to build this, or name it better?

You may have led three system transitions and never once called it change management. That gap is positioning, not competence.

THE REALITY CHECK

Run this before you enroll in anything. Learning plans usually fail because the time required was never compared to the time available.

The one skill I'm choosing first

Hours a week I actually have × weeks until I need it

= total hours I have to work with

What can I credibly learn or produce in that time?

FOUR WAYS TO BUILD CREDIBLE EVIDENCE

☐ Use it on something real. A work project, volunteer assignment, case study, or small business problem. The goal is evidence you can explain and show.

☐ Learn from someone doing the work. Speak with one to three people in the role. Ask which parts matter most in practice and what beginners overinvest in.

☐ Take a focused course, then apply it fast. Choose one tied to the actual gap, and produce a work sample or result while the material is fresh.

☐ Make the evidence visible. Resume, LinkedIn, portfolio, interview examples, in the language employers search for.

MY FIRST MOVE

WHAT I'LL DO

STARTING WHEN

WHO CAN HELP

PROOF AT THE END

Build the gap that's blocking you, not the one that's trending.
And apply anyway while you're building it.

