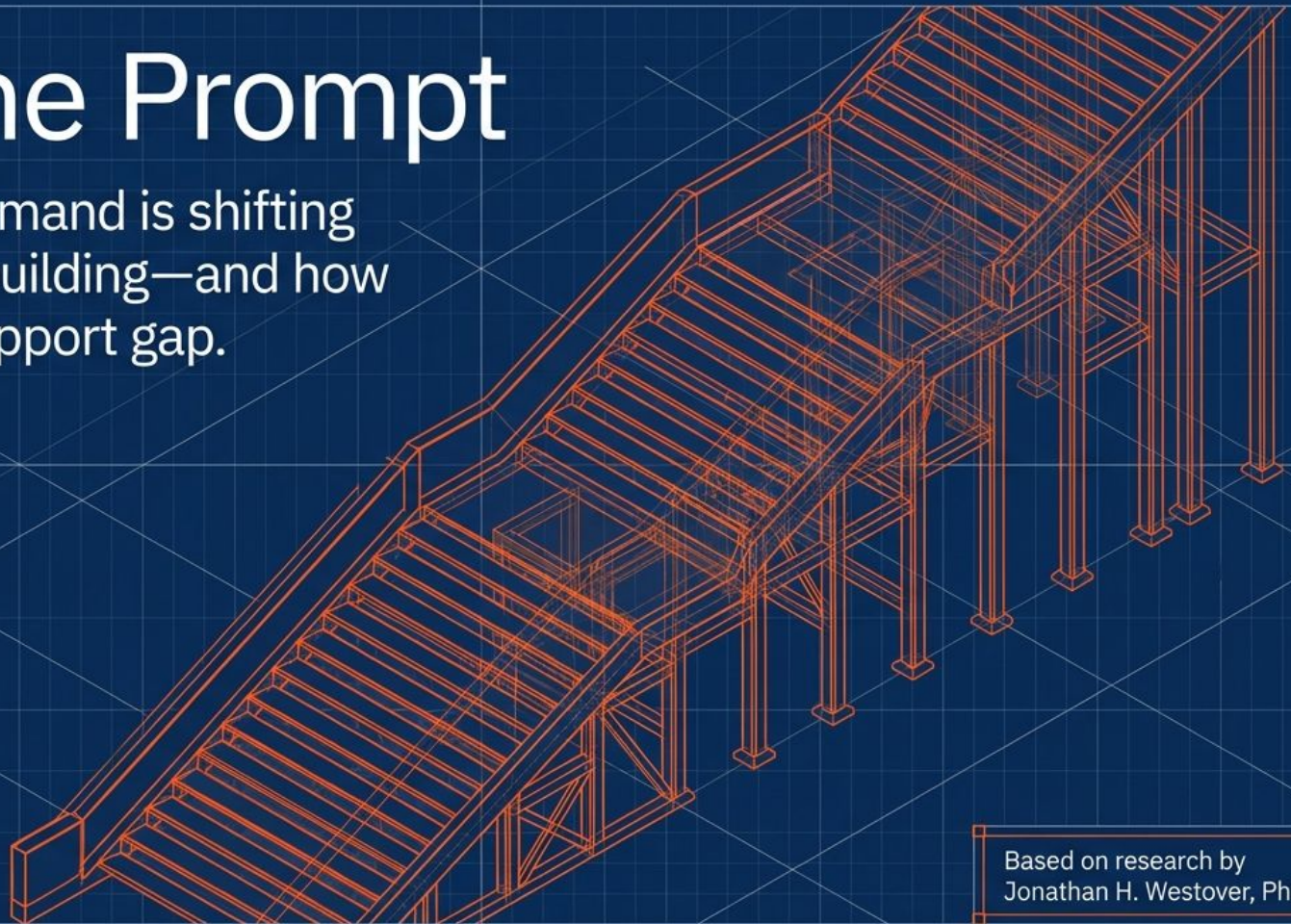


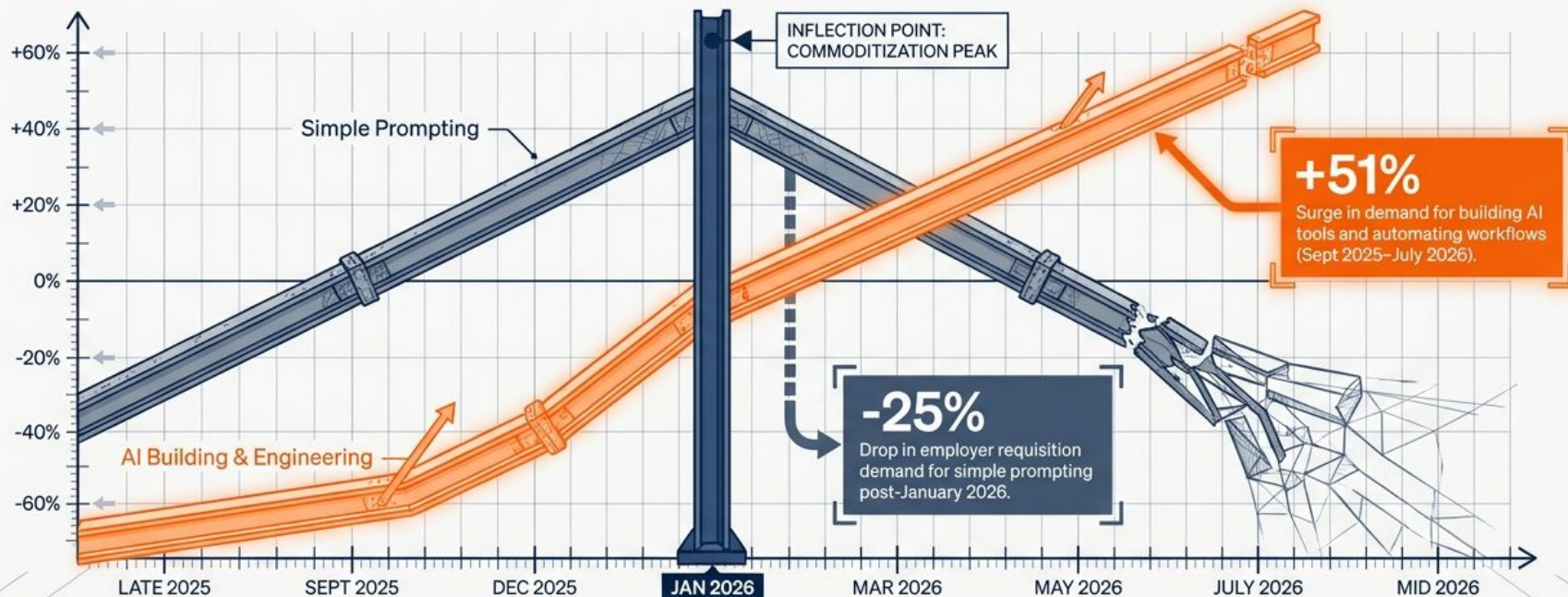
Past the Prompt

Why AI skill demand is shifting from using to building—and how to close the support gap.



Based on research by
Jonathan H. Westover, PhD.

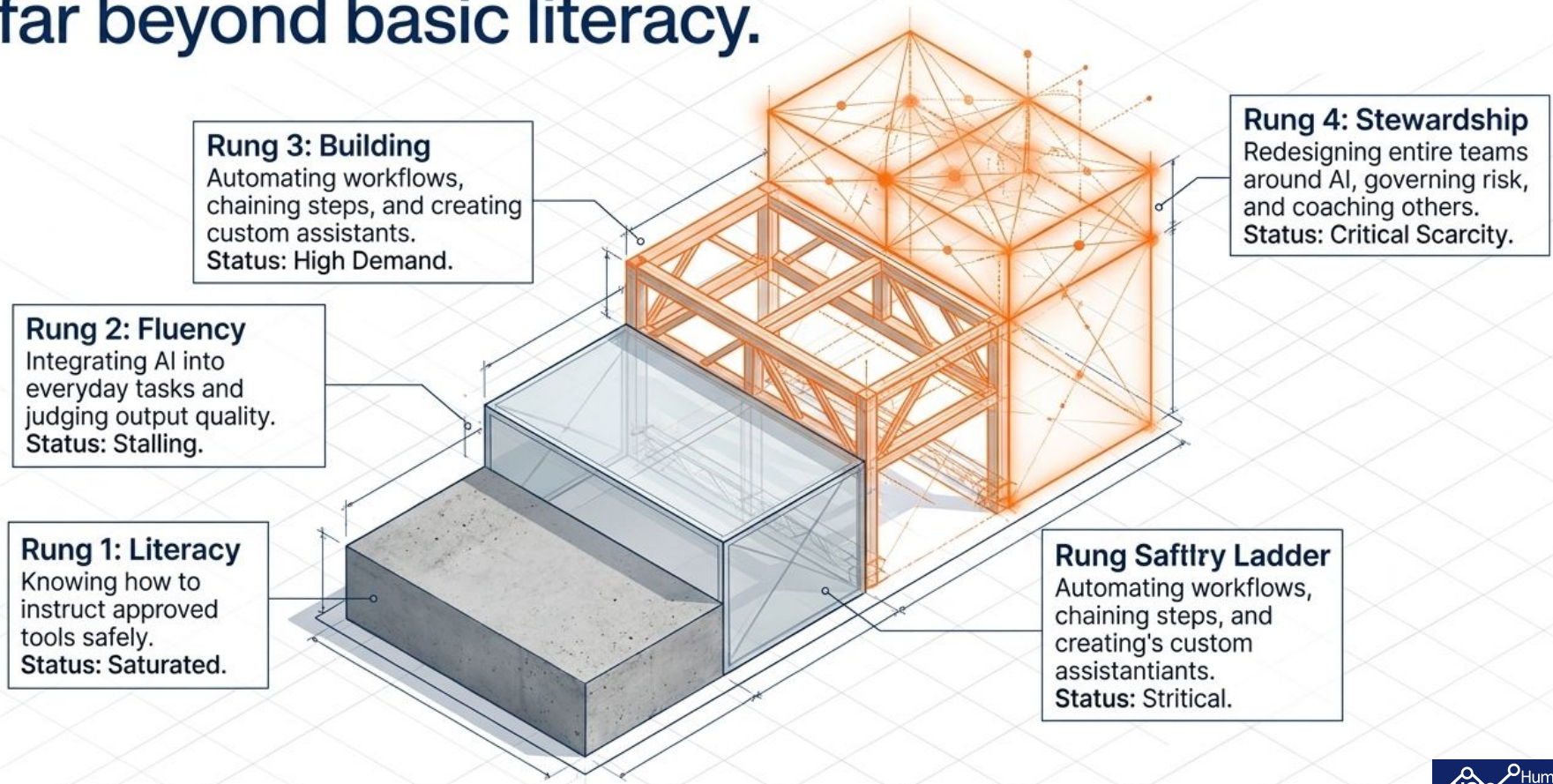
The shelf life of prompt engineering is expiring.



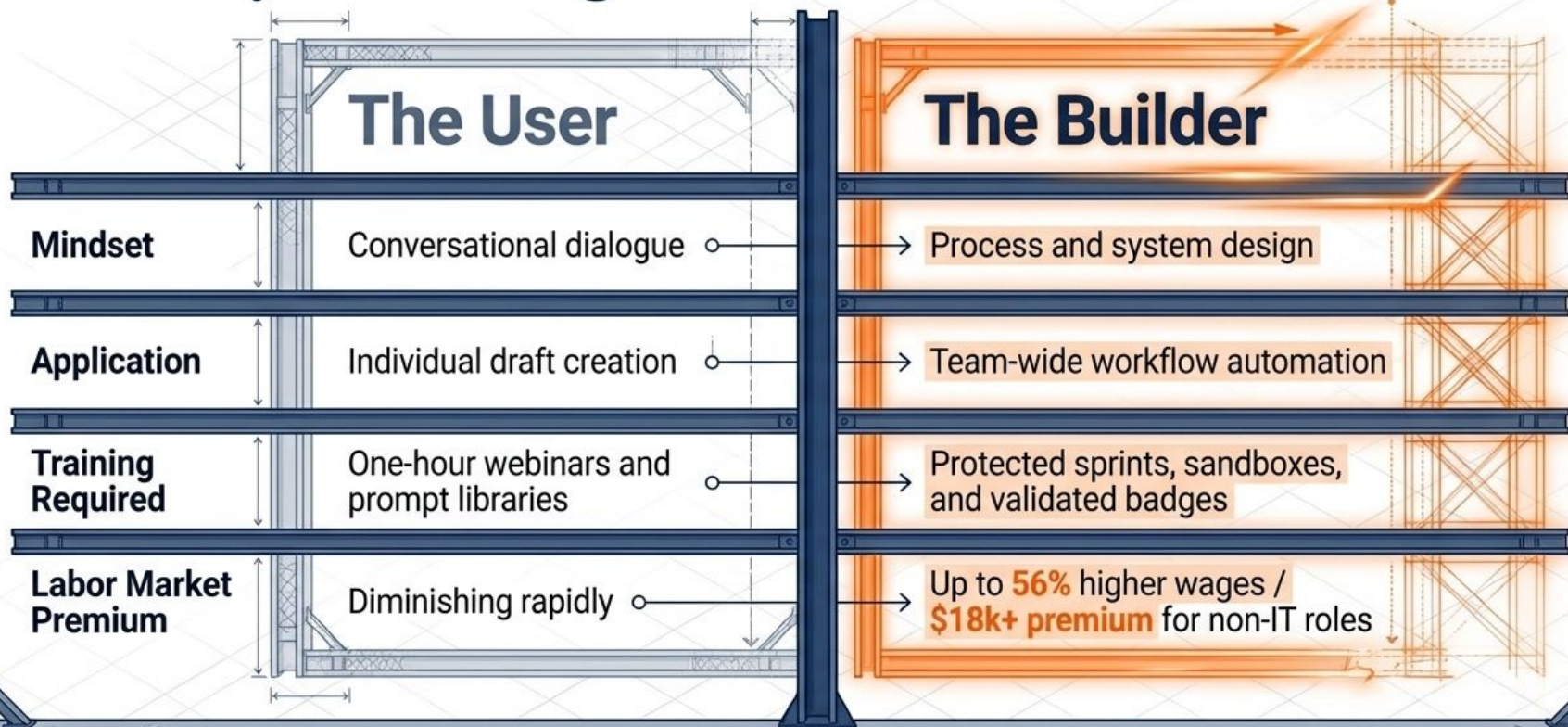
Commoditization has turned prompting from a premium skill into table stakes. As tools embed directly into mainstream software, organizations no longer need users; they need **builders** who can capture measurable ROI.

(Source: Workday Global Workforce Report, Oct 2026).

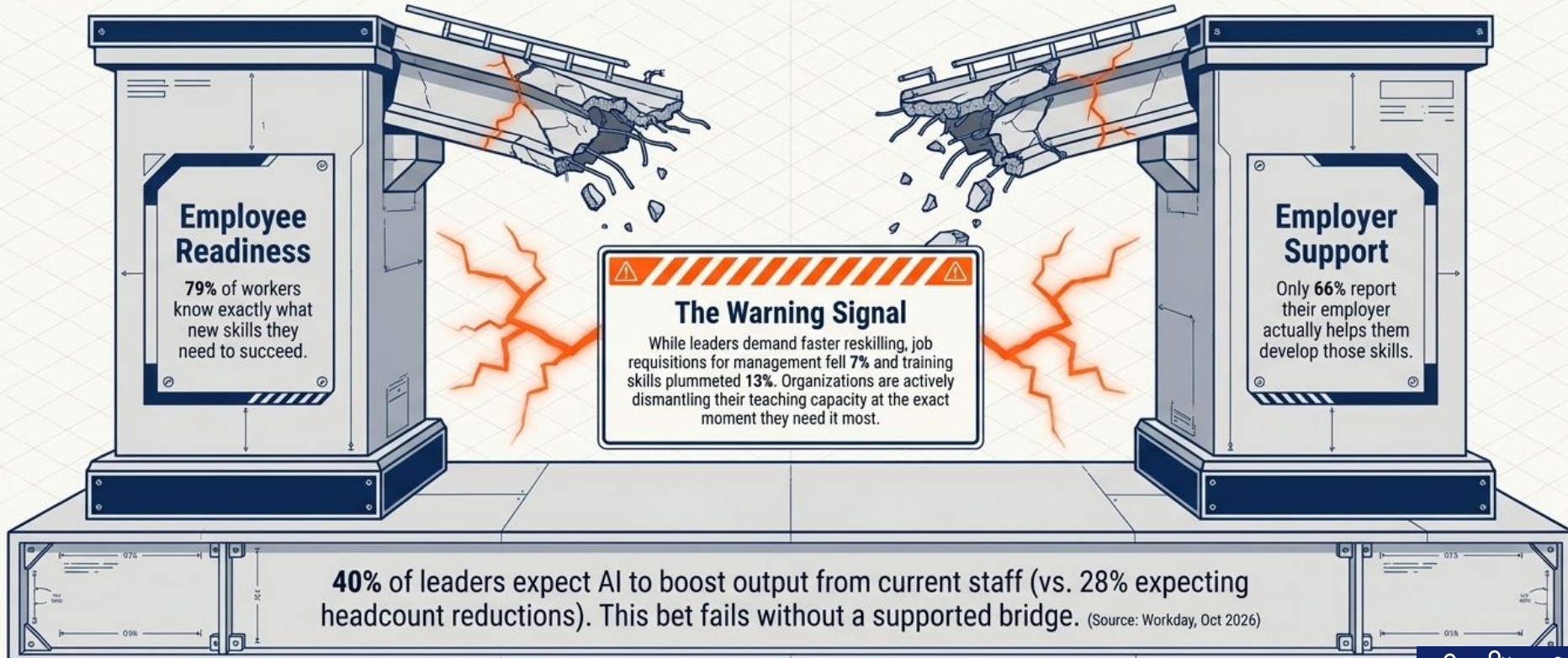
Organizations must elevate capability far beyond basic literacy.



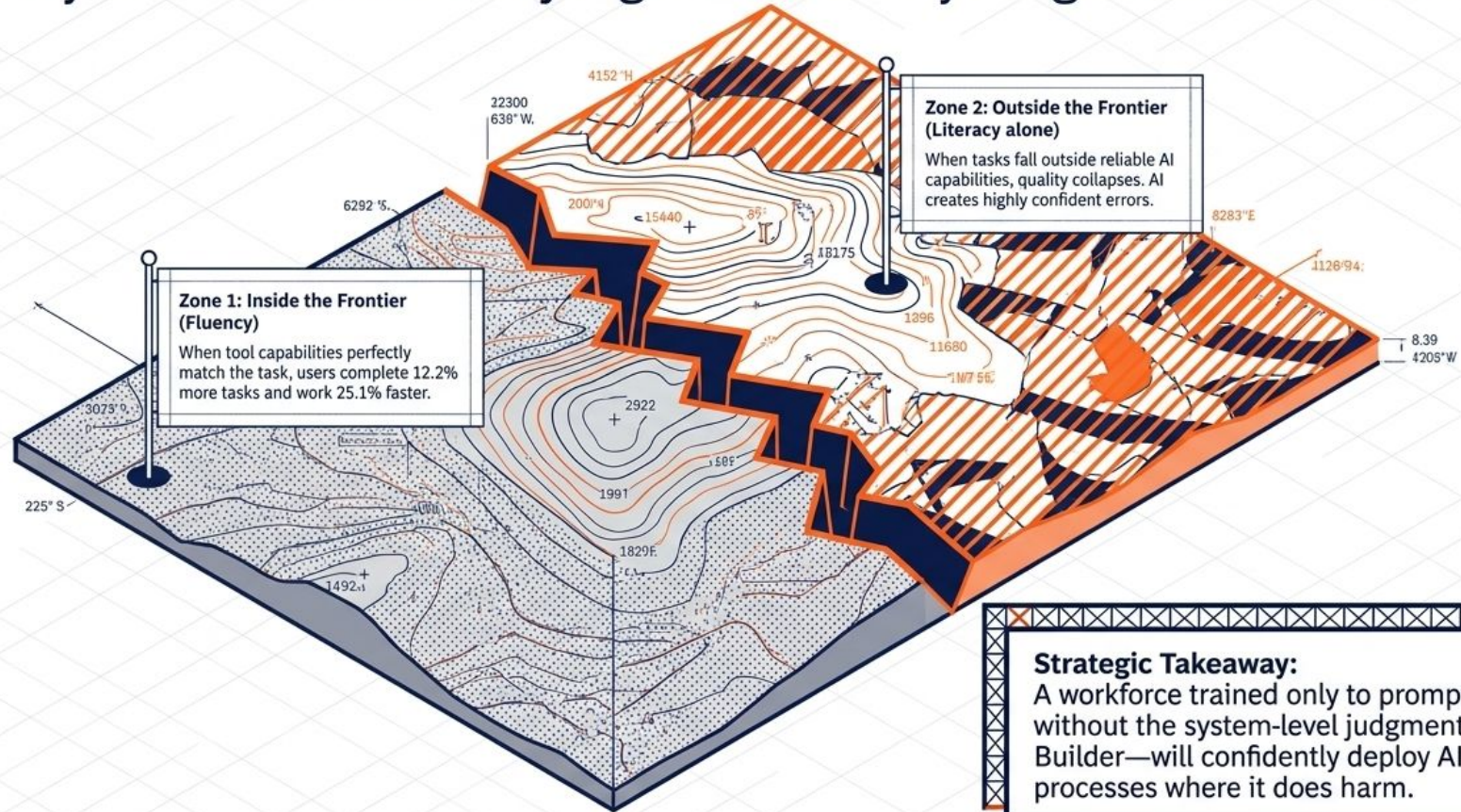
The fundamental shift from conversational use to system design.



A dangerous gap has opened between ambition and organizational support.



Literacy without structural judgment destroys organizational value.



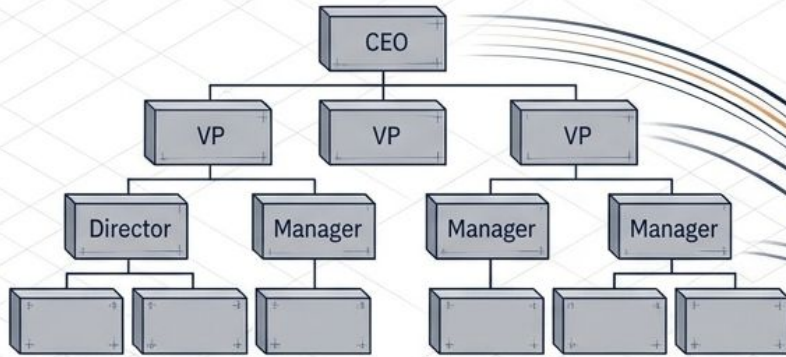
Source: BCG field experiment with 758 consultants (Dell'Acqua et al., 2023).

Transitioning from fragmented courses to a unified capability engine.

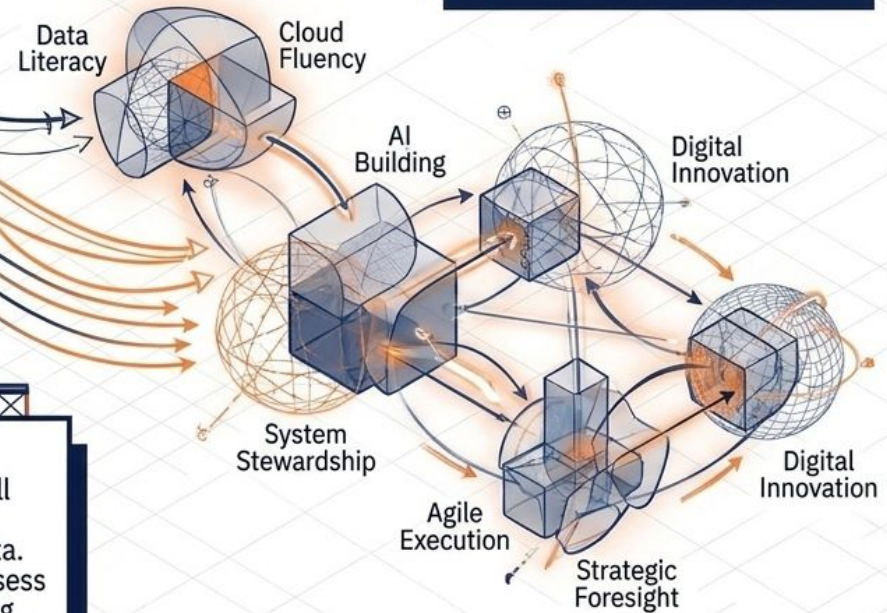
Closing the support gap requires an evidence-based system, not a lunchtime webinar series.



01 / Map capability dynamically to role architectures.



Skills Node Map



Field Evidence: AT&T & Amazon.



Both deployed tiered, role-mapped pathways linking specific learning resources directly to future business requirements.

The Action:

Discard static annual taxonomies. Map specific capability rungs (Literacy, Fluency, Building, Stewardship) to specific role families.

The Blueprint:

- **Live Demand Signals:** Refresh skill priorities quarterly using internal requisitions and external labor data.
- **Demonstrated over Declared:** Assess building capability through working artifacts, not self-reported surveys.

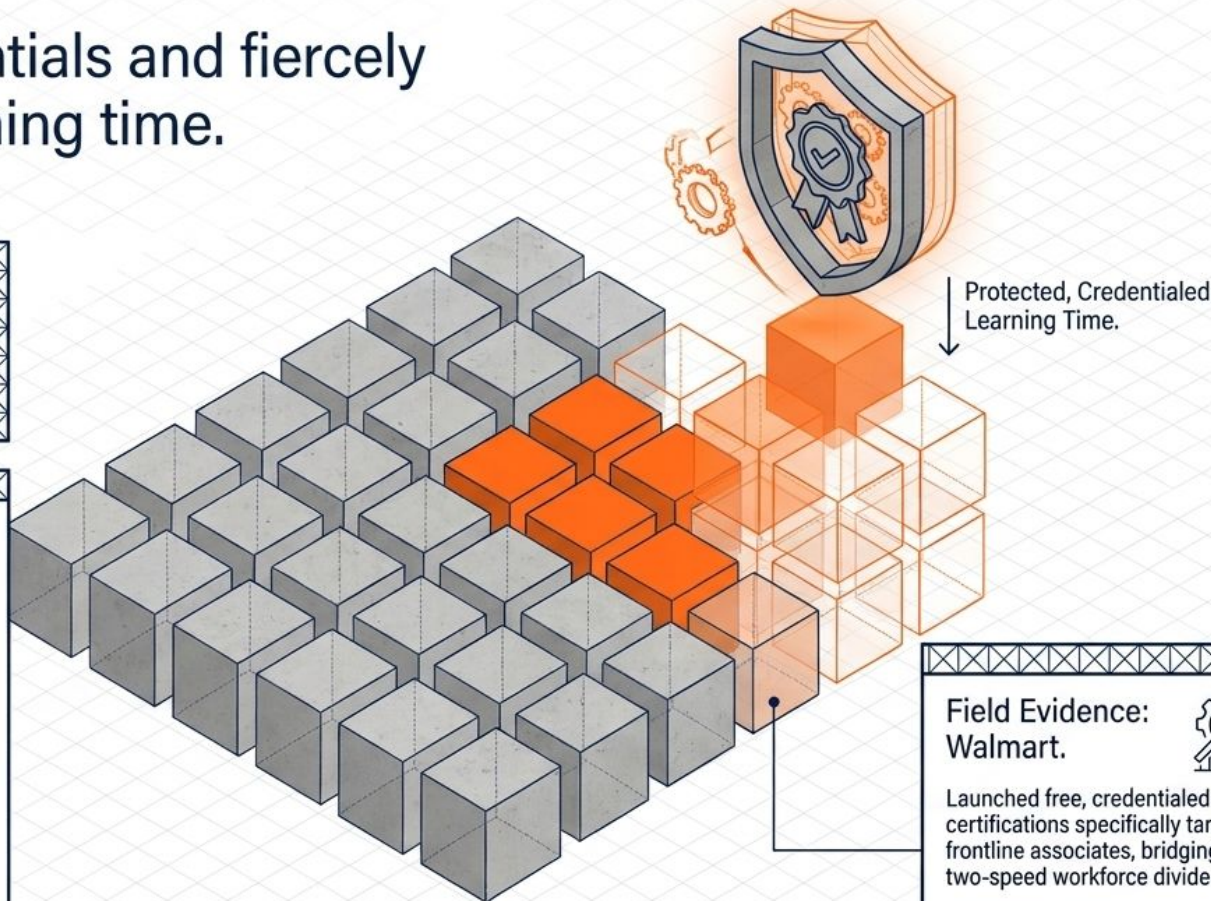
02 / Fund credentials and fiercely protect learning time.

The Action:

Treat a few hours of introductory training as the floor, not the finish line.

The Blueprint:

- **Schedule Protected Time:** Mandate manager-endorsed, in-work hours dedicated entirely to AI practice.
- **Fund Portability:** Pay for recognized certifications with labor-market value to signal genuine investment in the employee.
- **Target the Frontline:** Prioritize less-experienced staff where productivity gains are empirically highest.

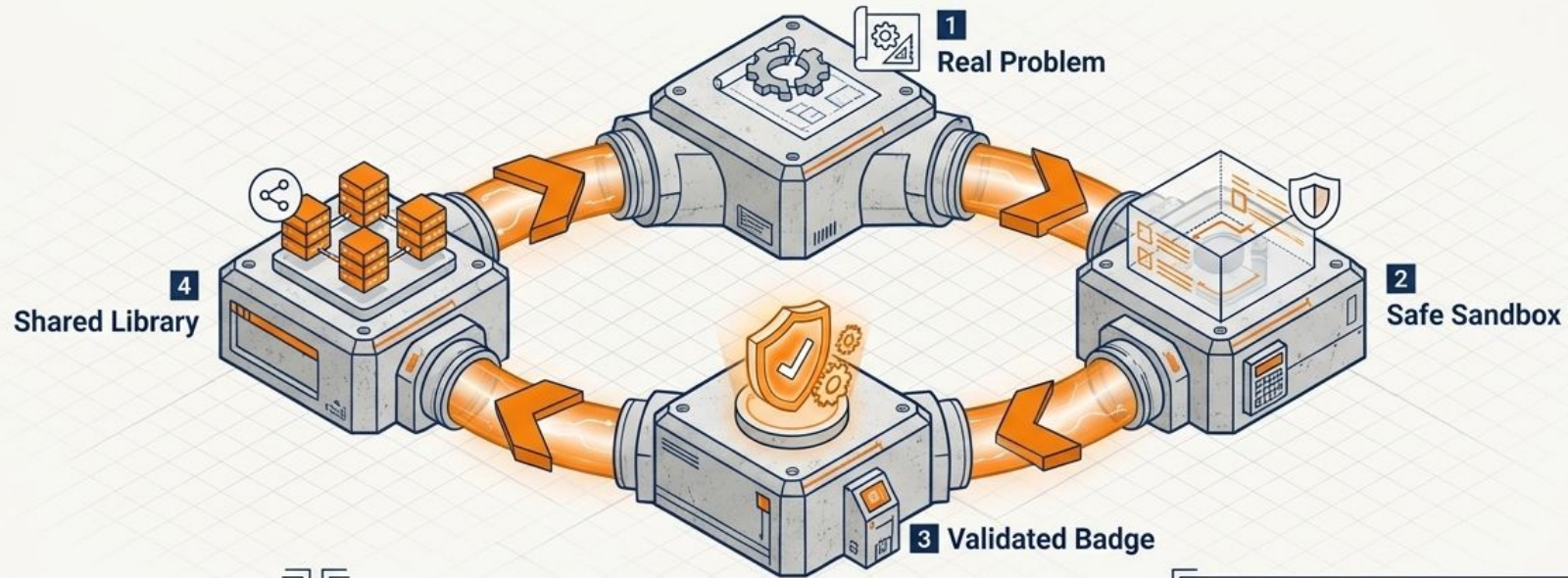


Field Evidence: Walmart.



Launched free, credentialed AI certifications specifically targeting frontline associates, bridging the two-speed workforce divide.

03 / Drive learning through real-world building sprints.



The Action:

Abandon the one-off hackathon. Enable deliberate, sustained practice on real, painful workflows.

The Blueprint:

- **Project-Based Sprints:** Time-boxed builds solving genuine team pain points.
- **Validated Badges:** Recognize working products, not course completions.
- **Reuse Libraries:** Make automations shareable so individual learning compounds into organizational capability.



Field Evidence: PwC Digital Accelerators.

150+ hour skill badges tied to validated products, resulting in a Digital Lab with **5,500+** shared workflow assets and millions of automated runs.

04 / Decentralize expertise through local champions.

The Action:

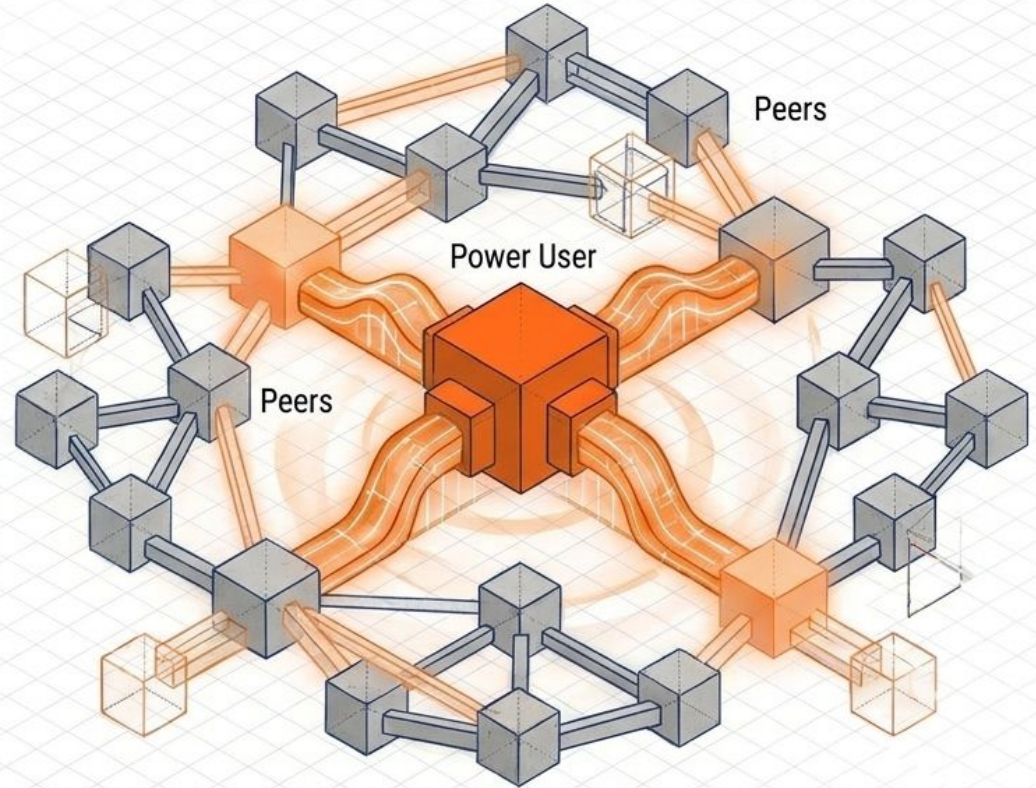
AI capability spreads socially. Centralized HR cannot coach thousands of specific workflow automations.

The Blueprint:

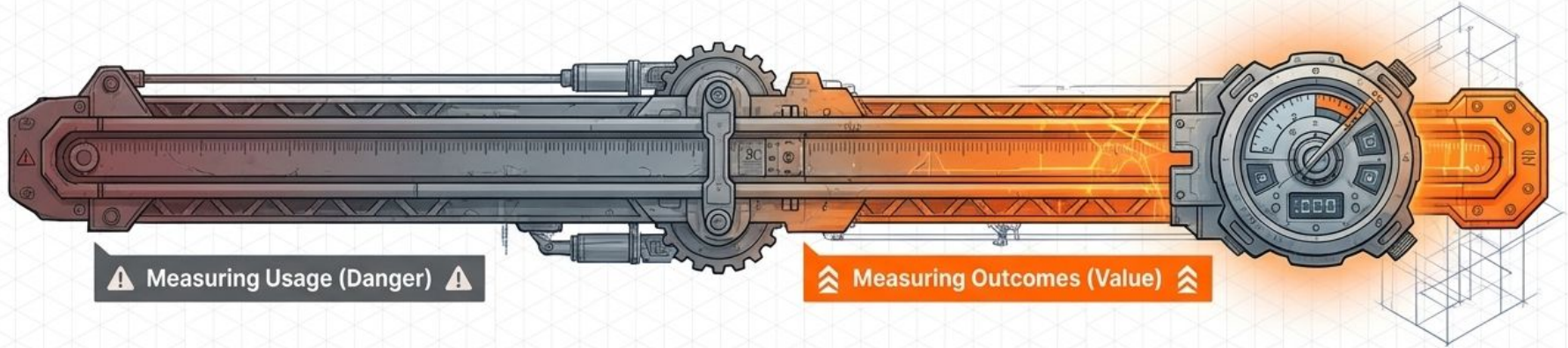
- **Embed Local Experts:** Place champions inside specific business units, close to the actual work.
- **Equip Managers:** Train managers not to be AI experts, but to recognize good use, ask critical questions, and protect their team's learning time.
- **Normalize Imperfection:** Create the psychological safety required to share half-working prototypes.

Field Evidence: Moderna / JPMorgan Chase.

Top 100 power users identified via usage data and embedded locally; resulting in 750 custom GPTs built across the enterprise in just two months.



05 / Measure business outcomes rather than tool usage.



The Action:

Do not measure logins or prompt volume. Measure better work, faster cycle times, and workflow redesign.

The Blueprint:

- **Make Builds Visible:** Invite employees to document successful automations in performance reviews.
- **Open Mobility:** Create project-based internal pathways so newly skilled builders can deploy their skills across teams.



Field Evidence: Shopify vs. Duolingo



Shopify: Teams must justify *'not'* using AI before requesting headcount.



Duolingo: Experimented with grading employees on AI usage, but pivoted back to pure outcomes when the metric pushed AI into places it didn't belong.

The strategic playbook for building AI capability at scale.

The Response	The Core Practice	The Common Pitfall
Map Capability	Live demand signals & demonstrated skills	The static, multi-year HR taxonomy.
Fund Time	Manager-endorsed hours & portable credentials	Literacy programs with no follow-up.
Learn by Building	Sprints, sandboxes & shared reuse libraries	The hackathon that goes nowhere.
Scale via Champions	Embedded experts & psychological safety	Unfunded volunteer enthusiasm.
Align Expectations	Measure outcomes & make builds visible	Vanity metrics and tracking simple logins

Three foundational pillars for continuous AI readiness

Pillar 3: Cultivating Stewardship & Judgment

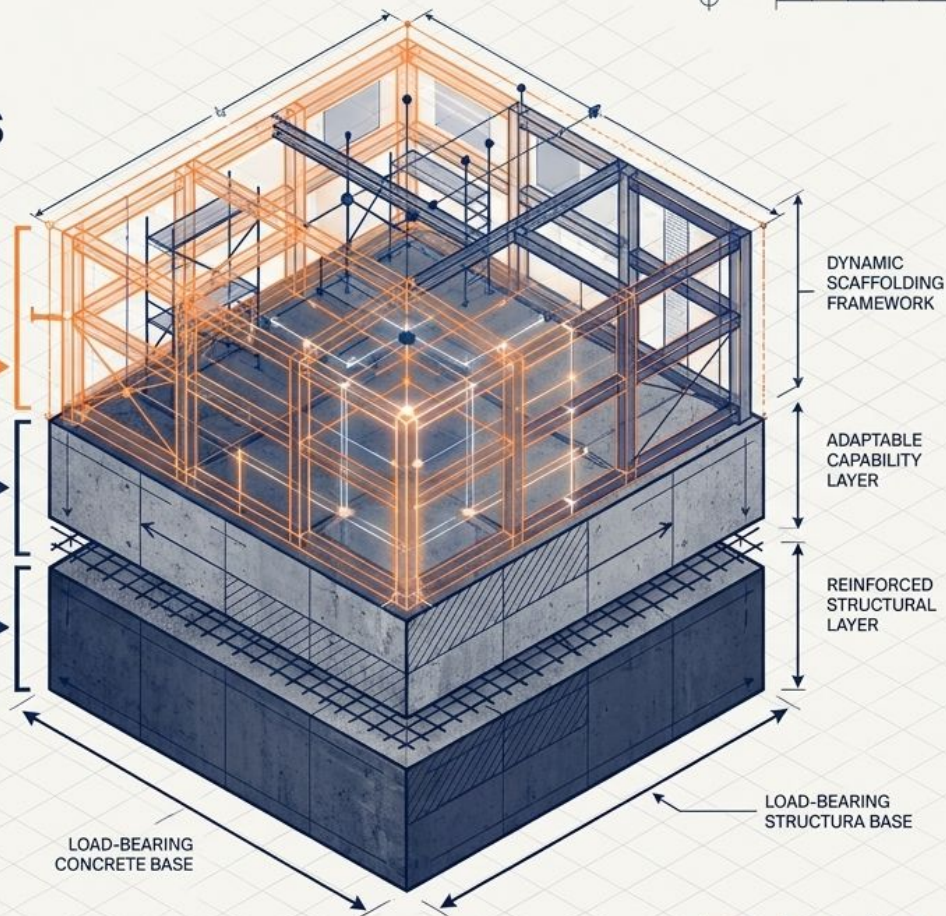
Developing the mindset to govern risk, enforce quality standards, and redesign work—capabilities that retain value regardless of which software vendor wins.

Pillar 2: Rebuilding the Teaching Organization

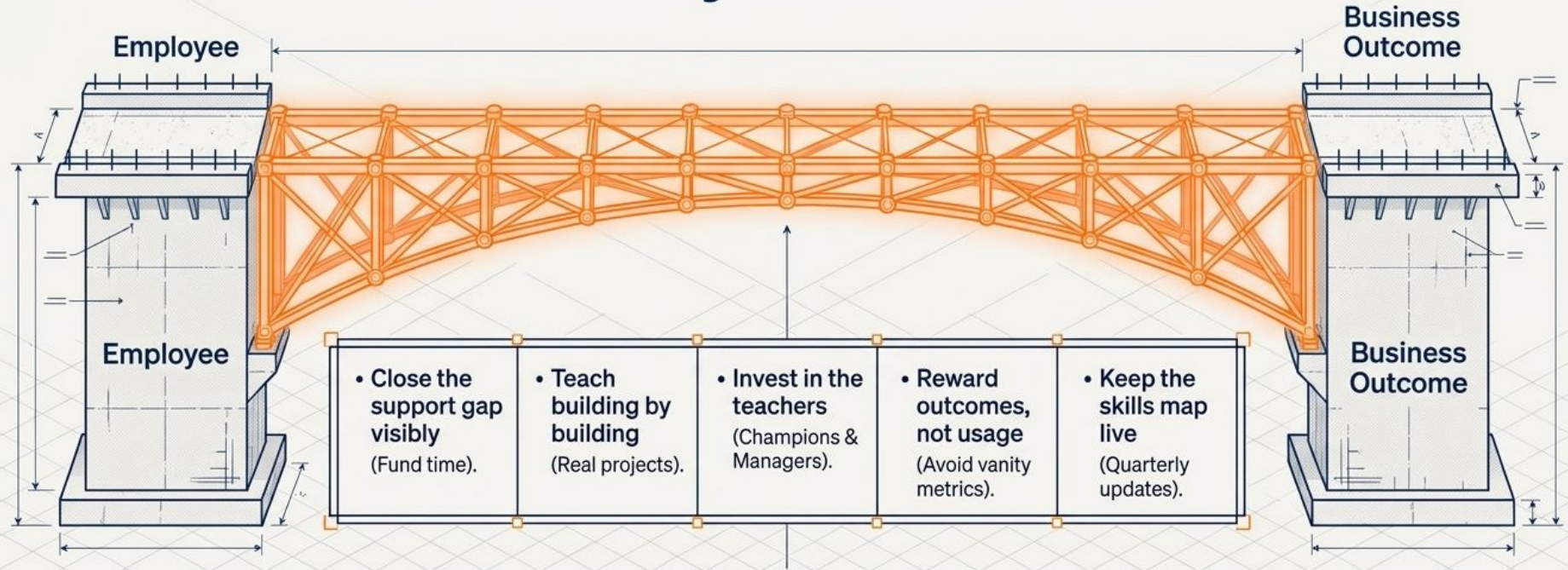
Making coaching part of the job description. Reversing the dangerous cost-cutting of management and peer-training roles.

Pillar 1: Skills Intelligence as Infrastructure

Triangulating live internal requisition data with external market signals to spot skill half-lives before they expire.



Retire literacy as the finish line.



“Leaders who expect AI to help them get more from their current workforce are making a reasonable bet. But it is a bet on development. And development requires investment.”