GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Building AI talent in Singapore

An eBook by General Assembly Singapore

eBook contents

Foreword

The question is no longer *if* teams will use AI, but how effectively they integrate it into real-world workflows.

Yet, as technology advances at this remarkable pace, one truth has become increasingly clear: the gap between education and employability is widening. We are entering an age where talent must do more than simply "learn AI." They must learn to think with AI and leverage it as a fundamental tool.

At General Assembly, we've been seeing this shift unfold dramatically—from startups automating content pipelines to global enterprises reimagining product design and data operations. What we've observed at GA mirrors this transformation: roles are being rewritten, skill expectations are rising, and the definition of 'job-ready' has evolved.

Familiar challenge, new pace

We know this kind of acceleration well. Every few years, organizations face defining moments of disruption. We saw this during the initial wave of digital transformation in the 2000s, and again as the COVID era rapidly intensified the need for diverse tech talent.

Today, they face the next monumental wave: AI transformation.

The foundational questions sound familiar, but the stakes are exponentially higher:

- How do we prepare the workforce fast enough?
- What does "AI literacy" truly mean in a professional context?
- How do we hire for adaptability, not just current ability?

To explore these critical questions, General Assembly convened leaders across technology, education, and business for a pivotal roundtable discussion. What emerged was a candid, wide-ranging conversation about the next evolution of skills, learning, and hiring in the AI era.

This eBook isn't about predicting the future. It's about preparing for it—with the curiosity, adaptability, and courage that define every great learner.

About this eBook

This eBook is built on findings from Shaping the Future of Tech Talent—a closed-door roundtable hosted by General Assembly in Singapore in October 2025.

Participants

We gathered Technology Industry leaders from Product, Design, Engineering, Recruitment and Partnerships for an open honest discussion.

Focus

The conversation centered on how AI is reshaping hiring, training, and the definition of tech talent today.

Methodology

The session was facilitated by GA and recorded to capture qualitative insights, which were later distilled into this summary.

In the coming pages, expect a high-value snapshot of how pioneering organisations are actively building their AI-literate teams and mapping out emerging skill gaps. Long story short? **Strategic upskilling for the AI age is no longer optional. It's critical.**

Disclaimer: *The insights presented here are derived from the qualitative discussion of the General Assembly roundtable participants and represent their expert perspectives on emerging trends. This document is a summary of those discussions and should not be considered formal academic research, a comprehensive industry forecast, or a prediction of future events.*

From Prompt Engineering to Context Engineering

Prompting might be the new syntax, but context is the new logic.

The initial industry focus on prompt engineering (the new syntax) has given way to context engineering (the new logic). This means that success no longer hinges on just crafting a clever question, but on designing the entire workflow.

True AI-literate professionals design context-rich systems where tools know what matters, why it matters, and when to act. Thus, there is an increasing demand for individuals who can oversee, audit, and design the rules of the system, and anticipate the second and third-order effects of AI deployment in a business context.

In short, it's not about crafting clever prompts; it's about orchestrating human-AI collaboration to solve meaningful problems.

What this means

For Candidates:	For Hiring Partners:
Future professionals must understand not just how to interact with AI, but how to design systems that interpret business goals and ethical boundaries. This requires a strong foundation in business strategy, ethical frameworks, and clear communication, skills AI cannot yet replicate.	Implement scenario-based design reviews in the interview process. Present a complex business objective and an ethical constraint, then assess the candidate's proposed human-AI workflow and defined guardrails. Companies can also consider investing in cross-functional training between technical teams and legal/strategy/compliance departments to build the organizational muscle needed to transition existing employees to AI system ownership.

The education-to-work gap is widening

Participants agreed: the traditional education system isn't keeping pace with industry.

Many graduates can code, but few can apply their skills to scalable, compliant, and human-centered products. The most effective talent comes from practice-based learning: hackathons, simulations, and hands-on projects that reflect real-world complexity.

Employers consistently emphasized that **problem-solving remains the top capability they seek.** It's no longer just about coding or execution, but about navigating ambiguity, connecting systems, and seeing patterns others miss.

What this means

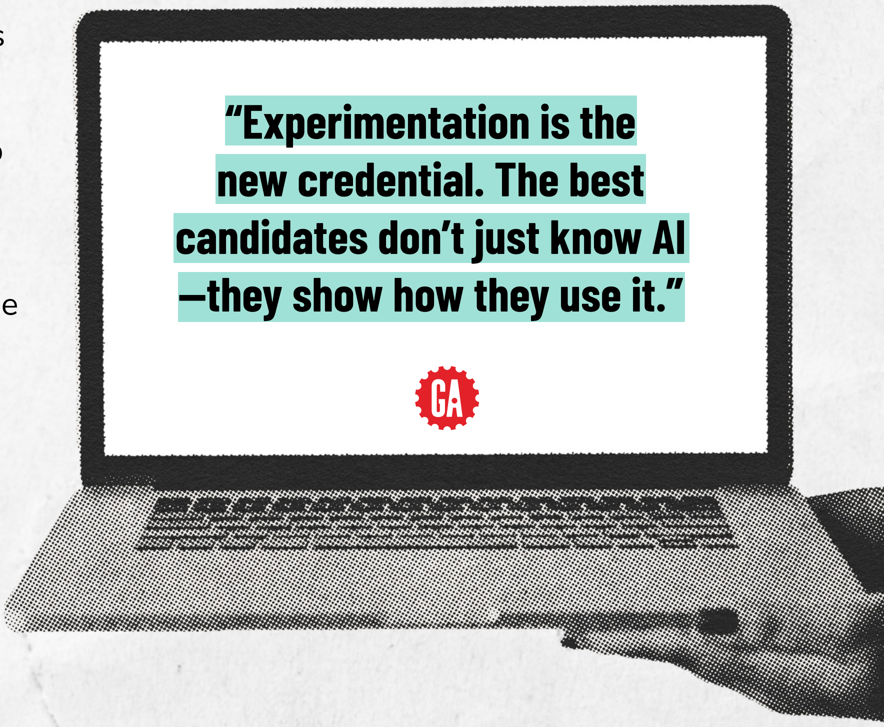
For Candidates:	For Hiring Partners:
The most effective talent comes from hands-on, real world experiences. Focus on finding ways to build public portfolios and proactively practice applying AI tools to real-world problems. The ability to articulate how you used an AI tool to achieve a complex, measurable result is the true signal of proficiency.	Shift assessment from résumé keyword scanning to portfolio-based reviews and practical simulations. Furthermore, embrace a culture where internal certification programs and hands-on, practice-based training are prioritized over external degrees for upskilling current staff.

Redefining AI literacy and the skills that matter

By 2026, nearly every professional will need AI literacy but the definition extends far beyond technical proficiency.

The term "AI literacy" is highly ambiguous across departments and companies, creating a messy operational definition for hiring. This ambiguity fuels a trust gap because managers struggle to assess AI-assisted work and fear hiring candidates who lack understanding of underlying principles. When a candidate submits code or copy that is "too perfect," the hiring manager cannot easily discern the human effort, critical thinking, or foundational knowledge behind the output.

This requires hiring managers to learn to distinguish between thoughtful, AI-assisted work ("good fake", effective augmentation) and fully automated, thoughtless output ("bad fake", masking weak fundamentals).

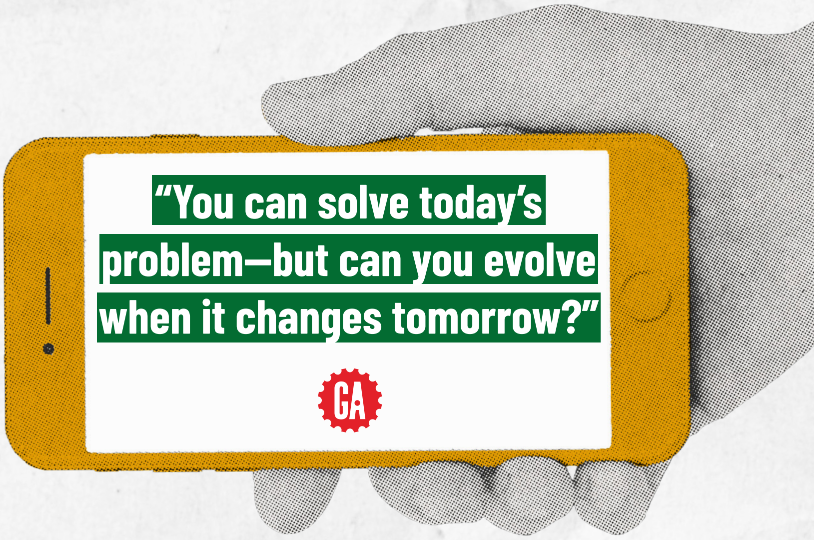


What this means

For Candidates:	For Hiring Partners:
Don't wait for the hiring manager to define AI literacy. Take the initiative by clarifying what AI proficiency means in the context of the job's requirements and the company's field. This proactive step shifts the conversation from vague claims to specific, strategic value.	Standardize the definition of AI literacy within your organization, providing a clear rubric to distinguish between AI augmentation (good fake) and reliance (bad fake). Train interviewers to ask probing questions that validate the candidate's underlying principles and critical judgment behind the AI-assisted work.

Hiring mindset: From culture fit to growth fit

The hiring conversation is evolving from "Do you fit in?" to **"Can you grow with us?"**



The rise of generative AI has created a new paradox: technical execution is now cheap and fast, but strategic problem-solving is more valuable and scarce than ever. Since AI can instantly handle basic code, drafts, and analysis, the premium skill is no longer execution speed but high-level problem clarification, debugging, and critical thinking in ambiguous situations. And because of that, the focus in hiring has fundamentally changed from a culture fit to growth fit.

A growth mindset, curiosity and openness to learning, are now the fundamental signals that a candidate can grasp the underlying strategy and vision of the company before delegating execution to a machine. Organizations increasingly recognize that junior talent, often overlooked, can drive meaningful AI adoption. They're the ones experimenting daily—integrating new tools organically into workflows and inspiring teams to evolve.

What this means

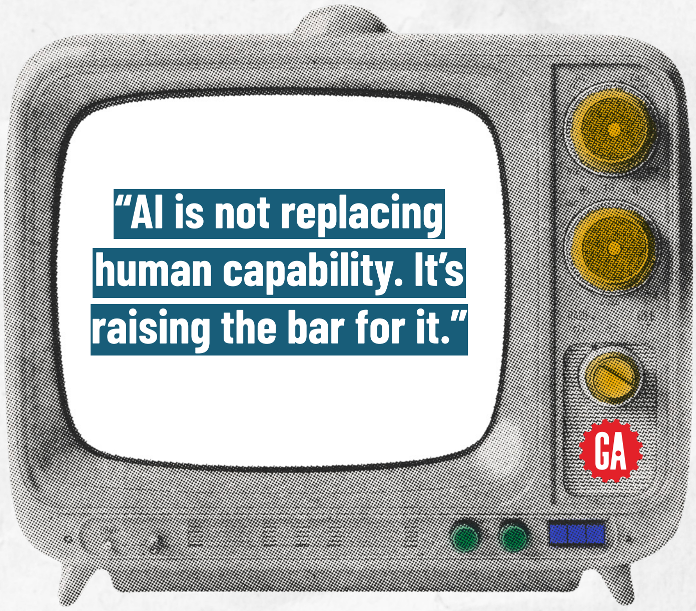
For Candidates:	For Hiring Partners:
Speed and execution are table stakes. Focus on communicating your reasoning: how you break down problems, weigh trade-offs, and navigate uncertainty. As AI speeds up execution, what truly matters is structured thinking, clarity, and curiosity.	Prioritize growth fit over execution speed. Redesign interviews to evaluate adaptability, problem decomposition, and clear articulation of thought processes. Complement this with mentorship and internal training that reward critical thinking and confident navigation of ambiguity — the skills that deliver the highest value in an AI-driven workplace.

The new hiring reality

AI is reshaping job descriptions, resumes, and portfolios. Candidates and recruiters now rely on the same tools to write, refine, and polish — blurring the line between authentic capability and automated assistance.

For recruiters, the challenge has shifted: how do you validate skill, intent, and integrity in an age of deepfakes, AI-enhanced resumes, and portfolios that look flawless but lack substance? Trust now has to be built through transparency and continuous assessment, not surface impressions.

Sustainable innovation still depends on what AI can't replace: **mentorship, structure, and the critical thinking that provides the human scaffolding behind the tech.**



What this means

For Candidates:	For Hiring Partners:
Don't rely on AI outputs alone. Use AI to accelerate your work, but make sure your human judgment, creativity, and point of view shine through. The strongest professionals treat AI as a co-pilot—not a substitute for original thinking.	Build interview steps that surface what AI can't replicate: human judgment, creativity, and context-driven decision-making. And inside your teams, invest in mentorship to cultivate the uniquely human skills that enable long-term innovation.

Summary

For organizations, the future belongs to those who hire and develop for potential, curiosity, and adaptability rather than static credentials. Integrating AI responsibly means using it to amplify human insight, not replace it, while investing in mentorship, AI literacy, and structured learning remains the foundation for sustainable innovation.

For individuals, success depends on your ability to grow. Continuously learn, unlearn, and relearn as tools, roles, and contexts evolve. Experiment thoughtfully and build an AI-enabled portfolio that demonstrates reasoning, creativity, and context awareness. And above all, **remain human at the core.** AI can automate tasks, but your judgment, insight, and ethical compass are irreplaceable.

AI is reshaping what it means to work, lead, and create. Tools will come and go, but human judgment, curiosity, and ethical insight remain irreplaceable. The organizations and individuals who thrive will be those who adapt, experiment, and lead with intentionality.

Reflection Activity:

Take a moment to consider your own role in this future:

- **How** are you currently leveraging AI to amplify your strengths rather than replace them?
- **Where** could you experiment, learn, or mentor to create more human-centered impact?
- **What** one habit, skill, or mindset could you develop to stay ahead in an AI-accelerated world?

Write down your thoughts and identify **one concrete action you will take this week** to apply it. Your advantage lies not in the tools you use, but in how thoughtfully you wield them.

About General Assembly

General Assembly (GA), is the leading talent and upskilling partner that helps individuals and businesses acquire the real skills required to succeed in an increasingly complex technological era. Founded in 2011 to make tech-centric jobs accessible to anyone and meet the demand of fast-growing tech companies, GA evolved into a centre of excellence in training people from all backgrounds to upgrade their practical knowledge of tech skills now required in every company and in any role. With a global presence, hands-on instruction, and a passionate alumni community, GA gives learners 360-degree support as they take the next step in their career journey. GA is part of LHH, the professional talent solutions arm of The Adecco Group, the world's leading talent advisory and solutions company. In Singapore, GA partners with the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) under their Tech Immersion and Placement Programme (TIPP) and SkillsFuture, providing subsidised fees for Singaporeans and PRs for their immersive tech bootcamps. Their AI Academy helps Fortune 500 companies, startups and businesses upskill their employees across all roles, levels and markets.

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