

Seeing Through the Skills Fog

Using SFIA to understand what skills you have (and what you need)



Introductions

Chat:
Where are you joining from?



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BEING HUMAN IN
A DIGITAL WORLD

What Is Skills Fog?

Skills fog:



*Operating with limited, unreliable visibility
of real capability*

- Skills are **assumed** from job titles
- Confidence masks **assumptions**
- **Risk** builds quietly

Poll:

*How foggy is it?
How clear is your organisation's skills
visibility today?*

Skills Fog in 2026

Skills fog matters right now

- AI is changing work, but not cleanly
- Tasks are shifting faster than jobs can officially change
- Workforce plans are ageing faster than approval cycles
- Leaders still have to forge ahead regardless
 - Strategy
 - Hiring
 - Development
 - Investment

Without knowing what skills you can access, responding to these challenges becomes much harder

Chat:

What decisions feel hard right now because capability feels unclear?

Case Study

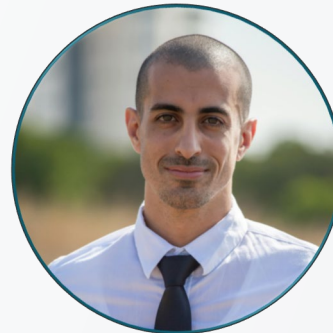
Hollyford Technologies

Meet Hollyford Tech

- Mid-sized NZ tech business
- GIS SaaS
- Increasing use of AI in product and operations
- Pressure to move faster, leaner, smarter



Mahana
CEO



Ollie
CTO

NB: Hollyford Tech is a fictional example, drawn from our real scenarios from our work

What's Happening At Hollyford

Leaders are saying:

"The jobs look the same on paper, but the work has changed"

"We don't know who should be using AI, or how"

"Our workforce plan is already outdated"

"We're invested in AI tools, but we're not seeing ROI yet"

Poll:

Which sounds most familiar in your organisation?

NB: Hollyford Tech is a fictional example, drawn from our real scenarios from our work

CEO: Board Mandate

Mahana must adapt the business model

- Integrate AI agents into the product
- Expand AI use in operational activities
- Rethink pricing and licencing as the product changes



Mahana
CEO

What she needs to make decisions:

- Organisation-wide visibility of strengths and gaps
- Clarity on where real capability risk could derail strategy
- Confidence on where to invest, build, hire or partner

"I can see the strategy options, but I can't see the true state of our capability clearly enough to make choices"

Chat - CEO lens:

Before changing your business model, what would you most want to know about your organisation's skills?

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CEO: Board Mandate

What goes wrong without visibility

- Strategy becomes disconnected from delivery reality
- Strengths are missed
 - You under-use what you already have
- Gaps appear late
 - You discover constraints after commitments
- False confidence from training or certificates without evidence
 - These signal knowledge, but not capability



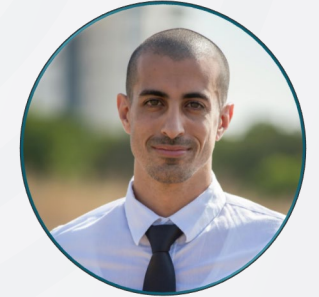
Mahana
CEO

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CTO: Operational Changes

What AI has changed:

- AI-assisted coding now part of engineering work
- Agent creation now part of engineering work
- AI also used in back-office operational tasks
- Roles look stable on paper, work patterns have shifted



Ollie
CTO

Ollie's planning problem:

- The real skills mix in his team (not job titles)
- Strengths and gaps in skills against new job designs
- What to develop vs recruit vs contract

Poll:

Where is AI impacting your tech teams most today?

NB: Hollyford Tech is a fictional example, drawn from our real scenarios from our work

CTO: Operational Changes

Ollie's skills fog:

- Different depth of AI use across team
- Different emphasis on:
 - Validation
 - Risk judgement
 - Product thinking
- Job titles become misleading planning tools



Ollie
CTO

"My engineers look the same on paper, but the truth is they're doing very different work these days"

Chat:

Have you seen jobs become broader rather than more specialised?

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Naming The Pattern

Skills fog comes from a lack of shared, trustworthy signals about capability.

Job titles don't automatically confer skills

Evidence can be subjective or outdated

Different teams use different language to describe skills

Uncertainty about skills data creates skills fog

Poll:

What's causing skills fog in your context?

SFIA

Enter SFIA

A great **visibility tool**

A **practical** way to cut through the skills fog

SFIA creates:

- Shared language to describe skills
- Consistent levels for skills
- Better visibility for planning, development and hiring



About SFIA

- Modern skills framework designed for the digital world
- Two dimensional – skills, and levels of those skills

147 professional skills
(SFIA 9)

Organised into **6**
categories (for navigation)

7 levels to describe use of
a skill with increasing
expertise

Result: 672 skill-level
descriptions



What Is A Skill?

Who is the musician?



Example Skill

Delivery management DEMG

SFIA 9

Change and transformation

Change implementation

Skill Overview

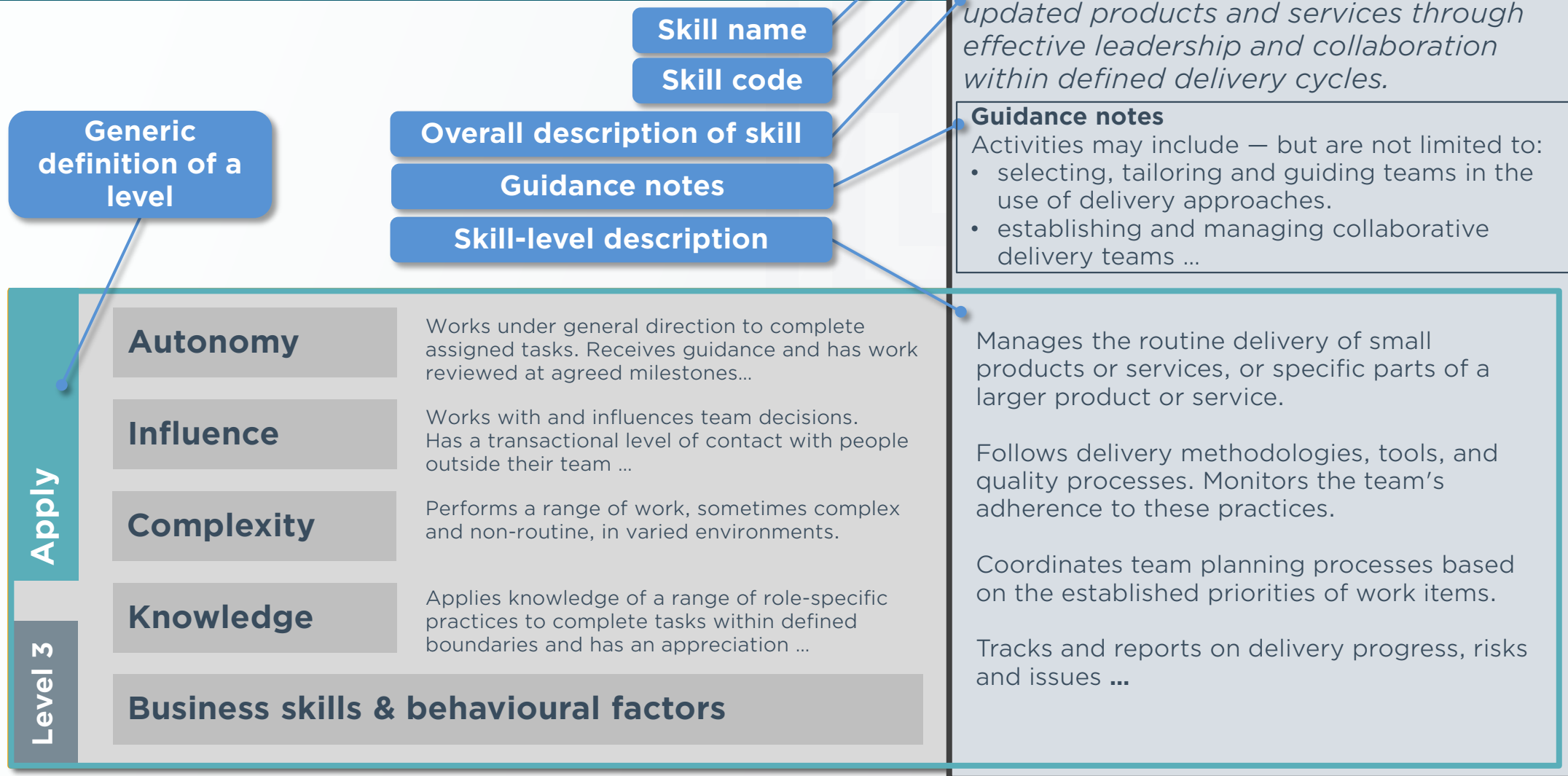
Skill Levels (3-6)

Additional Notes

Skill description

Ensuring successful delivery of new or updated products and services through effective leadership and collaboration within defined delivery cycles.

Skill Structure



SFIA Levels Matter

Delivery management DEMG

SFIA 9

Change and transformation

Change implementation

Skill Overview

Skill Levels (3-6)

Additional Notes

Skill description

Ensuring successful delivery of new or updated products and services through effective leadership and collaboration within defined delivery cycles.

- Same skill, different **autonomy**
- Same skill, different **influence**
- Same skill, different **complexity**

This avoids vague labels like 'senior' or 'junior' that vary widely in context

Delivery Management (DEMG)

Level 6

Initiate, Influence

Defines and oversees the delivery strategy for multiple products or services. Aligns delivery strategy with organisational goals and customer needs. Ensures effective allocation of resources and budget. Monitors and reports on performance of product and service delivery, ensuring alignment with objectives. Identifies and mitigates systemic risks and issues. Sets the direction and standards for delivery...

Level 5

Ensure, Advise

Leads delivery of products or services for large or complex initiatives. Adapts delivery approaches based on the context and complexity of the initiative. Provides leadership and guidance to multiple delivery teams. Collaborates with stakeholders to align delivery objectives with business goals ...

Level 4

Enable

Manages the delivery of products or services for small to medium-sized initiatives. Applies appropriate delivery methodologies and tools. Establishes and leads delivery teams ...

Level 3

Apply

Manages the routine delivery of small products or services, or specific parts of a larger product or service. Follows delivery methodologies, tools, and quality processes ...

In Practice

Making Skills Visible

Organisations that see value from SFIA focus on three things:

1. Start with a shared language

- Agree what you mean by skills
- Use consistent definitions across teams

2. Focus on real work

- What are people actually doing?
- Where is AI changing tasks and expectations?

3. Build evidence over time

- Move beyond job titles
- Use examples of real work to understand capability



Hollyford: What SFIA Changes

Mahana
CEO



Ollie
CTO



- Clearer view of strengths and gaps
- Strategy grounded in real capability
- Reduced risk from false assumptions

- Clearer skills understanding behind job titles (real skills portfolio)
- Better job design + hiring decisions
- More targeted development investment

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Takeaway

The Skills Fog Check (10 minutes)

1. Where are we assuming skills based on job titles?
2. Where are these assumptions riskiest? (strategy / AI / hiring / development)
3. What can't we see clearly right now?
4. What would better skills visibility change?
5. What's one small step to get us started?

*Visibility is more effective
than assumption*

What Next

Chat & Questions:

What's one thing you're taking away from today?

What questions do you have for our team?

Resources

- **SFIA Foundation**
 - Owners and publishers of SFIA
 - sfia-online.org
- **Digital Skills Agency:**
 - Helping organisations learn, apply, and embed SFIA
 - digitalskillsagency.com



Explore next steps:

- **Learn SFIA**
 - Training/upskilling
- **Apply SFIA**
 - Advisory support
- **Embed SFIA**
 - Create skills portfolios
 - Implement SFIA into job design, development, hiring, and more





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