

# Workforce Planning in the Age of AI

Planning skills and jobs in uncertain times



# Introductions

**Chat:**  
*Where are you joining from?*



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BEING HUMAN IN  
A DIGITAL WORLD

# Why Workforce Planning Feels Harder

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AI is changing work,  
but not cleanly

Tasks are shifting  
faster than jobs update

Economic shocks and  
local/global events are  
having impact

Workforce plans  
are ageing faster  
than review cycles

**Chat:**

*What makes workforce planning feel  
challenging in your world right now?*

# Meet Hollyford Tech

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



**Adam**  
Senior Engineer



**Priya**  
Customer Success  
Manager

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

# What's Happening At Hollyford

Leaders are saying:



“Our workforce plan is already outdated, our jobs and structures don’t reflect reality”

“The jobs look the same on paper, but the work isn’t”

“We don’t know who should be using AI, or how”

“We’ve invested in AI tools, but feel like we’re not getting ROI yet”

**Poll:**  
*Which sounds most familiar?*

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# Myths and Assumptions

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## The assumption:

*“AI will replace certain jobs,  
so we need new job titles,  
and maybe a few job responsibility changes”*



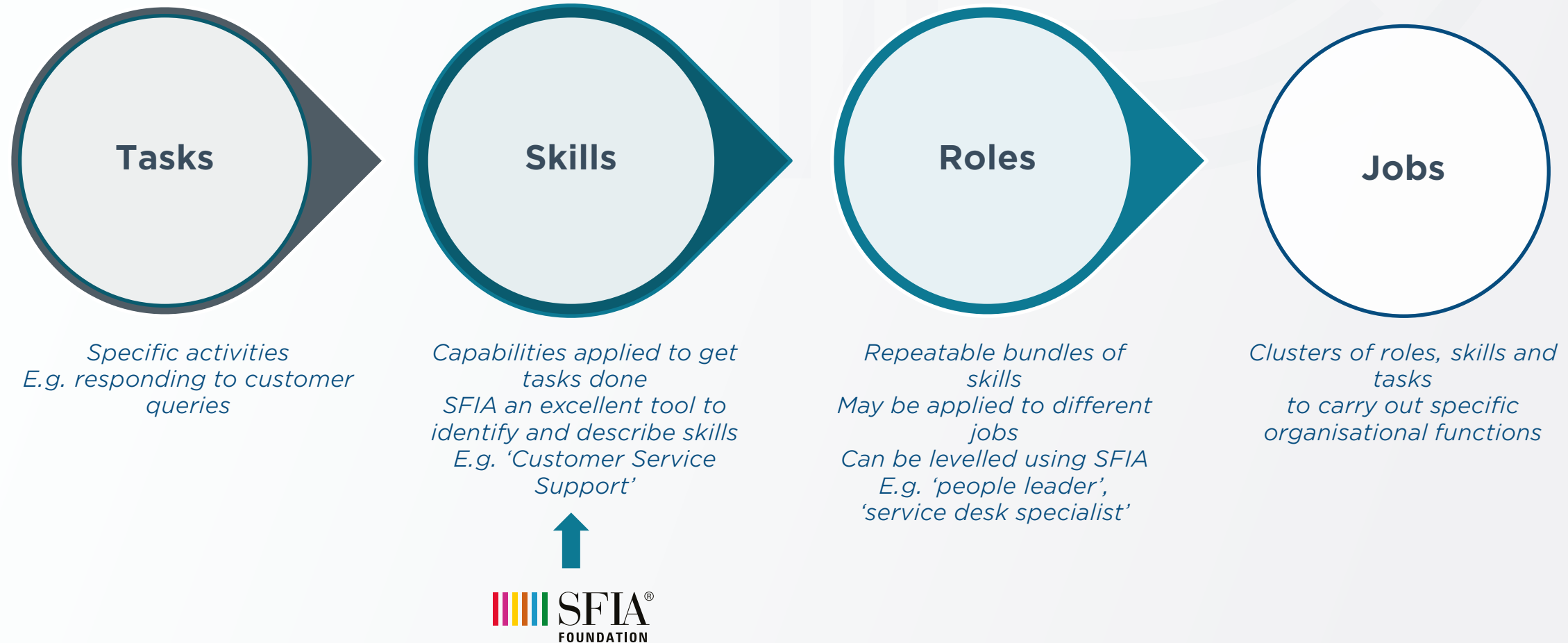
## What actually happened:

- Jobs stayed as they were
- Tasks within jobs changed
  - Use of AI tools in back end ops
  - Integrating AI within existing SaaS product
- Confusion increased

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# A Clearer Way To Think About Work

## Four layers of work

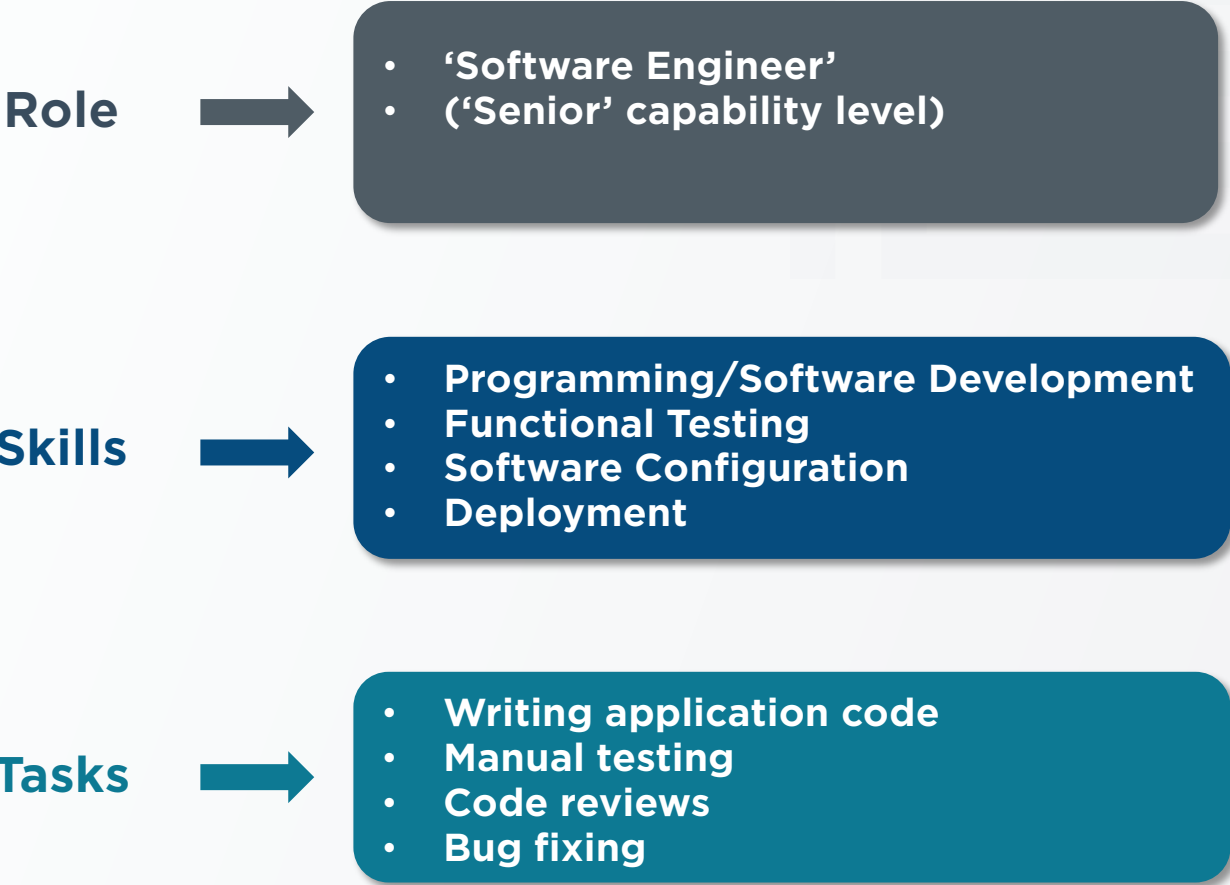


# Case 1

Senior Software Engineer

# Case 1: Senior Software Engineer

## Pre-AI:



*Adam*  
*Senior Software Engineer*



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# Case 1: Senior Software Engineer

## What AI changed:

- Generative coding **tools**
- AI-assisted **testing**
- Faster iteration **cycles**

## Task changes:

- Less time writing boilerplate **code**
- More time:
  - **Shaping** refinements
  - **Validating** outputs
  - **Reviewing** AI-generated code



**Adam**  
*Senior Software Engineer*

### **Poll:**

Where do you see AI having the biggest impact today?

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

# Case 1: Senior Software Engineer

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## Concept shift:

*Role shift from 'coder' to 'product engineer'*

## Skills now emphasised:

- Product Management
- Systems Design
- Quality Assurance
- Programming/Software Development (retained skill)

## What didn't disappear:

- Core engineering expertise
- Need for skilled engineers



**Adam**  
*Senior Software Engineer*

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# Case 1: Senior Software Engineer

## Workforce evolution:

*Broader engineering jobs*

## Hollyford's insight

- **More work capacity** per engineer
  - Broader
  - Demand for more senior capability
  - More product-oriented

## Role label

- 'Product Engineer'
- Not a new job title everywhere, but a new bundle of skills



**Adam**  
*Senior Software Engineer*

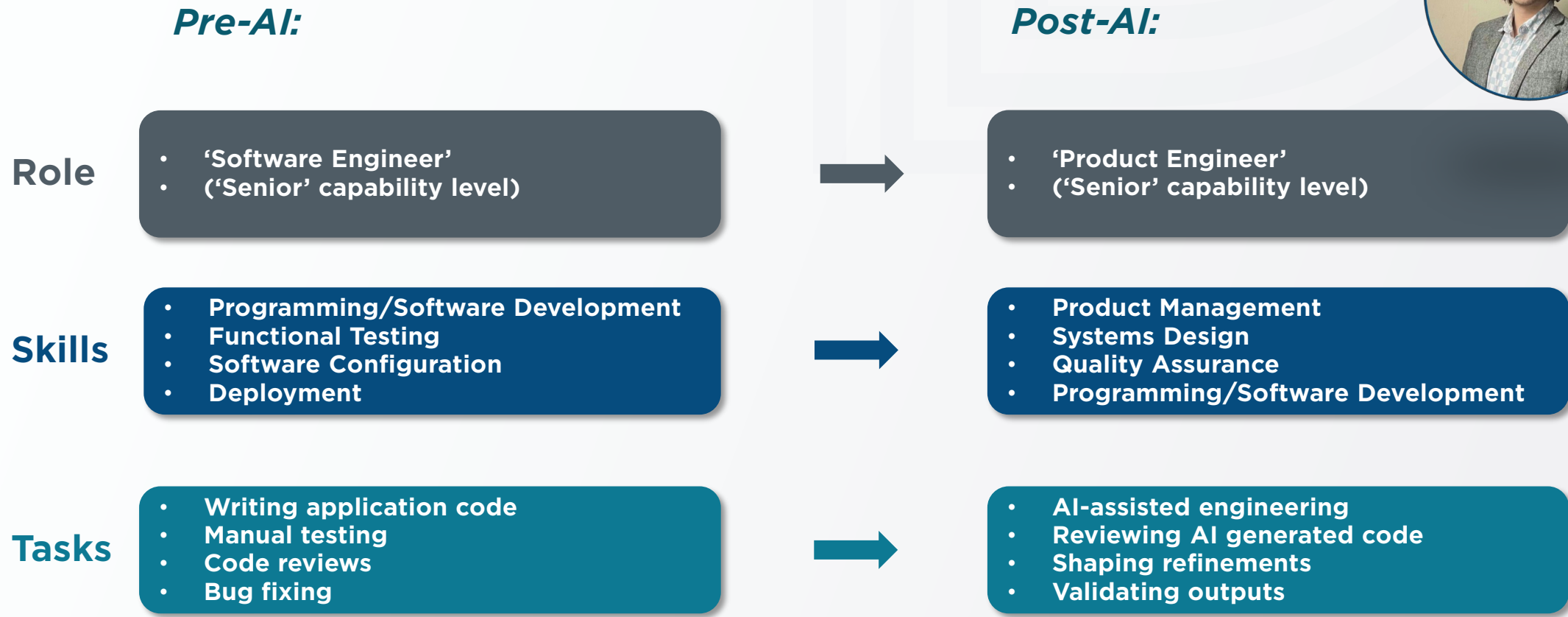
### **Chat:**

*Have you seen jobs  
in your organisation  
become broader?*

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# Case 1: Senior Software Engineer

## Change summary:



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# Case 2

Customer Success Manager

# Case 2: Customer Success Manager

## Pre-AI:

Role



- 'People Leader'
  - (Mid-level)
- 'Customer Success Specialist'
  - (Senior level)

Skills



- Customer Service Support
- Relationship Management
- Performance Management
- Customer Experience

Tasks



- Managing complex customer queries
- Escalation handling from team
- Coaching and developing team
- Line management of team



*Priya*  
*Customer Success Manager*



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# Case 2: Customer Success Manager

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## What AI changed:

- Customer-facing AI chatbots and agents
  - Upgraded chatbot capability
- Automated handling of effectively all routine queries

## Task changes:

- Few routine interactions
- More focus on:
  - Complex customer issues
  - Relationship management
  - Exception handling



*Priya*  
*Customer Success Manager*

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# Case 2: Customer Success Manager

## Same skills, different application:

**Skills**  
(unchanged)



- Customer Service Support
- Relationship Management
- Performance Management
- Customer Experience

**Tasks**  
(changed)



- Higher stakes customer outcomes
- Increase in complex conversations
- Fewer direct reports, more capability coaching



*Priya*  
*Customer Success Manager*

### **Poll:**

*Does AI in your organisation remove tasks, or raise the bar on remaining work?*

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# Case 2: Customer Success Manager

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## Job impact summary:

*'People leader' role redefined*

## Role label

- Still a 'people leader' role
- Smaller, more experienced team
- Greater focus on:
  - Judgement
  - Trust
  - Customer value

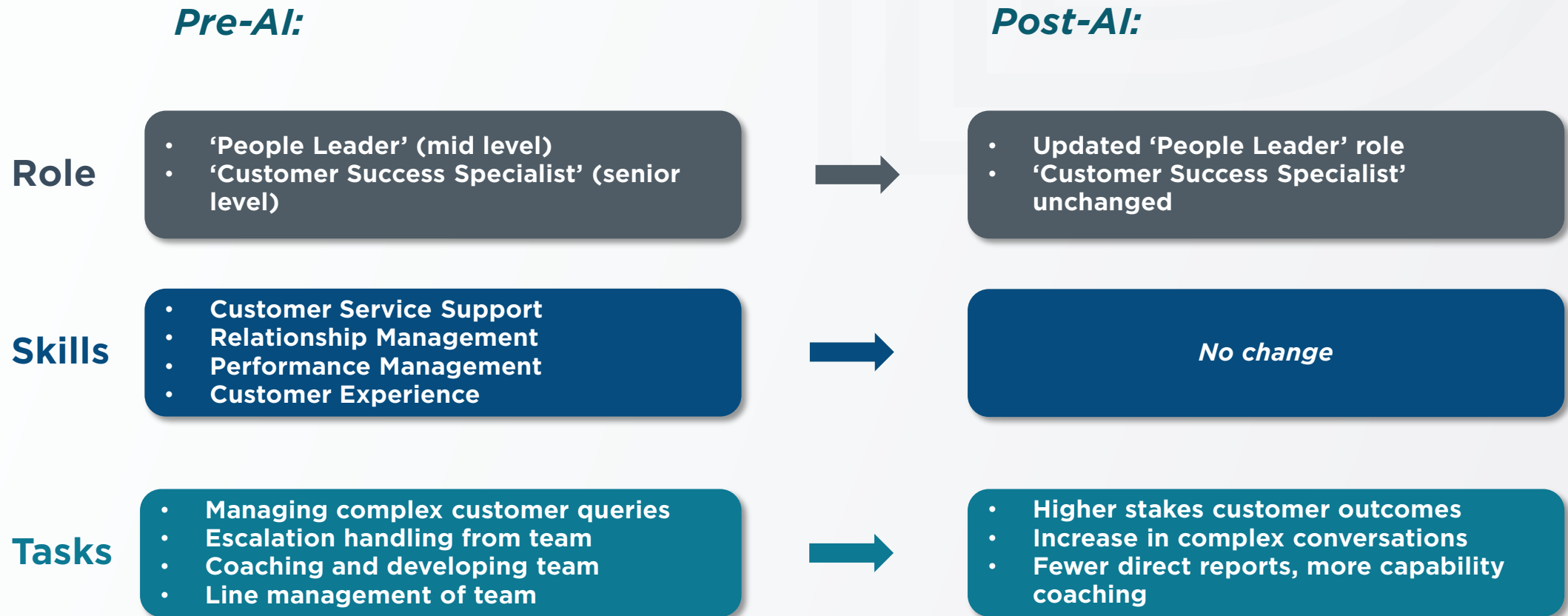


**Priya**  
**Customer Success Manager**

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# Case 2: Customer Success Manager

## Change summary:



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# Learnings

# Comparing Both Jobs

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## Senior Software Engineer

- Tasks changed significantly
- 'Role' rebundled - new skills needed
- Job meaning shifted significantly



## Customer Success Manager

- Routine tasks absorbed
- Role refined - adjusted leadership needs
- Job remains recognisable



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# Job-Based Planning

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## Hollyford's challenge:

- Workforce plan treated both jobs the same way
- Assumed tasks would stay similar and simply adapt to AI
- Assumed reduction of some jobs

## The reality:

- One job needed redesign (Senior Software Engineer)
- One job needed skill re-application (Customer Success Manager)
- Neither needed immediate job re-titling

### **Poll:**

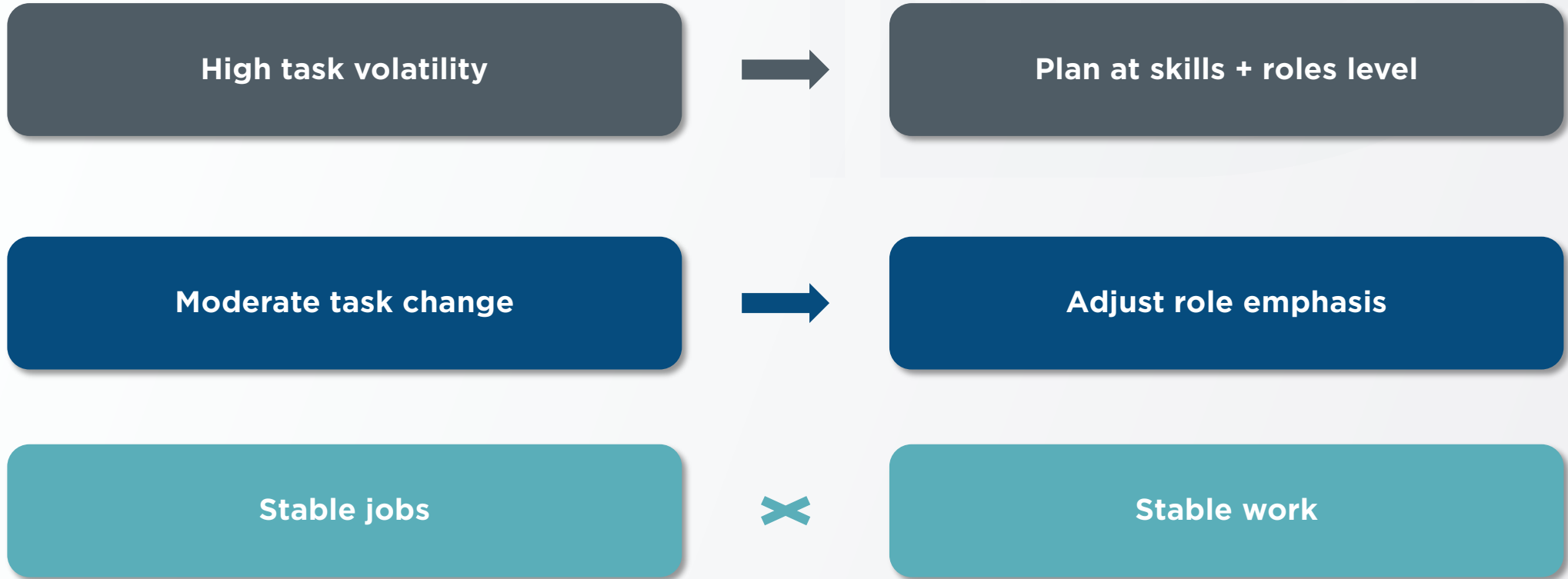
*Are jobs in your organisation changing more like Adam's, or do they look more like Priya's?*

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# Learnings

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## Roles vs skills vs tasks:



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# Skills Portfolios in Action

**'Customer Success Specialist' Role:**

CSMG, CEXP

**'People Leader' Role:**

RLMT, PEMT, EEXP

Team	Position	SFIA Skill Code and Level				
Customer Success	Customer Success Specialist A	CSMG 3	CEXP 3			
	Customer Success Specialist B	CSMG 2	CEXP 2			
	Customer Success Specialist C	CSMG 2				
	Customer Success Specialist D	CSMG 3	CEXP 3			
	Customer Success Specialist E	CSMG 4	CEXP 2			
	Customer Success Specialist F	CSMG 2	CEXP 4			
	Customer Success Manager A	CSMG 4	CEXP 4	RLMT 4	PEMT 4	EEXP 4
	Customer Success Manager B	CSMG 4	CEXP 3		PEMT 4	
	Head of Customer Success	CSMG 5	CEXP 5	RLMT 5	PEMT 5	EEXP 5

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# Where SFIA Helped

- **Consistent skill language** across engineering and customer domains:
  - *What exactly do we mean by skill X*
- **Clear capability levels** as roles broadened
- **Confidence in job design (or redesign)**



Team	Position	SFIA Skill Code and Level				
Customer Success	Customer Success Specialist A	CSMG 3	CEXP 3			
	Customer Success Specialist B	CSMG 2	CEXP 2			
	Customer Success Specialist C	CSMG 2				
	Customer Success Specialist D	CSMG 3	CEXP 3			
	Customer Success Specialist E	CSMG 4	CEXP 2			
	Customer Success Specialist F	CSMG 2	CEXP 4			
	Customer Success Manager A	CSMG 4	CEXP 4	RLMT 4	PEMT 4	EEXP 4
	Customer Success Manager B	CSMG 4	CEXP 3		PEMT 4	
	Head of Customer Success	CSMG 5	CEXP 5	RLMT 5	PEMT 5	EEXP 5

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# Key Leadership Insights

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AI doesn't change everything  
equally

Workforce planning must  
respond at the *right layer*

Skills visibility is now planning  
infrastructure

# The junior job challenge

Why we must face it

# What About Junior Jobs?

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## AI removes routine work first

- Routine work used to double as learning (by accident)
- That learning pathway is now broken
- ***This is a capability pipeline problem***

**AI breaks the accidental learning model.**

**Skills portfolios don't fix that,  
but they help us understand future risks**

# Designing New Entry Pathways

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- Must be designed **intentionally**
- Learning can no longer rely on **volume**
- Entry roles must be:
  - More **supported**
  - Deliberately **developmental**
  - May be fewer per organisation
- **Skills portfolio visibility** allows this to be planned, not guessed

**Entry level roles  
will become  
a designed and deliberate  
organisational plan**

# Summary Insights

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**Tasks move first**

**'Roles' are the most powerful planning lever**

**Jobs lag reality**

**Skills portfolios help in uncertain environments**

# Takeaway

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## What you can do this week:

- Start with one question:
  - Which tasks are changing fastest? And in which jobs?
- Check out the [Decision Guide: Roles v Skills v Tasks](#)
  - Shared with post-session resources

# What Next

## Resources

- **SFIA Foundation**
  - Owners and publishers of SFIA
  - [sfia-online.org](https://sfia-online.org)
- **Digital Skills Agency:**
  - Workforce planning in digital contexts
  - Helping organisations learn, apply, and embed SFIA
  - [digitalskillsagency.com](https://digitalskillsagency.com)



### Chat & Questions:

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

*What questions do you have for our team?*



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