

# DESTINATION: YOU ENJOY THE JOURNEY

**PERSPECTIVES 2020**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PERSPECTIVES: GREATNESS, UNLEASHED</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>LEARNING: THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>A MIND IS A WONDERFUL THING TO SHIFT</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF POSITIVE</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>INCLUSION BENEFITS EVERYONE</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>THE NEW NORMAL IS HERE NOW</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>WHAT'S NEXT?</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>BROUGHT TO YOU BY SKILLSOFT AND SUMTOTAL</b>



# INTRODUCTION

## **Welcome.**

I had only been with Skillsoft for a few months when the world turned upside down. Whenever you start a new position, you have to be prepared for the unexpected. But nothing could have prepared us for the COVID-19 pandemic, for transitioning an entire global staff to remote work, or for converting a long-scheduled live event to digital.

## **The change was truly transformational.**

Over ten weeks, an entire team worked — sometimes day and night — to reinvent Perspectives from top to bottom. It became a free, 24-hour, global, and digital experience. Perspectives 2020 featured more than a hundred speakers in keynotes, case studies, and head-to-head debates. There were product demos and regional business continuity panels. There were music and yoga breaks and ample opportunities to ask questions, suggest solutions, and participate in what turned into a rich and dynamic conversation about everything from personal development to diversity and inclusion training, and from leading in challenging times to lively discussions on who owns the skilling agenda.

## **Perspectives 2020 wasn't just about teaching people new skills; it was about our collective well-being.**

More than 14,000 people joined us in real-time with thousands more attending On Demand. If you missed it, I hope this book delivers much of the knowledge and insights of the program. If you did attend, use this book to revisit some of the many big ideas that surfaced.

I truly hope you find Perspectives 2020 as inspiring as I did.

Michelle Boockoff-Bajdek

**Michelle Boockoff-Bajdek**  
*Chief Marketing Officer*





# PERSPECTIVES: GREATNESS, UNLEASHED

In the spring of 2020, as the business world responded to a global pandemic and we all adjusted to working from home, there was one thought on everyone's mind ...  
“What happens next?”





Like many organizations, Skillsoft had to make changes — especially in the area of our live events. We transformed Perspectives 2020 into a global digital experience that ran 24 hours live and followed the sun across four continents.

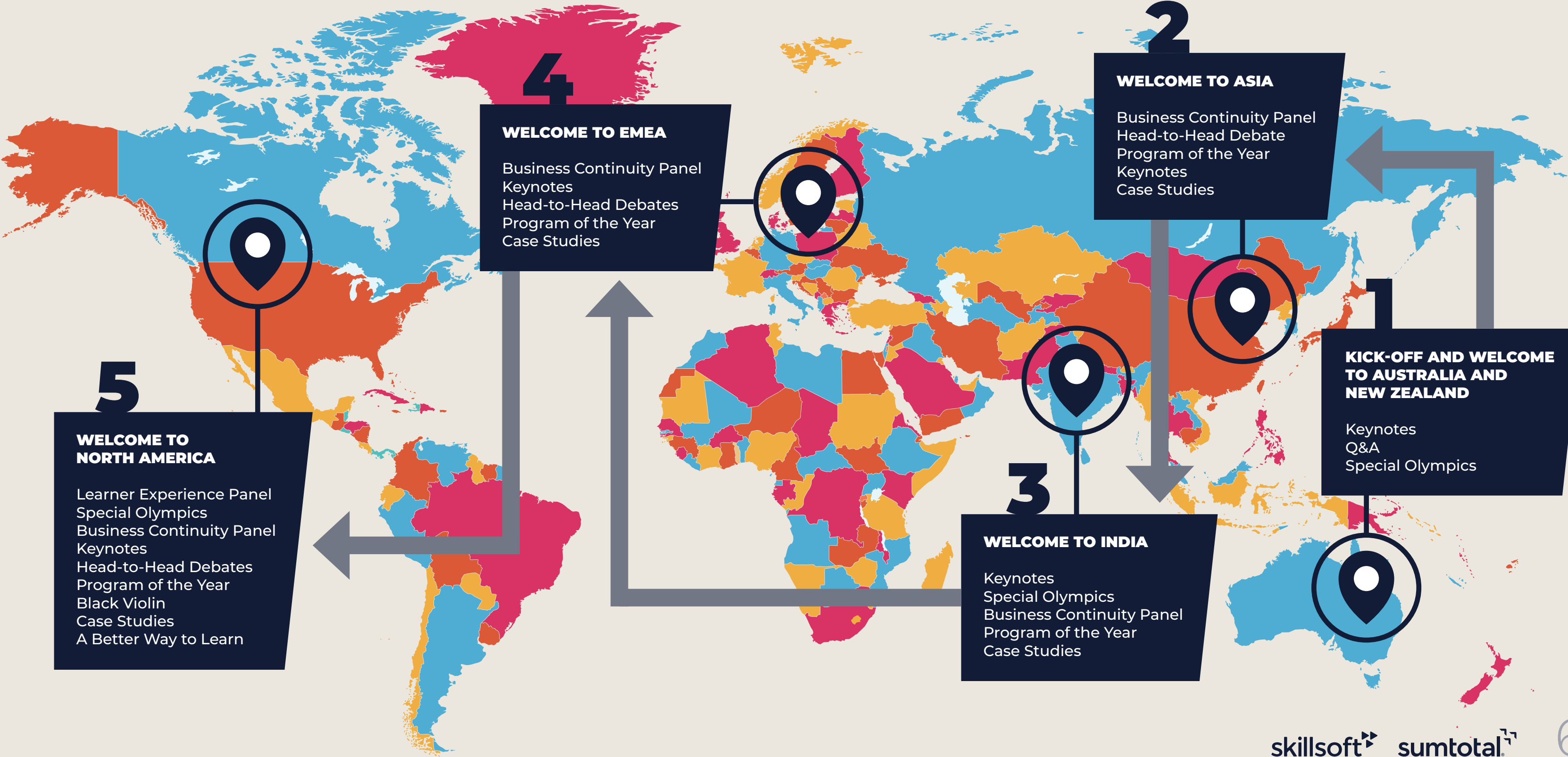
We started in Sydney and ended in San Francisco. Along the way, we filled screens and minds with dynamic live content. The experience included interactive keynotes from learning pioneers and head-to-head debates on hot topics from the best minds in business and learning.

We also featured product demo power workshops, panels on business continuity planning, as well as exclusive content and badges for leaders and learners alike. There were relevant case studies and targeted tracks, as well as mainstage presentations, awards, entertainment, and more.

“What happens next?” Nobody knows, but Perspectives 2020 and this companion book can help you prepare for it.



# PERSPECTIVES 2020 “FOLLOW THE SUN” EXPERIENCE





# LEARNING: THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL

When you think back on your formal education, what do you remember as most rewarding?

Chances are, it wasn't the professor who made you memorize dates and formulas. Or the teacher who insisted that you regurgitate theories, word-for-word, on every exam. The best educators are those who make you think, and who teach you *how* to learn, not what to learn.





Fast forward to the business world. Chances are, you're working in an organization that's flatter than it's ever been. In many organizations, workers are given more autonomy, more opportunities to make decisions all the time. In fact, the role of employers and managers — particularly those in human resources and employee development — has changed.

Training used to be a fairly simple one-way equation. Trainers taught and trainees learned. But, in today's faster paced, more agile world, the most successful people are training themselves. They're proactively looking for ways to strengthen their current capabilities and add new ones, to keep up with evolving technologies, to build their own leadership skills.

This shift promises exciting outcomes. Learning can be customized to specific roles and individualized for specific learners and their preferred style and speed of learning. Learners, given the opportunity to set their own career objectives and pursue directly related learning, are more motivated, which certainly benefits the organization. As does a company culture that democratizes learning and opportunities for advancement.

At Skillsoft, we applaud these changes and are proud to support them. We believe that everyone has the potential for greatness.





# A MIND IS A WONDERFUL THING TO SHIFT

Some of the most quotable quotes from thinkers like Socrates, Isaac Asimov, William Butler Yeats, Henry Ford, and more speak to — and celebrate — the idea of lifelong learning. It's a concept we wholeheartedly agree with.





Think about the tangible reasons why people pursue learning. For a degree, a diploma, a certification, a job requirement.

Now, think again. When you shift your mindset, you discover a wealth of opportunities. Learning doesn't have to be a one-and-done activity. Learning can be an ongoing and incremental journey. Rather than consider it the acquisition of something finite, shift your thinking to the idea that with each new skill or piece of knowledge, you are growing.

Just as individual learners may need to make a mental shift, so do organizations. Certainly, there are roles that require specific skills — especially in areas like technology and compliance. But, those skills are constantly changing.

Preparing — and training — for the future becomes a new challenge when you don't know what the jobs of the future will be. Sought after competencies — like search engine optimization, big data analysis, chatbot programming, and more — didn't exist ten or twenty years ago. So, preparing for a specific future job can be short-sighted, if not an exercise in futility.





Instead, learners, leaders, and organizations need to focus on power skills that cross disciplines, like agility, adaptability, and resilience. The question isn't what specific job can I prepare for? But, how can I shift my thinking so I'm ready and able to succeed in whatever roles emerge ahead?

In this way, we'll build a future-ready workforce with a solid foundation of evergreen competencies and a willingness to learn specific skills as they evolve. There are great benefits to be realized when you encourage people to continually learn.

Remember when Harry Potter became a Quidditch Seeker? In the real world, seekers are characterized by relentless curiosity. These lifelong learners are immensely valuable as problem solvers and troubleshooters. They don't have to be coached to think outside the box, because they don't really believe in the box to begin with.

And it's these people — and the organizations that employ them — who are destined for greatness.





# EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF POSITIVE

The internal culture of an organization is directly related to the attitude of its most loyal customers. In both cases, it's important to “accentuate the positive.”

Guess what? There's so more to this than a 1944 hit song.





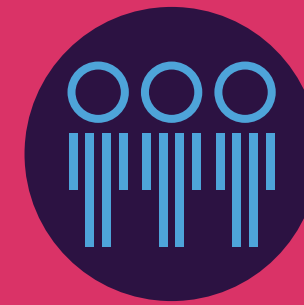
One important way to keep employees feeling positive is to provide them with opportunities to *increase, improve, and advance*. Skills needed in today's fast-paced digital age change quickly and continually. Employees need to feel that they can increase their skillset, keeping it up to date and keeping themselves marketable. They need to believe that they have the ability themselves to improve their situation and to advance in their career. And, when an entire team shares these beliefs, the results are exponentially positive.

This positivity, and related optimism, hope, and gratitude become particularly important in times of disruption, change, and even rapid growth. As more and more companies manage digital transformation, a positive and empowered workforce evolves quickly from a nice to have to a need to have.

While we're on the subject, the positive relationships a business builds with its employees should also extend to customers. A top-notch product, fair pricing, and reliable service and support are critical to success, but less important than the emotional bond you build.

Giving employees access to continual learning will make your organization a more positive place. And, that affects your organization inside and out. Because when satisfied customers become the kind of loyal advocates who wouldn't dream of buying from your competitor, you've taken the power of positivity to the next level.





# INCLUSION BENEFITS EVERYONE

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is on everyone's mind right now. And, for good reason. Marginalized groups, whether those are people of color, women in STEM, the LGBTQ+ community, or people with physical or intellectual disabilities, deserve a seat at the table.





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What many business leaders don't realize, however, is that DEI doesn't just benefit the otherwise underrepresented groups. It greatly benefits the organizations that commit to it.

Consider technology, for example. Innovations like AI are meant to enhance lives and facilitate quicker, easier decision-making. But, if artificial intelligence is only informed by the experiences of one group, how intelligent will it really be?

As the business world continues to expand and, through the ubiquity of digital, virtually every corporation becomes a global one, products and solutions need to address the challenges of an ever-wider variety of people.

Companies are being challenged now to demonstrate a real commitment to DEI. Lip service is no longer enough. Inequities have existed far too long and C-level executives are being held accountable.

But, here's the good news. Welcoming a more diverse workforce — and including them in more meaningful ways — adds valuable new perspectives to project and people management, the research and development process, sales and service, customer engagement, and more.





# THE NEW NORMAL IS HERE NOW

In the years to come, we'll all look back at 2020 as the world's biggest (and perhaps most stressful) test. To address the pandemic, local and national governments had to work together, the healthcare industry had to work harder and faster than ever, and nearly all of us had to learn to work remotely.





But, that wasn't all. We had to work remotely but also manage remotely. This meant redefining collaboration, choosing the right tool sets, and helping teams adjust to a new reality of work/life balance. All in a time of global health crisis, social unrest, and economic insecurity.

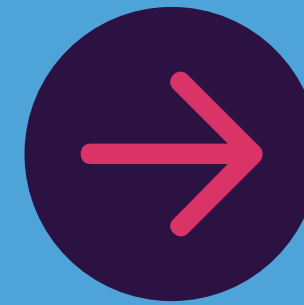
Of course, we all had to learn how to use Zoom and Webex, but it was the softer skills that became most important for business continuity. Skills like agility, resilience, innovation, and adaptability. Effective communication — in new ways, via new channels — became paramount. As did each contributor's ability and willingness to manage his or her own time, work, and learning.

All around, it's been a time of tremendous learning.

Digital transformation — something that most organizations weren't quite ready for — happened practically overnight. In fact, for some industries, that transformation was accelerated by five to ten years. The pandemic will eventually end and many activities that have been curtailed will resume. But, business as usual will be forever changed. Expect remote work to continue in some way, shape, or form. Expect leaner teams, streamlined processes, and more independence.

The new normal is here now.





# WHAT'S NEXT?

You can continue this journey with us when you register for 60 days of free access to Skillsoft's Percipio learning platform.



**REGISTER NOW FOR  
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COMMITMENT  
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Only Skillsoft delivers highly engaging learning experiences, curated into nearly 700 learning paths. And it's continuously updated to ensure you always have access to the latest skills.



# THANK YOU

Perspectives 2020 couldn't have been such a rich and rewarding experience without the talents of all of our speakers, moderators, authors, teachers, coaches, case study presenters, debaters, and award-winning customers. Thank you.

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We hope you've enjoyed this companion to Perspectives 2020. At Skillsoft and SumTotal, we believe that every person has the potential to be amazing. Our mission is to democratize learning. We provide the insights and tools people need to successfully meet the ever-evolving requirements of an ever-changing world. With programs like Perspectives 2020, we're committed to helping each and every person discover and nurture their greatness.



# ABOUT SKILLSOFT AND SUMTOTAL

Skillsoft delivers online learning, training, and talent solutions to help organizations unleash their edge. Leveraging immersive, engaging content, Skillsoft enables organizations to unlock the potential in their best assets – their people – and build teams with the skills they need for success. Empowering 36 million learners and counting, Skillsoft democratizes learning through an intelligent learning experience and a customized, learner-centric approach to skills development with resources for Leadership, Technology and Development, and Compliance.

Skillsoft and SumTotal are partners to thousands of leading global organizations, including many Fortune 500 companies. The company features three award-winning systems that support learning, performance and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform, and the SumTotal suite for Talent Development, which offers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle.

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