Meet Skillsize, the startup that understands why skills-based cultures are the future of work

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Michael Boham, founder of Skillsize about helping businesses optimise and manage their recruitment, building a collaborative and risk-taking culture and using AI to align organisations with their strategies.

Skillsize was founded because we saw a gap in the way that companies recruit. We realised that keyword tools are ineffective in recruitment and that bias in the recruitment process means that many people are not getting jobs they deserve.

Skillsize was built to provide a comprehensive solution to these problems faced in the recruitment process. It was developed to help unlock potential that is often left untapped in the early stages of recruitment. By focusing on capabilities rather than just expertise, Skillsize ensures that recruitment is more efficient and effective, whilst ensuring a better fit between a person and their role. Additionally, it helps to reduce bias in the recruitment process, as the focus is on context and capabilities rather than just specific keywords. The ultimate goal is to create a more efficient, fair and effective recruitment process which can identify talented individuals and help them reach their full potential.

Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Skillsize is a SaaS business that helps recruiters and organisations optimise and manage their recruitment and talent operations. We strive to create a skills-focused future, where candidates are judged solely on merit, and their skills are made visible and accessible.

Our AI-powered platform allows recruiters to streamline their recruitment process and make better-informed hiring decisions. It also allows organisations to manage their workforce more effectively, and align their personnel with their strategy. We reach our customers and partners mainly through our networks, nurturing strong relationships with key institutions.

Skillsize believes in the power of skills to shape the future. We are creating the infrastructure of a future where skills are valued and respected, and where talent is recognised and rewarded. We are passionate about helping organisations to build the best teams, and empowering individuals to make the most of their skills and talents.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

Skillsize has come a long way since its beginnings as a job seeker tool. When it was first launched, Skillsize was designed to help job seekers represent their skills more effectively. By providing an intuitive platform for job seekers to showcase their skills, Skillsize helped them increase their chances of landing the job of their dreams.

However, that was just the beginning. Over the years, Skillsize has evolved to become much more than a job seeker tool. With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), Skillsize has embraced this technology and used it to help organisations hire more effectively.

The latest version of Skillsize uses AI to align organisations with their strategies. By analysing the skills and abilities of the workforce, Skillsize can identify the most suitable candidates for a particular job. This helps organisations save time, money and resources while ensuring they have the right people in the right roles. Moreover, it helps prevent organisations from

making costly hiring mistakes.

In addition, Skillsize now helps organisations with onboarding and offboarding by providing a streamlined process. This helps organisations ensure smooth transitions when it comes to hiring and releasing employees.

By leveraging AI and other technologies, Skillsize has evolved into a powerful tool for organisations to use to recruit and retain the best talent. It has gone from helping job seekers represent their skills better to now helping organisations hire the most suitable candidates and optimise their workforce.

Tell us about the working culture at Skillsize

At Skillsize, we believe in a culture that encourages collaboration and risk-taking.

We're an adventurous bunch—we try new things, we don't mind if those things don't work out, we emphasise a culture of rapid experimentation.

We work hard to be respectful of each other's time, space, and energy. And we're always on the lookout for ways to improve our processes and make our work more efficient. We believe that by fostering an environment of open dialogue and creative problem-solving, our team is more engaged and productive. We are committed to creating an environment where employees feel comfortable taking risks and trying out new ideas, knowing that if it doesn't work out, we'll learn from our mistakes and move forward.

A collaborative, trusting and risk-taking culture is the foundation of Skillsize. We are adventurous in our approach to business and innovative in our efforts to meet the changing needs of our clients.

How are you funded?

Skillsize was bootstrapped from the ground up, with no outside funding. The founders had been working together for years with the focus on growing the company into something that would have a positive impact on the world.

By bootstrapping, we have been able to maintain control over their company and make decisions based on our own values. This has given us the strategic agility and the freedom to experiment and take risks with their business, without having to answer to outside investors.

Although bootstrapping is a great way to fund a company, it can also be a

difficult path. As founders, we had to be surgical with spending and ensuring we reinvest the right amount of money back into the business. This required a lot of discipline and hard work, and it meant that we adopted a more measured approach to taking risks.

Despite the challenges, we believe bootstrapping was the right choice for Skillsize. It has allowed the company to grow at its own and controlled pace. This has allowed us to take the company in the direction we believe is best for the long-term success of the business.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

One of the biggest challenges Skillsize faces is the long sales cycles of large enterprise customers. We are a bootstrapped startup, so we don't have the luxury of a large marketing budget, and therefore need to rely on relationships in order to grow our customer base.

This can be difficult because there are many other well-funded SaaS alternatives out there that offer similar products to ours—how do we stand out?

We overcome this challenge by obsessing over and honing in on the intersection between what the market needs and our unique selling proposition (USP).

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How does Skillsize answer an unmet need?

We leverage contextual skills analysis to provide a focus on capabilities, beyond just expertise.

When you focus on capabilities, you become more adaptable and valuable to your employer or clients. These are the skills that you can take from one job to the next and can help you advance your career. Capabilities can include problem solving, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, curiosity, leadership, flexibility, creativity, and adaptability.

Expertise doesn't grow indefinitely, it is something that is acquired through

time and dedication. In contrast, capabilities are something that you can have at any time and are transferable between fields. Capabilities like resilience, creativity, adaptability, and curiosity are something that anyone can work on and improve.

More organisations are starting to focus on capabilities as they adopt a more skills-based models with a focus on talent mobility for optimum engagement and productivity.

What's in store for the future?

The way we work is changing.

It's becoming more and more common for organisations to seek out employees who are mulit-skilled, rather than those who can simply do a job. For example, rather than hiring an accountant who will sit at a desk and crunch numbers all day, an organisation might hire someone who has a background in accounting along with some experience in marketing and sales. This type of hiring is known as skills-based hiring: instead of looking at the person's previous experience or education, they're looking at their specific skills and how they apply those skills in different settings.

We believe that skills-based cultures are the future of work, and we are committed to building a platform that will enable organisations to get the most out of their resources. We are working to create an accessible platform that will help employers find the right skills, and will make it easier for individuals to showcase their skills and find the right opportunities.

We are committed to creating a future in which skills are valued, respected and rewarded. We are striving to create an environment where individuals can showcase their skills and talents, and be rewarded for their efforts. This means creating a platform that makes it easy for employers to find the right skills for the job, and for individuals to discover new opportunities and make the most of their talents.

We envision a future where all individuals are empowered to explore their range of skills, and where employers can easily find the people they need.

To achieve this vision, we are focusing on partnering with more organisations to embrace a more skills-based culture. We'll help individuals expose their range of skills to those who need them, and we'll build an accessible platform that seamlessly connects skill demand to need—at scale.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

In my experience, the best way to get started as an entrepreneur is to solve a problem you have experienced or are an ideal customer for. While this may seem like a no-brainer, it's actually pretty unique and can make a huge difference in your ability to get traction early on.

It short circuits your market research and validation process, which means that you can move faster than your competition. You're not going to be spending weeks or months trying to understand the problem space and build out hypotheses—you already have a strong understanding of what the problem is and how you can help people solve it.

It also dramatically lowers the cost of testing new ideas and making changes along the way. Instead of spending thousands of dollars and hours on focus groups and surveys, you can just ask yourself "What would I do if I had this problem?" or "How would I solve this problem if it were my own?"

I think the key is then finding people who are in the same situation as you—people who need something but don't know it yet—and then making sure they know about it!

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

For me, maintaining a regular daily routine is essential for my well-being and productivity. I strive to wake up early, usually around 5am, so that I can start the day with a sense of accomplishment. This also gives me time to engage with personal development content, like philosophy podcasts, books or watch YouTube videos on the subject to get into the right frame of mind for what lies ahead.

Meditation is also an important part of my routine. I find that it helps to calm my mind and get centred so that I can focus on the day's challenges. I also make sure to commit to a daily gym session. This helps to not only keep fit and healthy but also helps to clear my mind and get the creative juices flowing.

I'm also a big fan of ancient philosophy, particularly stoicism. I believe in the concept of the dichotomy of control, which is about focusing on the things that I can control in my life such as my daily habits, routines, systems and even

perspective. It also encourages me to accept the things that happen that I cannot control and embrace fate, or "Amor Fati" as is referred to by the stoics. This approach helps to keep me grounded and focused on what I can control and how I can shape my future.

My daily routines and rules are my way of life and have been an important part of my life for many years. They help me to stay focused, motivated and on track and ensure that I am able to make the most out of every day.

Michael Boham is the founder of *Skillsize*.