Industry-Integrated Delivery Guide

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Demand-Driven

Rapidly Delivered

Employer-Led

6 principles
of Palette's upskilling model

**Industry
Integrated**

**Potential-Focused
Recruitment**

**Job Placement
Support**

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Introduction

Industry integration is one of the six components of a Palette Skills upskilling program. This stage builds on the successful collaboration with employers to validate demand and design the program. Leveraging what was learned from employers in these stages, the next step is to plan activities that bring employers directly into the delivery of the program and create experiential, 'on-the-job' type activities. These activities establish a stronger connection between employers and participants, allow participants to learn directly from employers, and give employers opportunities to see participants' skills and abilities.

This guide explains what industry integration means in an upskilling program, how Palette Skills applies it in our current programs, and what the best practices are for engaging employers to participate.

What is industry integration?

Industry integration is embedding employers into an upskilling program through activities and interactive events that support experiential learning.

When designed effectively, upskilling programs that embed industry-integrated activities create opportunities for participants to showcase their skills to employers, learn directly from employers, and connect employers with new talent pipelines. These events and activities can be anything from a guest lecture, a case study, a networking event, work-integrated learning, or anything that brings together employers and participants.

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Why it's part of our model

The hiring process is challenging for job seekers and employers. One job posting might get thousands of applicants, meaning only a small number of these job seekers will make it to the interview stage. Not hearing back from employers after submitting an application or getting to the interview stage only to realize you don't have the right experience are among the top challenges of our participants when it comes to the job search.

Industry integration helps participants overcome these challenges by getting directly in front of employers. Panel discussions, networking events, and experiential activities alongside employers allow participants to make meaningful connections with employers and engage and learn from them while demonstrating their interests and abilities. Participants also benefit from learning the skills employers seek and putting them into practice in real-world scenarios.

For employers, the hiring process can be time-consuming, weeding through a mountain of applications, and interviewing applicants, only to be unsure whether they can perform, which creates added risk to the process.

Industry integration helps employers overcome these challenges by engaging directly with motivated, skilled participants and seeing them showcase their capabilities. Employers contribute to designing industry-integrated activities to ensure participants learn what applies to their roles. This participation saves time and reduces the risk associated with hiring, as employers can see the immediate hiring potential of participants throughout these various activities in the program.

Key benefits for participants:

- Provides 'real-world' work experience, learning skills needed by industry
- Connect and learn directly from employers
- Helps build a professional network

Key benefits for employers:

- Provides a new process for connecting with new talent
- Interact with, and see participants in action, reducing the risk of hiring
- Ensures participants learn the skills they need

How we do it:
a SalesCamp Example

What does Industry integration look like within Salescamp?

As laid out in Palette Skills' employer-led design guide, working with employers is critical to understanding the types of industry-integrated activities and the skills and tasks to include in an upskilling program.

To build this component of SalesCamp, we started by speaking with employers. We quickly realized that specific tasks, skills, and experiences were central for an applicant to land a sales role successfully. With insights from employers, we designed three main activities that taught participants what they needed to know to execute these tasks and allowed them to test their skills in real time. Ultimately, we found the most value in implementing the following:

- A Guest Panel

- A Showcase Event

- Networking Days

These activities are part of the core SalesCamp structure and complement each other to create a strong, immersive, industry-integrated experience.

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Guest Panel

The Guest Panel connects participants with seasoned, knowledgeable sales professionals and focuses on digging into the sales professionals' backgrounds. Interaction between panellists and participants is ultimately the goal from an industry integration perspective. The panel allows for dialogue between participants and employers, improving participants' knowledge of the sector and allowing them to meet potential employers.

Showcase Event

The Showcase event requires participants to take on one challenge that mimics a task they would do regularly in a sales role and present it in front of an employer. Examples of these challenges include:

1 **An elevator pitch**, where participants pitch a company (what they are, what they do, etc.) as they would during a presentation or speaking to a potential client.

2 **Cold calling**, where participants conduct a mock cold call, a regular part of a B2B sales job, to book another meeting with the potential client and create a new sales pipeline.

3 **Objection handling**, where participants demonstrate how to overcome client concerns or objections when selling a product.

Through the Showcase activities, participants get a taste of what they will be doing in a sales environment, employers gain a better perspective of what participants have to offer, and participants have the opportunity to receive real-time feedback from industry.

Networking Events

Networking events provide opportunities for participants to connect one-on-one with employers who are hiring. Participants leverage this opportunity to learn more about the employer and share why they are interested in a sales role at their company. Employers meet with skilled, pre-vetted candidates, offering them a new approach to filling their job vacancies. Networking events are conducted virtually and timed with market hiring cycles.

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How do we get employers to engage?

There is an intrinsic need for employer engagement when using industry integration in an upskilling program. So, how do we get these employers to engage?

For SalesCamp, we focus on mission fit and value proposition. We identify and recruit employers who understand, relate, and appreciate our program's goals. By showcasing the untapped talent pool within SalesCamp alongside the value of upskilling, we can provide solid value to employers. Interacting with participants throughout the program gives employers an advantage in the hiring process – it saves time and lowers risk – and that's incredibly valuable for employers.

How to identify and attract employers that fit your program

Knowing the value of our program to potential employers, the following steps are to identify and start reaching out.

Identifying Employers

Identifying the right employers depends on understanding employer needs – connections to skilled talent – and how your upskilling program meets those needs – connecting employers to qualified talent. Now is the time to research potential employers.

Look into their size, location, workforce statistics, current open roles, what industry niche they reside in, etc. Check out job boards (e.g. Indeed) and LinkedIn to see who has available positions or has hired recently, and look at news releases to find companies who have recently announced investments or growth plans. Knowing this will help you understand the types of roles an employer is looking to fill and, when they might be looking to fill them, whether they would be interested in participating now or in a few months. Overall, this will get you started in building an employer pipeline. In the case of SalesCamp, we developed a target audience of employers that we felt fit what we could offer: small and medium SaaS or tech businesses that hire entry-level sales roles. This kind of research was imperative to our success, as it meant we were starting a dialogue with companies who would have a genuine interest in our mission.

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Employer Outreach

Once you've identified employers, the next step is to begin outreach to the appropriate companies. Outreach is about building a relationship, maintaining a discussion and listening to understand their current and future needs.

The first step is to set up a meeting. There, you can show the value of your program and the experiential activities you're looking to involve them in. Within your pitch, you want to concisely explain your program, its value proposition, and its partnership opportunities.

Once you've described your program as effectively as possible, show them the benefits of participating in your industry integration activities. Note the participants' strengths and point to the industry-specificity of the activities involved in the program.

It's also essential to make sure they're a fit for you and your program. Discuss their hiring practices, expectations for employees, and corporate culture. Ensure they're a company you're comfortable guiding your participants towards working for.

Working with partners can help with your outreach activities. Many community organizations, such as employment agencies, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies, are funded to bridge the gap between job seekers and hiring companies. These organizations might be able to connect you directly to employers they know are looking for new talent, while your upskilling program can support these organization's job seekers.

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Where to go from here?

There is tremendous value in industry integration. Developing activities that can connect participants and employers while continuing to develop participants' skills is a key component of an upskilling program and critical to achieving job placement. Whether the upskilling program is challenging your participants or lining up networking sessions, these intentional activities benefit employers and participants in getting to a job placement.

With that in mind, the next thing to do is to implement industry integration in your upskilling program. Take stock of your program, meet with employers to define their needs, identify the activities that will meet them, and bring them into practice. Upskilling programs that embed industry-integrated activities will lead to a new kind of success and progress for your participants and employers.
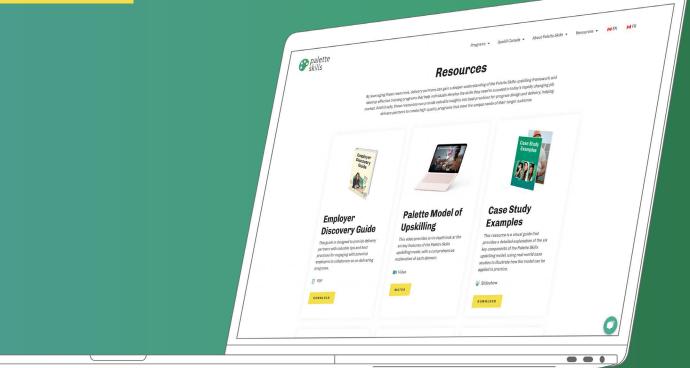

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Palette Skills continues to build its learning sandbox guides and tools that support training providers in designing and delivering demand-driven upskilling programs.

We'd love to share updates and hear your thoughts on what resources you'd like to see in the future. Fill out the form below to stay in the loop and share your suggestions.

Stay Connected