

## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

### Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Industry Needs

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For decades, Human Resource (HR) practitioners and the academic sector have worked to bridge the gap between the supply of qualified candidates and the evolving demands of the industry. However, simply achieving vertical alignment—where educational attainment matches job requirements—is no longer sufficient to secure better opportunities within organizations.

Today's workforce faces increasing expectations for higher and multi-dimensional skills, driven by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and the transformation of organizational roles. Traditional learning in a single discipline, such as Human Resources, is no longer enough. Professionals must now master diverse competencies to remain relevant and competitive.

Modern HR roles, for example, require more than knowledge of policies and processes. They demand:

- Proficiency in technology, including computer software applications.
- Adaptability to dynamic environments.
- Resilience to cope with immediate changes in systems and procedures.

To thrive in this ever-changing landscape, individuals must demonstrate:

- Technological proficiency – Comfort with digital tools and platforms.
- Adaptability – The ability to adjust quickly to organizational and environmental changes.
- Resilience – Maintaining effectiveness under pressure and uncertainty.
- Continuous learning – A commitment to acquiring new skills and knowledge as roles evolve.

With over 25 years of experience in Human Resources—managing both local and global requirements in talent sourcing and Learning & Development—I have witnessed a significant shift in what organizations truly need from candidates.

Sourcing applicants today is no longer just about meeting functional competency demands. It goes far beyond that. In fact, we often find ourselves questioning whether the role we are hiring for—such as a Company Accountant or Audit Personnel for example—still prioritizes traditional skills. Increasingly, the most critical competencies are not limited to performing accounting or auditing tasks. What organizations value now is the ability to: *Organize, analyze, demonstrate, and automate information* so that it becomes easy for users and stakeholders to access, interpret, and apply. This evolution is driven by technology and the growing expectations of information recipients for outputs that are: *Fast, Reliable, Consistent, Sustainable*. Competency requirements have evolved dramatically. Today's professionals must combine technical expertise with strong analytical, organizational, and digital automation skills to meet the demands of a rapidly changing business environment.

Likewise, for the organization to attract the best candidates, organizational branding has become more important than ever. Today's applicants are not joining companies solely for competitive salaries and rewards packages. They are also seeking organizations that: *Align with their values, Offer a strong culture and Demonstrate genuine employee engagement and support*.

Modern candidates look beyond personal benefits—they want to work for companies that care about the environment, the community, and the planet. This shift makes it essential for organizations to create sustainability programs, not only to strengthen the brand but also to ensure long-term success for the company and future generations.

Ultimately, this is about mutual care—meeting the needs and expectations of both the organization and its stakeholders. When companies prioritize sustainability and purpose-driven initiatives, they build trust, attract top talent, and create a workplace that thrives in today's competitive landscape.

The gap between academia and industry will continue to widen unless both sectors embrace the reality that skills, adaptability, and values matter as much as education. Organizations must invest in continuous learning, technology integration, and sustainability initiatives, while individuals must commit to lifelong learning and resilience.

In this era of rapid change, success is no longer defined by what you know today—but by how quickly you can learn, adapt, and contribute to a purpose-driven organization tomorrow.

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### Forging the Future: Davao City's Economic Trajectory and the Synergistic Role of Ateneo de Davao

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DCCCII –President

Davao City stands firmly as the economic powerhouse of Mindanao, continually enhancing its status as a premier investment hub. This ambition is vigorously pursued by the **Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (DCCCII)**, the driving force that articulates the needs and opportunities of the business sector. This commitment to proactive evolution and long-term vision perfectly aligns the Chamber with the academic excellence of the **Ateneo de Davao University (AddU)**.

#### The 2026 Mantra of DCCCII: Driving Change, Building Future

The DCCCII's mantra, "**Driving Change, Building Future**," is the strategic blueprint for a dynamic economy. It reflects a commitment to anticipating global shifts, adopting necessary reforms, and constructing a resilient, sustainable future for Davao and Mindanao.

The Chamber's strategy focuses on integrating Davao's natural strengths with global trends, primarily through four major flagship events that embody this forward-thinking approach, recognizing the crucial role of all sectors:

1. **MSME Week:** A foundational event focused on empowering **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises**. Aligned with the "Driving Change" principle, it offers various capacity-building seminars, trainings, and trade fairs aimed at digitalizing and professionalizing small businesses. It ensures that the economic "Future" built is inclusive, with MSMEs integrated into the larger supply chain and digital economy.
2. **Davao Agri-Trade Expo (DATE):** In the spirit of "Driving Change," DATE focuses on adopting **Agriculture 4.0** technologies (AI, Robotics, and Data Analytics) to revolutionize farming. This change management is crucial for "Building Future" food security and creating high-value agro-processing industries.
3. **Innovation Summit:** This event is the heart of the "Driving Change" mandate, convening leaders to discuss frontier technologies like **Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Cybersecurity**. It drives the shift towards a high-tech, knowledge-based economy, essential for "Building Future" competitiveness.
4. **Davao Investment Conference (Davao ICON):** This platform connects the changes initiated through all other events with the capital needed to "Build the Future." Davao ICON markets the city's strategic advantages—informed by a culture of change—in infrastructure, manufacturing, and tourism to global investors.

These events collectively demonstrate the DCCCII's commitment to creating an economy that is both rooted in its agricultural base and forward-looking in its adoption of cutting-edge technology, while ensuring the participation of the crucial MSME sector.

#### The Essential Role of Ateneo de Davao University

The success of the DCCCII's transformative mantra relies heavily on a talent pool equipped with both technical expertise and the ethical resilience to lead change. The **Ateneo de Davao University**, especially its **School of Business and Governance (SBG)**, can be one of the strategic partners to produce the human capital necessary for **Driving Change, Building Future**.

AddU's contributions are strategically aligned with the Chamber's needs:

| DCCCII Agenda (The Future We Need to Build)  | AddU SBG's Contribution (Driving the Change)                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MSME Empowerment / MSME Week                 | <b>Entrepreneurship Development:</b> SBG's Entrepreneurship Department and incubation centers directly mentor startups and provide technical assistance to small businesses, translating academic knowledge into grassroots economic change. |
| Tech and Digital Economy / Innovation Summit | <b>Innovation Ecosystem:</b> Operating innovation centers that foster tech startups, drive research in data science, and align academic output with the cutting-edge topics of the Summit.                                                   |
| Stable Investment Climate / Davao ICON       | <b>Ethical Leadership:</b> Producing business and governance graduates grounded in ethical leadership, ensuring transparency and good corporate governance—the foundation of a stable investment future.                                     |

Through its commitment to rigorous academics and relevant research, AddU ensures that the professionals entering the workforce are not just competent technicians, but ethical leaders capable of **Driving Change** responsibly and sustainably. AddU's representation in the Davao City MSME Development (MSMED) Council, alongside the DCCCII, further solidifies this governance partnership.

#### A Testament to Partnership: DCCCII's Support for the SBG Journal

The powerful, collaborative spirit between Davao's business owners and its academic leaders is concretely affirmed by the DCCCII's support for the launch of the **School of Business & Governance (SBG) Journal**.

This endorsement is a clear declaration that the DCCCII recognizes **research and informed inquiry** as the crucial tools for "**Driving Change**." The Journal serves as a permanent, peer-reviewed knowledge hub that provides the intellectual foundation for the Chamber's transformative agenda:

- **Evidence for Change:** It provides the academic rigor necessary to justify policy shifts and the adoption of new practices, including those affecting MSMEs, agri-tech, and ICT.
- **Foundation for the Future:** It serves as a repository of local, context-specific data and analysis on economic trends, investment climates, and best practices, ensuring that the "Future" is built on solid, intellectual ground.

The DCCCII's backing of the SBG Journal solidifies a vital principle: the future of Davao City is guaranteed by the continuous, productive synergy between the **Captains of Commerce** and the **Catalysts of Knowledge**, united under the banner of "**Driving Change, Building Future**."