



SkillUp

Elevate Your Business Game

Program for 2026

Our values

At SkillUp, 3 principles shape the way CEOs learn, connect, and grow together.

1 Inspiration

Exposure to successful entrepreneurs and international experts from around the world has the power to shift your mindset.

When you see what others have built, we hope to inspire you for new growth and adventure.

2 Collaboration

Growth is rarely a solo journey.

At SkillUp, we bring together CEOs and top management leaders at a similar stage of growth, united by a shared vision for their businesses. Here, you can speak openly, share the challenges that keep you up at night, and compare notes on how others have navigated the same obstacles. Peer insight from people who truly understand your position is one of the most powerful tools a leader can have.

Together, we go further.

3 A Spark of Possibility

Sometimes, all it takes is a small nudge to unlock what you thought was out of reach. AI is more accessible than you think, see what it can do for you.

A compelling marketing campaign does not require a big budget, just a bold idea that makes people stop and look.

SkillUp provides that spark, that gentle push in the right direction.

Our community values

We ask every participant to bring 3 things to this program:

1 Decency & Integrity

Engage with others with honesty and respect.

2 Presence & Contribution

Show up, engage, and contribute. Your participation makes this program valuable for everyone.

3 Generosity

Freely share your knowledge, your experience, and your opportunities.



Offerings

SkillUp offers three distinct formats, designed to meet you at the right level of engagement.

1

5-week program

The next session runs from June 1st to July 7th, with an additional session planned in November.

2

Mini SkillUp

The next session will take place in October.

3

Club

Open to participants who have completed either of the two formats above.

5-week program

Most sessions are held online, lasting 90 minutes, and feature interactive sections to boost engagement.

Week 1 – Digital Innovations and Business Success (online)

Get a forward-looking perspective on the digital landscape and what it means for your business. During this week, you will:

- Explore what is coming next in Information Technology and how to leverage it for business success
- Discover the state of the art in AI and practical use cases you can apply in your company

Week 2 – The Offsite

A 2-day, 2-night immersive experience focused on leadership and growth. During this offsite, you will:

- **Develop** your leadership skills
- **Understand** your communication style and how to engage effectively with others
- **Deepen** your knowledge of marketing strategies
- **Take part** in one-on-one clinics with experts to explore which AI tools are right for your business and how to implement them in practice
- **Build your network**, use this opportunity to grow your network with business leader just like you



Weeks 3 and 4 – Diving Deeper into Your Sector (online)

These weeks are tailored to your industry. We offer three tracks: Manufacturing, IT, and Tourism (with some sessions also relevant to agribusinesses).

Please note that for the upcoming June cohort, only the Manufacturing and IT tracks will be running.

IT Track: Software and Digital Solutions – Adapting to a Fast-Changing World

Gain a comprehensive understanding of the forces reshaping the tech industry and what they mean for your business. During these sessions, you will:

- Navigate the ethical, regulatory, and governance dimensions of AI
- Understand what happens when technology evolves faster than the market – and how to stay ahead
- Learn from a CEO operating in the sector
- Explore the future of software development and what it means for your organisation
- Identify concrete opportunities for growth and innovation in the IT sector

Manufacturing Track: Becoming More Efficient with Factory 4.0

Discover how modern manufacturing practices and digital tools can transform your operations. During these sessions, you will:

- Apply LEAN principles to reduce waste and improve efficiency
- Strengthen your supply chain management practices
- Explore how digitalization and Industry 4.0 technologies can modernise your production
- Hear first-hand from a CEO navigating these challenges in the sector

Tourism Track: Building Resilience, Innovation and Year-Round Value

Understand the trends shaping the future of tourism and how to position your business for sustainable success. During these sessions, you will:

- Gain insights into the evolving traveller profile and emerging markets
- Explore the strategic role of DMCs in driving destination competitiveness
- Discover proven strategies to overcome seasonality and generate value beyond peak periods
- Understand how aviation infrastructure shapes year-round tourism development

Week 5 – Sustaining your success (online with clinics on-site)

During this week, CEOs come together to explore key topics essential to the long-term sustainability of their businesses:

- **Governance**
with a particular focus on family-owned businesses
- **Environmental and Social Responsibility**
navigating evolving consumer expectations and increasingly stringent regulations
- **External Growth and M&A**
identifying acquisition and partnership opportunities to accelerate business growth
- **Financing Options**
understanding the funding strategies available to support your ambitions



Mini Skillup

Food and accommodation are fully covered by the project.

Day 1

Active listening and resonance

We often think we listen, but do we really? This session explores how the quality of your attention shapes the way you lead and the relationships you build.

Your year in review and your role

A structured moment to step back and reflect: what went well, what didn't, and what your role as a leader actually looks like day to day.

Day 2

Situational management

No two situations are the same. This session looks at how to read a room, a team, or a crisis, and adjust your approach accordingly.

Nurturing your relationships with collaborators

We will help you understand your leadership style and then explore what it takes to build trust and get the best out of the people you work with.

My experience in marketing and yoursuccess as a business

A candid conversation with David Bruketa about what actually works in marketing... and how to define your product hero.

AI Clinic: your personalized 30-minute session

A one-on-one slot with an expert to cut through the noise around AI and figure out what actually makes sense for your business.

Day 3

Process communication model

A practical framework for understanding your own communication style and learning how to adapt it when dealing with different types of people on your team.



Club

An exclusive community for CEOs and business leaders who have attended the SkillUp Bootcamp or Mini SkillUp Program.

Expert-led sessions paired with hands-on consulting tailored to your business.

Workshops

Change Management Workshop

Lead and communicate change effectively.

Personal Branding & Communication

Communicate with impact and build your brand.

Market Research & Market Entry

Understand markets and identify growth opportunities.

AI Use Case Workshops

Develop practical AI solutions you can implement immediately.

Manufacturing Productivity Workshop

Boost efficiency using Lean, supply chain and Industry 4.0 tools.

Legal & Regulatory Entry Workshop

Understand legal essentials for new markets.

Commercial Excellence & Pricing

Optimization of every lever of a commercial strategy – product, price, innovation, marketing, and sales.

Consulting

Change Management Consulting

Tailored guidance to manage organizational change.

Personal Branding & Communication

One-on-one strategic messaging and visibility coaching.

Market Research Consulting

Customized market insights and entry strategies.

AI Consulting for SMEs

Select and implement the right AI solutions.

Manufacturing Productivity Consulting

On-site diagnostics to improve factory performance.

Legal & Regulatory Consulting

Clarify compliance needs for entering new markets.

Diaspora Mobilization Consulting

Use diaspora networks to support market entry.

Commercial Excellence & Pricing Consulting

Drive measurable revenue and profit through pricing and growth strategies.



Premium Masterclasses

Monthly sessions & half-day workshops, online & in person



Structured Networking

Curated events with fellow CEOs and industry thought leaders



Annual Offsites

Two exclusive retreats per year – Croatia & international



€12,000 Consulting Credits

Credits to spend on a range of consulting companies and experts – pick and choose from our list

Key Partners

Some of our partners this year for the program:



A School with a View

MEDIA MIND

ignition
PROGRAM

∞ INFINUM

civittà

LUQAM

DAVOR
BRUKETA



How to apply?

SkillUp is open to CEOs who lead businesses that meet the following eligibility criteria:

Number of staff headcount:

10–250 persons¹

Financials:

Annual turnover below 50 million€
OR annual balance sheet total below 10 million€, with a minimum annual turnover of 500 000 €²

Operations:

More than 3 years

1. Includes full-time staff (one unit), part-time, temporary and seasonal staff (fractions of one unit). Not included: apprentices or students in vocational training, employees on maternity leave or parental leave.

2. Latest year available with government, 2024.



PLEASE NOTE:

The calculation for the financials (and thresholds) may differ when one or more other enterprises hold a share in the capital or voting rights. Please check **the guide** to check the SME definition and use **the tool** to check your eligibility.

This program is open only to CEOs. In some cases, managing directors will be eligible.

By participating, the company will receive de minimis support, equivalent to up to 25,000 EUR for the 5-week bootcamp and 5,000 EUR for the Mini SkillUp.

The team will be flexible in allowing larger companies to participate.

Applications are submitted directly through our website:

skillup.mingo.gov.hr

Companies from all over Croatia

SkillUp unites a truly diverse community of business leaders from across Croatia. Participants come from every corner of the country, with roughly equal representation from Zagreb, the coastal region, and inland areas. Women are also strongly represented, with female entrepreneurs and managers making up a third of every cohort.

Our participants span a wide range of industries, from **technology and IT to manufacturing** (metal, plastic, rubber, paper, machinery and specialized equipment), from **food and beverage production** (bakeries, fish processing, dairy, tea and coffee, ice cream and frozen foods) to **pharmaceuticals and medical equipment**.

The program also welcomes businesses from **tourism and hospitality** (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, nautical and sailing tourism), **construction and engineering** (civil engineering, architecture, electrical installations, geodesy), and **trade and services** (sales, consulting, human resources, legal services, and business process outsourcing).

This mix of sectors is not a coincidence. It is a strength. When a manufacturer sits alongside a tech founder, or an engineer exchanges notes with a consultant, the cross-pollination of ideas is where the real magic of SkillUp happens.



PLEASE NOTE:

This year marks an exciting new chapter for SkillUp: the program is expanding into the Western Balkans.

This milestone opens the door for entrepreneurs from the region to join the SkillUp Club, creating a cross-border community of business leaders united by a shared ambition to grow and innovate.

Sector	Number of companies	Share
IT & Technology (IT, digital marketing, telecom, automation)	~ 30	~ 20%
Manufacturing – Other (plastic, paper, machinery, equipment, glass, furniture, fashion, wood)	~ 25	~ 17%
Tourism & Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, nautical tourism)	~ 19	~ 13%
Manufacturing – Metal (metal constructions, metal products, metal processing)	~ 15	~ 10%
Construction & Engineering (construction, architecture, engineering, geodesy)	~ 15	~ 10%
Trade & Sales (sales and services, BPO, cleaning)	~ 15	~ 10%
Agroprocessing & Food (bakery, dairy, fish, beverages, frozen foods)	~ 12	~ 8%
Healthcare & Pharma (medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, dental)	~ 6	~ 4%
Consulting & Professional Services (HR, legal, environmental consulting)	~ 6	~ 4%
Creative & Media (graphic design, publishing, translation)	~ 5	~ 3%
Total	~ 150	100%

The program in numbers

The results speak for themselves.

151

CEO's and top
managers

6

Cohorts

63%

of participants have initiated
some business relations
with other SkillUp peers
following this program

97%

of companies have made
changes in their business
or are in the process
of making changes
following the program





Success stories

Hearing from participants

Here is what some of our alumni had to say about how SkillUp changed the way they lead.

“ The biggest change I made was in the process of hiring and assessing managerial staff.

I introduced a more structured approach to selection, testing and evaluation, which has already improved the quality of our recruitment and decisionmaking.

“ Planning to improve communication with employees, as well as communication between different departments.

Trying to understand employees' needs better.

“ We started implementing AI solutions in data analysis, forecasting, and operational optimization.

We also clarified team roles and strengthened middle management to improve execution and ownership.

“ I have changed my approach to communicating with employees.

I am trying to listen more, I plan to hire an HR specialist with the desire to improve interpersonal relationships, I am trying to distribute work and share responsibility.

“ The program prompted me to take several concrete steps, both strategic and operational.

I have started exploring the introduction of AI-supported solutions to improve internal processes and decision-making, particularly in data analysis and operational efficiency.





“ During the Mini SkillUp I meet some wonderful people from other industries that gave me great ideas, which I immediately started applying in my business (how to better organize and lead international sales of our products). However, a key realization for me was how powerful soft skills are. In small industrial companies, we tend to invest heavily in machinery and production facilities, while leadership and communication development often remain secondary.

This program shifted that mindset for me.

I have decided to personally continue investing in such programs, to encourage my key employees to do the same, and to engage external consultants to improve our internal communication and organizational processes.

“ I started paying more attention to communication, both within the team and in business situations in general.

The Process Communication Model session made me reflect on how different communication styles can influence outcomes and relationships.

This project is implemented by...

The IFC

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) improves the lives of people in developing countries by investing in private sector growth. We connect economic development with humanitarian needs to create real progress for the people and places that need it most.

IFC — a member of the World Bank Group — is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. For more than 60 years, we've leveraged the power of the private sector for global good. Today, we're using that experience to transform ideas into investments for green growth, inclusive jobs, and impactful projects.

More info on the website: <https://www.ifc.org>

The Ministry of Economy of Croatia

The Ministry of Economy of Croatia (Ministarstvo gospodarstva) is the government body driving the country's economic growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development.

From supporting entrepreneurs and attracting foreign investment to shaping industrial policy and trade relations within the EU and beyond, it plays a central role in building a prosperous future for Croatia. With a clear commitment to innovation and a green economy, the Ministry continues to lay the foundations for long-term economic resilience.

...and funded by the EU

