

AI Skills at Work: What China Teaches While Swiss SMEs Still Debate

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

The competitive edge in the AI era doesn't come from the best model — it comes from AI-literate employees. As China rolls out mandatory AI education from September 2025, Digitalswitzerland reports 78% of DACH SMEs treat upskilling as a priority, yet only 23% have a concrete plan. Time for systematic action.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

In May 2025, China's Ministry of Education approved a tiered AI curriculum that became mandatory nationwide from September 2025. Primary school pupils now receive at least six hours of foundational AI awareness per year, middle school students add ten hours of AI logic, and high school students spend one hour per week on AI innovation. The stated goal: by 2027, every student in the country should be AI-literate. In Beijing alone, more than 1,400 schools started offering at least eight hours of AI education from autumn 2025, fully integrated into existing IT curricula.

One could argue that national curricula have little to do with the daily business of a Swiss mid-market company. But the real point lies elsewhere: an entire generation of future employees, customers and competitors is growing up treating AI as a given, not a specialty topic. Companies still debating basic policy questions today aren't losing ground to a better language model — they're losing ground to organisations that have already learned to work with AI. For a closer look at how this global race plays out and which mistakes to avoid, see [avoiding the three biggest mistakes in the global AI race](<https://www.ki-podcast.ch/ki-standort-schweiz-kmu-strategie-und-globales-rennen>).

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 Structured training instead of informal experimentation — a clear curriculum rather than solo learning-by-doing.
- 02 Hands-on and practice-oriented rather than pure awareness sessions — employees work on real cases from their own daily tasks.
- 03 Role-specific formats for sales, support, HR and finance — application differs significantly by function.
- 04 Embedding in existing processes rather than one-off training — AI use becomes part of daily work, not an add-on task.

SWISS COMPLIANCE & ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES

- ☑ Full compliance with revised Swiss Data Protection Act (revDSG).
- ☑ Zero vendor lock-in on closed proprietary models.
- ☑ Seamless integration into Abacus, Bexio and M365 ecosystems.

Non-Binding Process Analysis

Let us review in 20 minutes where AI agents create immediate measurable efficiency in your workflows.

ki-outsourcing.ch