skillsoft

LEAN INTO
LEARNING

A look back on the state
of learning in *2022*

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Welcome

We've been on a remarkable learning journey. COVID-19 thrust the world into crisis; hybrid work disrupted culture, process, and labor markets; skills gaps and the great resignation forced business leaders to reassess how they build, nurture, and retain their workforce.

All of this disruption has given birth to a "skilling revolution." Throughout this transformative time, we have worked closely with our customers to help them "leap" into action, empowering their employees through learning, and ensuring they have the skills to succeed in a new world.

And, as 2022 unfolded, a common question arose: *How can organizations build learning programs that show clear ROI — not only to support employee growth, but to drive enterprise-wide transformation?*

We've discovered that while those giant leaps into learning can be the springboard for change, it's the "steady leans" that create sustainable gains: the day-to-day commitment to people and purpose, especially in times of crisis.

When you offer your employees purpose-driven learning, you invite them to make that commitment, too — leading to increased loyalty, improved employee retention, and incredible ROI — along with the skills and competencies that ensure a future-fit workforce.

When they do well, you do well.

The world stands at a critical crossroads with public health emergencies, climate concerns, economic and social disparity, and rapid technological change creating unprecedented and simultaneous disruptions. Today's employees, partners, and customers are asking organizations to support the greater good. And, business leaders are answering the call.

At Skillsoft, we believe that learning transforms lives. But, it also transforms organizations. The businesses that will thrive tomorrow are those that embrace the new social compact of today: one where employers, their people, and their communities are leaning into learning — and growing — together.

JEFFREY R. TARR
CEO, Skillsoft

Executive Summary

They say that "Adversity is the greatest teacher."

If that's true, we've all acquired quite the education over the past three years. Just consider what we've been through.

A pandemic. Economic uncertainty. Calls for diversity, equity, and inclusion. And despite the current economic uncertainty, it is undeniable that the traditional balance between employee and employer has shifted. The effects of such disruptive, seismic events are still being felt today — and will continue to be felt for many years to come.

In Spring of 2020, the phrase "new normal" became ubiquitous. But, chances are you've experienced and adapted to several new normals already. Now it's time to focus on not just *what's new*, but *what's next*.

A YEAR OF REFLECTION AND RECKONING

Society may be better equipped to manage the next wave of COVID-19, but it's clear that we won't return to the organizational norms of 2019. "Business as usual" has evolved. Remote and hybrid work models are here to stay. Employers face ongoing staffing challenges from "The Great Resignation" and "Quiet Quitting." And, skills gaps remain a challenge, affecting everything from product development and operations to customer satisfaction and succeeding in ever more competitive markets.

One major development that may present a challenge now, but great opportunity for the future, is a distinct shift in the traditional balance between employee and employer.

WHAT EMPLOYEES WANT

Today's employees aren't just looking for money from their next opportunity. Now, they take into consideration the company's vision, mission, goals, and social responsibility as they look for employers whose values align with their own.

Perhaps most important, employees want to work for organizations that commit to and provide growth opportunities and learning and development that lead to more enriching and rewarding careers.

WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED

Today's employers are under intense pressure to stay abreast of — and ahead of — digital transformation. This means constantly assessing and upgrading skills to stay competitive.

The challenge is exacerbated by current employment trends. In what remains a tight labor market, finding, hiring, and then retaining a skilled workforce is more difficult, time-intensive, and expensive than ever.

Foreword

THE NEW SOCIAL COMPACT BUILT ON GROWTH

The social compact between employer and employee has evolved. Businesses today must propel their people and organizations to grow together.

Continual learning and skilling programs are critical. And, it's just as important that the right kind of training is offered in the right way. By investing in the growth of their people, employers ensure they have what they need, which is a *sustainable workforce*, one that performs & adapts as the organization does — resulting in business growth.

However, both parties have to hold up their end of the bargain. When they do, there are mutually beneficial outcomes. And, making the most of those opportunities is something employees must deliver back to employers.

A strategy built on a culture of learning provides obvious return on investment to the business:

- Closing skills gaps for today
- Investing in a sustainable workforce for tomorrow
- Building in-demand tech skills
- Reaching the next level with power skills

CLOSING SKILLS GAPS

According to the latest Fortune 500 CEO survey, leaders have identified the talent shortage, what countless headlines term "skills gaps," as the number one threat to their business. There are three reasons:

1

EVERY COMPANY IS A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY.
Around the globe, virtually every industry is still experiencing accelerated digital transformation. New skills are constantly required for immediate use and to fuel initiatives planned for the next few years.

2

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING.
Forrester Research reports a massive demographic shift. There are simply less professionals entering the workforce than there are leaving it. This has forced a change in the way many companies handle talent.

3

THE LIFECYCLE OF SKILLS HAS SHORTENED.
Specific skills emerge and become obsolete more rapidly than ever before. This means that roles and job descriptions change constantly. Filling them is a never-ending issue.

Foreword

INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

By 2030, there will be a global human talent shortage of more than 85 million people. According to Accenture, failing to meet the skills demand could put $11.5 trillion in potential GDP growth at risk over the next decade.

However, with the threat of a talent shortage, many organizations overinvested in hiring, and those that did so now have to make difficult decisions. Hiring for new skills, while laying off workers is not a sustainable solution. It's increasingly difficult to recruit talent for the most in-demand skills. Plus, the hiring cost can be exorbitant: 50-200% of an annual salary.

And in a period of economic headwinds, more will be expected from the existing workforce, as they take on tasks and responsibilities of open roles, whose backfill has been deferred. A theme impacting all sectors of the global economy. Bottom line? Buying skills is no longer the solution. Today, organizations must build and bridge instead.

This approach drives positive outcomes for both employer and employee. In order to achieve true enterprise transformation, employers need to be focused on investing in their employees to reduce retention, enhance employee satisfaction, and develop the talent needed to fill any skills gaps. Sustainable talent development must be a strategic imperative.

What do we mean by "sustainable?" Having the right people with the right skills to handle both current and future workload. The key to being ready for opportunities, challenges, and future disruptions is building, nurturing, and leveraging a *sustainable workforce*.

BUILDING IN-DEMAND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

In this year's *Lean into Learning Report*, you'll find learning usage data that demonstrates increasing demand for certain skills, such as Application Security Awareness; Cloud Security; Secure Application Architecture; API Security; and Automated Software Testing.

Compared to usage data from last year, we're seeing a decrease in Agile Development, which may indicate that organizations have already implemented Agile and are already reaping the benefits. There's also an increase in Cloud Fundamentals. This reinforces data from our IT Skills and Salary Report; Cloud is the highest paid IT function for 2022.

Hard tech skills and certifications are crucial as they enable IT professionals — and the companies they work for — to remain competitive in dynamic market conditions.

Without continued tech-based learning, organizations will:

Fail to keep current on technology, decreasing productivity and output	Have difficulty retaining current employees	Struggle to achieve their business imperative in an uncertain economic climate
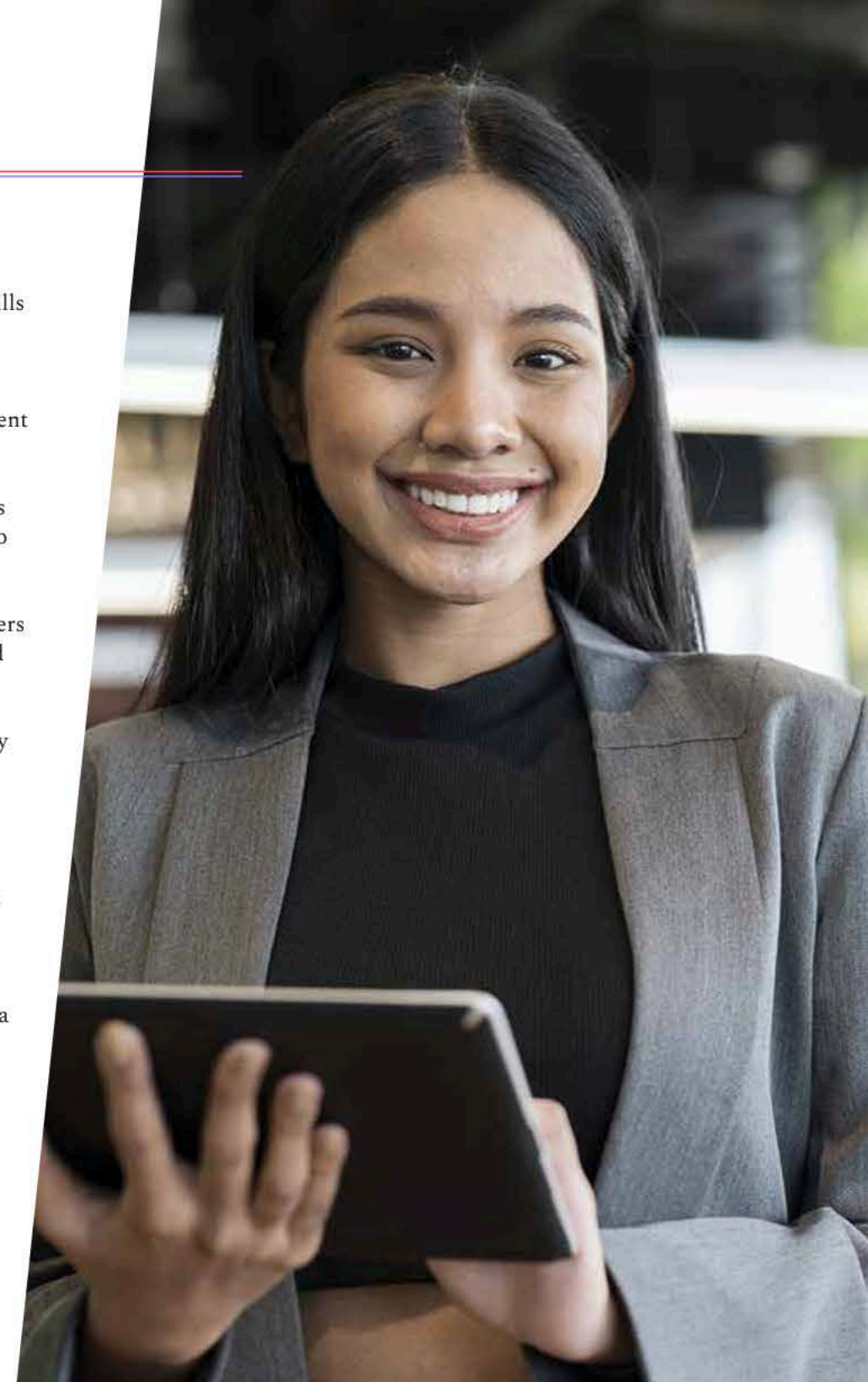
Foreword

REACHING THE NEXT LEVEL WITH POWER SKILLS

Regardless of role, learners have an insatiable appetite for power skills, such as leadership, collaboration, project and team management, adaptability, and effective and empathetic communication.

In this year's report, we found an increase in courses like Communicating with Confidence; Become a Great Listener; and Trust Building through Effective Communication. Compared to last year, there was a decrease in other topics, such as Interacting with Customers; and Customer Service Skills — indicating, perhaps, that these timely skills are reaching levels of competence.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is much more than a "nice to have." Forward-thinking organizations recognize it as a significant contributor to competitive advantage. Diversity leads to innovation, and innovation leads to growth. Consequently, organizations need to recruit, build, and develop stronger teams through diversity — whether that's professionals who are women; from Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities; LGBTQIA+; people of different abilities; or any other previously marginalized groups.

To empower employees and drive success, organizational leaders are building, advancing, and sustaining cultures that promote employee respect, diversity, and equity. A robust DEI learning program — designed for learners and leaders alike — is a foundational first step toward establishing and nurturing a culture that accepts and welcomes each individual's unique and valuable contribution.

TOP DEI-RELATED COURSES FOR 2022 INCLUDE:

- Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Action
- Becoming a DEI Ally and Agent for Change
- Understanding Unconscious Bias

Foreword

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Most organizational decision-makers will assert that training is important. However, all training is not created equal. It's crucial that the right kind of training is offered in the right way.

To ascertain what training is needed, organizations must:

- **Inventory current skills.** To date, there is little standardization where skills are concerned. At Skillsoft, we collaborate with forward-thinking institutions, such as the World Economic Forum, on the idea that there needs to be a universally understood skills taxonomy, a common language that can be used across industries and around the world.

- **Determine and Create Appropiate Learning Paths.** Organizations can fill the gap between skills they have and skills they need by building and bridging internally, creating learning paths that connect the current workforce to future skills.

- **Measure success.** Organizations — and individuals — can track progress with universally recognized and portable credentials, like third-party or vendor-authorized Certifications or Digital Badges.

Understanding which skills are needed is important, but only the first step. How training and learning are delivered can make all the difference. Employees must have access to learning experiences via a flexible platform so they can learn when, where, and how it makes sense for them. Training must be customized, reaching learners where they are today and directing them to where they want to be tomorrow.

The most effective learning experiences are:

ABSORBING
Compelling content commands attention and piques curiosity that sinks in.

TRUSTED
Vetted, rated instructors help inspire learners to perform at their highest potential.
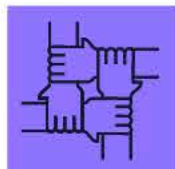
CONNECTED
Lessons and technology that let learners interact with peers is proven effective.

EXPONENTIAL
Learning that begets learning continually generates returns on time and investment.

And finally, organizations need to invest as much energy in communicating learning opportunities as they do in building the learning programs themselves. Employees must see a clear path for growth and development, or they may look elsewhere.

Through a commitment to a targeted, meaningful, and powerful culture of learning, leaders can effect lasting change. An investment in an organization's people is an investment in that organization's future.
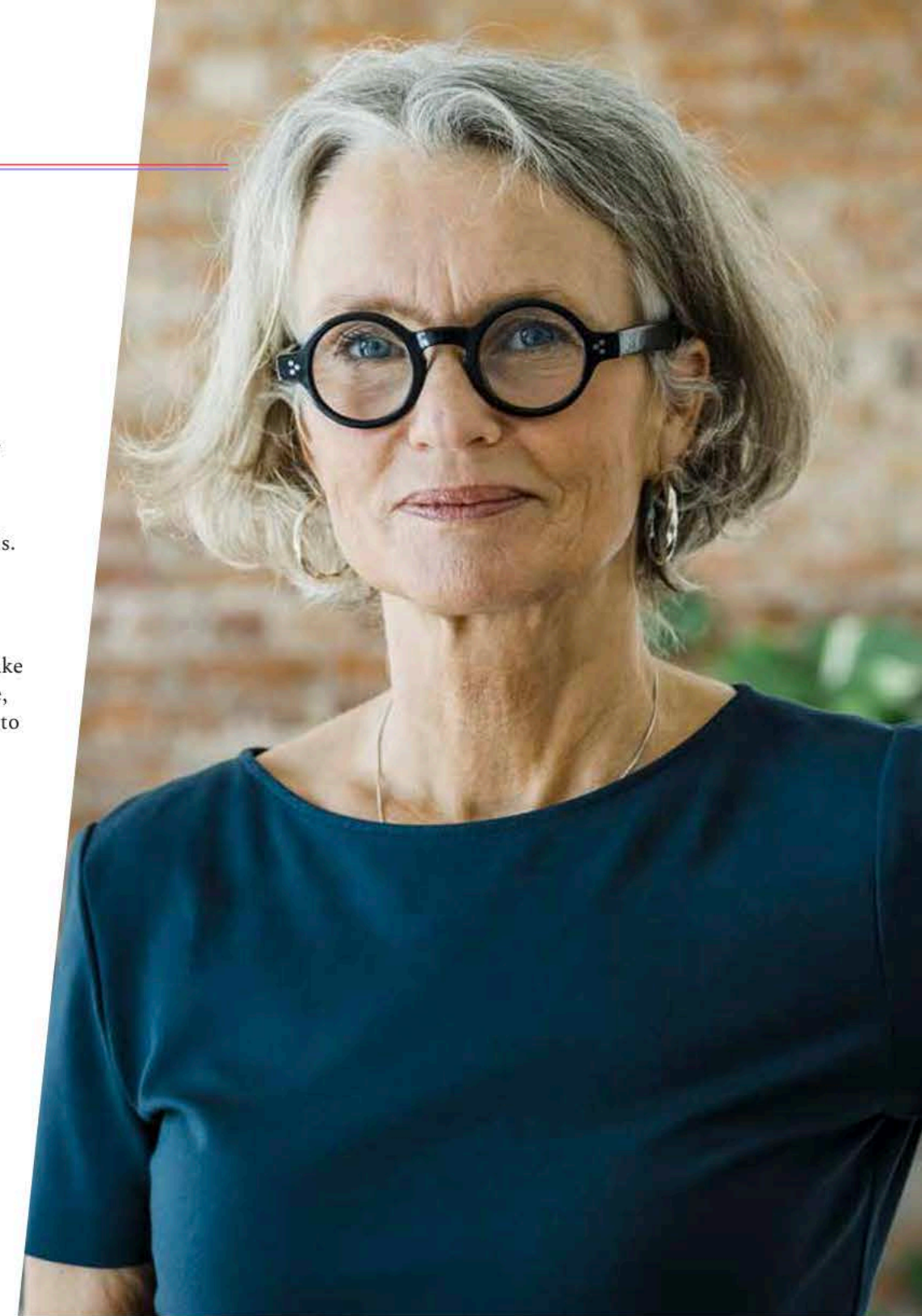
THE STATE OF SKILLING

THE STATE OF SKILLING

Hybrid Work in 2023

What People Leaders Need to Pay Attention to When Managing Hybrid Teams

BY HOLGER MUELLER,
VP & PRINCIPAL ANALYST,
CONSTELLATION RESEARCH

Without question, the work environment became more challenging in 2022. Hybrid work — the orchestration of work between in-office and work-from-home environments — has become both a powerful enabler and a critical challenge for people and their leaders. At the same time, enterprises are trying to get their people to return to the office. Enterprise leaders realize that something is missing or not working in the hybrid work world — especially for employees who recently joined the enterprise[1]. This segment takes a look at what will change in hybrid work in 2023 and what leaders can do to succeed in the new environment.

WHAT WILL CHANGE FOR HYBRID WORK IN 2023?

The following are a few key trends that will start to emerge and evolve in 2023 and beyond:

- **Hybrid work will become the norm.** In 2023 even the last remaining believers that the "old times" are coming back will realize that the traditional office work culture is not going to return. Hybrid work will establish itself as the norm. The trend to watch will be whether industries that require onsite workforce presence (e.g., healthcare, and manufacturing) relax in-office requirements for people who can adopt a hybrid approach. Talent scarcity and candidate demands will force these industries to adapt.

- **Leaders will improve; some will master the new work environment.** Great leaders excel by leading their teams to successful operation, attaining and surpassing objectives. A lot can go wrong, and challenges may require leaders to change the way they manage. Better leaders will create new best practices to help their teams succeed, foster a sense of purpose for team members, and create a sense of belonging — ultimately fostering a higher level of resilience.

- **Enterprises need to augment the office experience.** Undoubtedly, some in-person experiences still will have to happen. But because it is no longer a given that everybody is in the office Monday through Friday, the office needs to provide a better employee experience. Better meeting facilities, more humane offices, easier nomad working options, child and elder care, open offices, better food and catering options, an experience-driven approach to in-office meetings, and more will be key for a better office experience in 2023.

- **Leadership best practices go vertical.** The prevalence in some industries versus the absence of hybrid work in others will create different best practices for leaders. And, the gap between leaders in hybrid industries and leaders in in-person industries will widen. Enterprises will start requiring leaders they hire to have two to three years experience in successfully managing hybrid working teams. Overall, this is good news, because leadership research and best practices have stayed horizontal for way too long in a world that has become increasingly vertical.

- **People management remains in the experimental phase.** Leadership and people management in the hybrid environment will continue in 2023 — and hit overdrive — without clear guidance and standards. Enterprises need to foster experimentation for the sake of better best-practices evolution and must allow leaders to fail, recover, learn, and experiment until new best practices crystallize.

- **New people management software will emerge.** Enterprise software automates best practices, and as best practices crystallize in 2023, new people management software will emerge. Innovation will come from startups but also from traditional productivity system vendors that want to stay relevant.

[1] Salesforce CEO Mark Benioff discussed the productivity of new hires in the work-from-home era. Jordan Novet, "Marc Benioff tells Salesforce workers that new employees are 'facing lower productivity,'" CNBC, December 16, 2022. https://www.cnbc.com/2022/12/16/marc-benioff-says-newer-salesforce-employees-are-less-productive.html

Hybrid Work in 2023

WHAT WILL PEOPLE LEADERS HAVE TO DO IN 2023?

Here are some key strategies people leaders should consider in 2023:

- **Forget MBWA — it is now all MBTA.** Remember how "managing by walking around" once was revolutionizing leadership? Now the revolution is "managing by traveling around." Successful leaders will see employees and spend time with them in their homes or other out-of-office work locations.

- **Your open door is nice; your open calendar is what matters.** Much like MBWA, the open-door policy was a change for office culture and enabled employees to see their leaders. In a hybrid work environment, doors are irrelevant but availability of leaders via calendar and point-of-presence (POP) systems such as chat is what matters.

- **Make "no team member left behind" your new mantra.** It is critical for leaders to support and embrace their whole team, not leaving people behind or excluding them, regardless of their work location.

- **Leverage the new global talent pool.** The talent war is real, but with hybrid work practices, the talent pool has opened up to encompass an entire time zone, if not adjacent time zones, and, in some cases, has even gone global. Thanks to hybrid work, leaders have larger talent pools than ever to tap into for hiring and augmenting talent.

- **Promote remote people.** In the past, remote workers often were left out when it came to promotions and career progression. Hybrid work has effectively democratized the promotion pool: Because everybody is working hybrid, remote workers are no longer subject to stigma (and the risk of being overlooked).

- **Flexibility wins; foster and use it.** People want more flexibility. Smart leaders will tap into that desire, foster it, and use it to their team's advantage. Embracing flexibility for their team not as a nuisance but as a differentiator will be key for leaders.

MyPOV

Hybrid work management done right will not only foster but will also propel what matters to enterprises: Enterprise Acceleration[2], the higher agility and acceleration of all enterprise processes, applied to the enterprise's value chain and value creation. A more flexible workforce will be more productive, more successful, and more motivated and will show more resilience than ever. It is time for leaders to create environments that will unleash these key qualities for their teams. *2023 is a great time to start.*

[2] Mueller uses the term Enterprise Acceleration to refer to the need for enterprises to move faster and become more agile. For more, see: Holger Mueller, "Why the C-Suite Must Embrace Enterprise Acceleration," May 2, 2019. https://www.constellationr.com/research/why-c-suite-must-embrace-enterprise-acceleration

Building an Inclusive Work Environment

Every individual brings unique strengths and talents to the workplace. To empower employees and drive success for organizations, leaders are building, advancing, and sustaining cultures that promote employee respect, diversity, and equity. And, learning plays a pivotal role in this.

ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVITY

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is — and continues to be — a trending topic within organizations. But, not everyone understands or is comfortable with the nuances of this timely and emotionally charged subject.

There are a lot of questions — and learners, leaders, and organizations actively looked for answers, particularly in the areas of communication and unconscious bias.

TOP DEI COURSES 2021		TOP DEI COURSES 2022	
#1	Understanding Unconscious Bias	#1	Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Action
#2	Overcoming your Own Unconscious Bias	#2	Becoming a DEI Ally and Agent for Change
#3	How Culture Impacts Communication	#3	Understanding Unconscious Bias
#4	Take a Deep Breath and Manage Your Stress	#4	Moving from Bias to Inclusion in a DEI Journey
#5	Your Role in Workplace Diversity	#5	Adopting an Inclusion Mindset at Work
#6	Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace	#6	How Culture Impacts Communication
#7	Expert Insights on Unconscious Bias	#7	Using Communication Strategies to Bridge Cultural Divides
#8	Using Communication Essentials	#8	Overcoming Your Own Unconscious Biases
#9	Expert Insight on Communication Essentials	#9	Your Role in Workplace Diversity
#10	Bridging the Diversity Gap	#10	Expert Insights on Communication Essentials

DEI often brings up more questions than answers.

What's expected of me? What can I do? What are you doing for me? How can I feel valued? How do I make you feel valued?

Building an Inclusive Work Environment

INVITING WOMEN TO THE TABLE

The top courses on women and leadership in 2022 remain fairly consistent with those taken in 2021. The truly exciting story is the number of people investing their time in these courses. In 2021, nearly 1.7 million learners were curious to know how women could be valued more in the corporate world. In 2022 that figure rose to 12%. It's not a huge jump, but it's a start.

There's still so much to do as women continue to recover from the Pink Pandemic of COVID-19. In a survey conducted by the Center for American Progress, 20% of stay-at-home mothers would enter the workforce is they had better access to quality child care. And, another 42% would pursue a higher-paying job, and 29% would seek additional schooling or training for career advancement. According to Teach for America, more than four million child care slots could be lost due to COVID-19. And, most of these losses will affect low-income families and people of color.

However, gender equality continues to make small strides. And, that's good news since women who work for companies that focus on gender equality experience a higher percentage of productivity, mental well-being, job satisfaction, inclusive behavior, and loyalty to their employers. It stands to reason that this creates a win-win for both employer and employee.

TOP WOMEN'S COURSES 2021		TOP WOMEN'S COURSES 2022	
#1	Women in Leadership: Moving Beyond Gender Roles as a Leader	#1	Women in Leadership: Moving Beyond Gender Roles as a Leader
#2	Women in Leadership: Building your Infrastructure for Leadership	#2	Leadership Insights on Developing Women Leaders
#3	Women in Leadership: Mastering Key Leadership Competencies	#3	Women in Leadership: Building your Infrastructure for Leadership
#4	Leadership Insights on Developing Women Leaders	#4	Expert Insights on Women in Leadership
#5	Expert Insights on Women in Leadership	#5	Women in Leadership: Mastering Key Leadership Competencies
#6	Developing Women Leaders	#6	Women's Career Development Amidst the Pink Pandemic

Building an Inclusive Work Environment

## WHY ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL DIVERSITY MATTERS

DEI in the workplace is critical to making employees feel involved, included, and engaged so they can be their whole, authentic selves both in and outside of the office. It means recognizing, accepting, and appreciating individuals for their unique perspectives, and the ways they can enhance the employee experience.

By building skills through DEI programming, organizations can cultivate a culture centered around the needs of their employees. In turn, those employees can learn, inspire, and do their best work, which directly translates to an organization's success.

With diverse companies outperforming their less diverse peers, the business case for DEI is stronger than ever. According to McKinsey & Company, organizations in the top quartile for ethnic/cultural diversity among executives were 36% more likely to achieve above-average profitability.

A CULTURE OF INCLUSION — WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Building a culture of inclusion means establishing an environment where everybody's voice matters. It means listening when someone has something to say, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or what their role is. It's welcoming new thoughts and ideas with an open mind, creating a space where the most high-profile people and the most underrepresented voices are heard equally. Inclusion makes diversity and equity work.
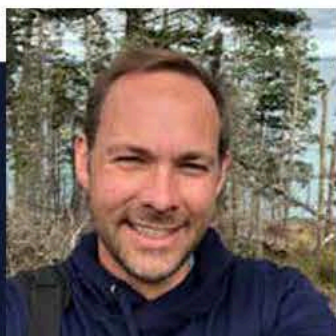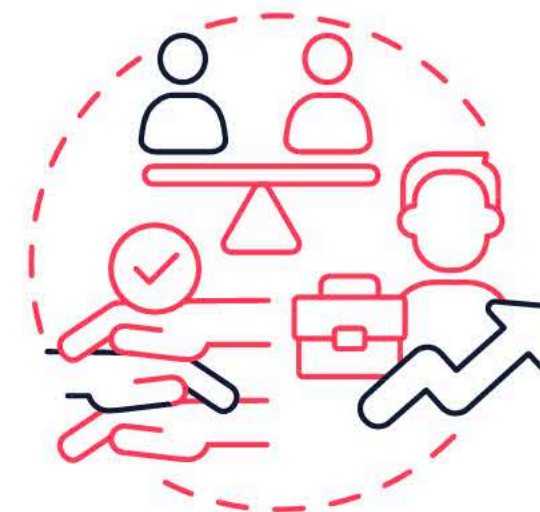
We asked Christopher Whalen, Skillsoft's Culture and Inclusion Specialist, for his advice on creating an inclusive environment.

"When we're talking about building a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, it's a pyramid.

At the bottom level is organizational awareness — what is bias? How does bias impact the way that I show up at work? What is allyship? How can I be more inclusive in my language? The goal is to get people thinking about their own behavior and help them identify the next step on their own journey.

Level two is inclusive leadership. Leaders need active listening skills and emotional/cultural intelligence to build and maintain trust, and to create a psychologically safe environment on their teams. This helps them to recgonise, empower, and remove barriers to growth.

That all leads to a courage culture — a culture that embraces active allyship, where feedback and new ideas flow freely and are embraced by leaders. That's the pinnacle. But, you need the two foundational elements before you can really have a courage culture. Which is what we are all striving for.

Inclusion works best when it's a bottom-up initiative. Let your people lead the way."

COURAGE CULTURE

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS

Skillsoft's 2022 IT Skills and Salary Report

Skillsoft published the 17th edition of the [IT Skills and Salary Report](#), illuminating the most in-demand skills; current salaries and compensation; training; leadership development and certifications; overall career satisfaction, and how the IT industry is handling today's most pressing disruptions.

The IT Skills and Salary Report provides a global view with input from both IT staff and IT decision-makers throughout North America, Latin America, Europe/Middle East/Africa, and Asia-Pacific. It's a go-to resource for valuable data, worldwide trends, historical analysis, and educated projections to better prepare IT teams for what's ahead.

Not surprisingly, data shows that this has been a year filled with change and uncertainty as the vast majority of us went into recovery mode in a post-pandemic world. And, despite a pendulum swing towards layoffs, we're still facing a global human talent shortage. While skills gaps are shrinking, recruiting and maintaining qualified employees — especially those with tech skills — are still top concerns.

The IT world is ever evolving. No big surprise there. But, that means training needs to be at the forefront. IT can't just be a supporting role; it's a critical and strategic component of any successful enterprise.

As we stated in the IT Skills and Salary Report, "Innovation starts with transformation and change happens when diverse minds come together and shake things up." Let's take a closer look at how the past year shook things up as the new normal became the everyday.

IT is coming out of the backroom and emerging as a major player within organizations. And, hard technological skills are no longer the only means to an end. IT professionals need to step out of their technology comfort zone and embrace power skills — leadership, effective communication, teamwork, time management, motivation, and adaptability — in order to prepare for and embrace the next big thing.
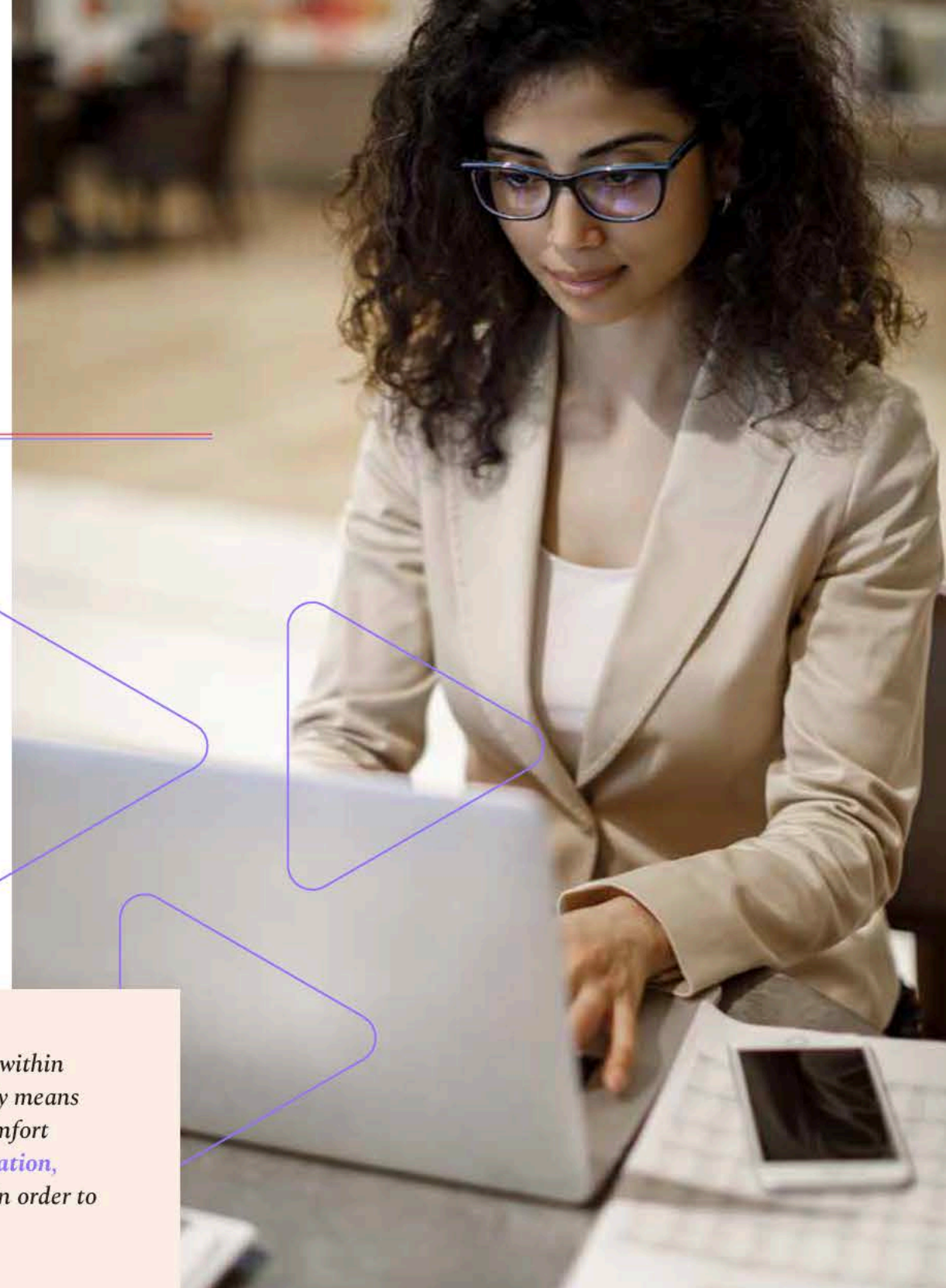
Skillsoft's 2022 IT Skills & Salary Report

SALARIES

Overall, most regions reported stable or slightly lower salaries across the board. Asia Pacific led the way on bonuses with 59% of respondents reporting having received one. North America continues to lead globally with a base salary of $108,165.

As expected, IT staff and decision-makers earn more money as they accumulate more experience.

Data suggests that through job performance and/or by learning new skills, employees are making a direct impact on salary increases. In most regions, raise percentages increased year-over-year with slight discrepancies between IT decision-makers and staff.

CERTIFICATIONS

IT professionals — and their employers — still see great value in certification. As we reported last year, 91% of respondents hold at least one certification and the average IT employee holds four. Forty-one percent of those were earned in the last six months, demonstrating a current and robust value perception around certifications.

Interestingly, although North America leads with salaries, they fall to the lowest position when it comes to holding certifications (although it should be noted that 87% still hold at least one). Ninety-six percent of Latin America IT professionals are certified.

Enterprise Architecture certification nets the highest salary in North America ($163,205), EMEA ($94,586), and Asia-Pacific ($92,016). In Latin America the highest netting certification goes to Dev Ops with an average salary of $90,053.

The most popular non-cyber security certifications are Microsoft, Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Cisco and ITIL, and IT Service Management. The most popular security, governance, compliance and/or privacy related certifications are Microsoft, ISACA, CompTIA, Cisco and (ISC)2.

REGIONAL SALARY BY LEVEL

NORTH AMERICA: $127,676 (IT Decision-maker), $108,165 (Overall), $94,302 (IT Staff)
LATIN AMERICA: $59,538 (IT Decision-maker), $48,771 (Overall), $40,886 (IT Staff)
EMEA: $73,207 (IT Decision-maker), $67,711 (Overall), $64,097 (IT Staff)
ASIA-PACIFIC: $57,258 (IT Decision-maker), $57,710 (Overall), $58,336 (IT Staff)

Legend: IT Decision-maker | IT Staff | Overall

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS BY REGION

NORTH AMERICA: 13% / 87%
LATIN AMERICA: 4% / 96%
EMEA: 9% / 91%
ASIA-PACIFIC: 6% / 94%
WORLDWIDE: 9% / 91%

Legend: Certified | Non-certified
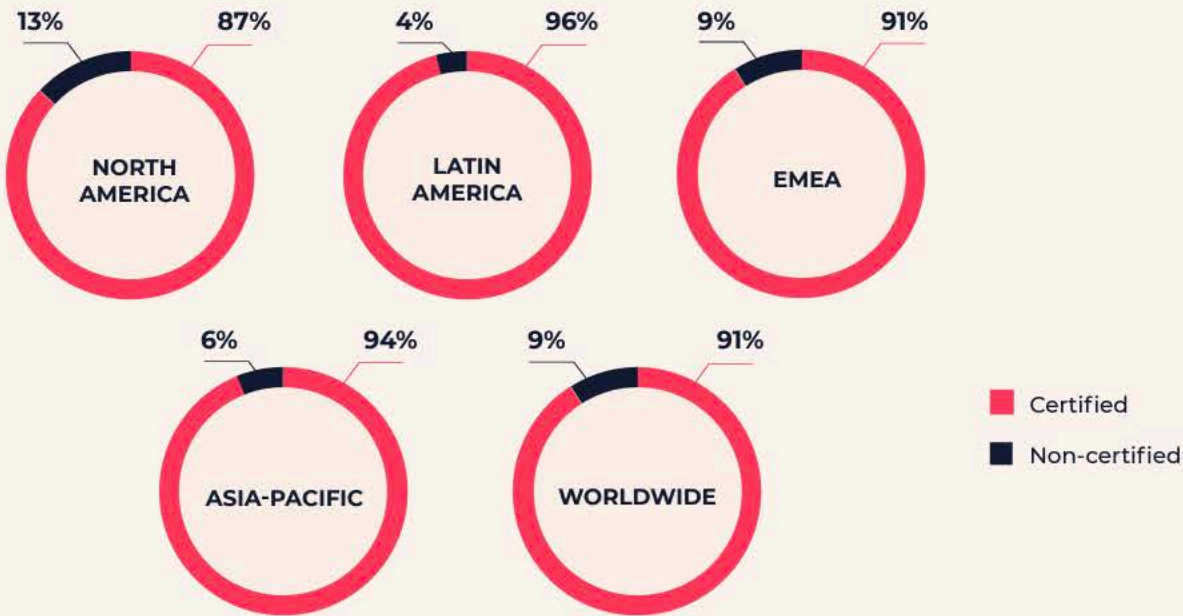
Skillsoft's 2022 IT Skills & Salary Report

IT DECISION-MAKER INSIGHTS

The majority of IT decision-makers reported concerns around retaining and attracting skilled and talented professional to fill key staff positions. Skills gaps remain a top concern for many, but the good news is that fewer reported current skills gaps in their organizations. More concerning is that a small percentage of decision-makers surveyed were unsure of whether or not they had a skills gap. This uncertainty implies a significant lack of awareness around skills needed and may lead to big problems in the future.

Increased stress, delays, talent acquisition costs, and operating costs, as well as decreases in productivity, customer satisfaction, and innovation are real byproducts of skills gaps. When it comes to budgets, decision-makers feel comfortable, with nearly 60% worldwide seeing an increase in their IT budget. And that means more money to invest in certifications. This is good news for the 55% of respondents who plan to train existing people to combat skills gaps. Ninety-six percent of IT managers believe certified staff add value to their organization.

Cloud computing is the top certification priority for 41% of decision-makers; cybersecurity (ranked number one last year) falls to second place with 31%. AI/machine learning and infrastructure/systems are also top priorities. The hardest positions to fill are cloud computing (30%), analytics/big data/data science (28%), and cybersecurity (25%). When it comes to vendors, decision-makers are investing in AWS (41%) and Google Cloud (33%).
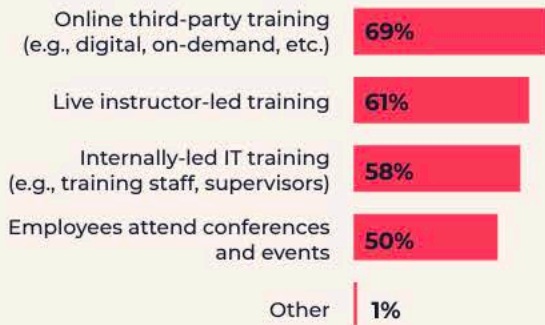
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps one of the most important takeaways from the report is that IT professionals see real value in professional development and training. More than half of those surveyed have participated in certification-focused IT training in the last 12 months. Slightly less have gone through some type of skills-based training. Even more promising is the fact that nearly a quarter of all respondents have received training in management competencies, reinforcing that the IT world recognizes — and supports — development of leadership skills.

Globally, web-based, on-demand sessions are the preferred learning format. This became the number one choice by far (63%) in the post-pandemic world, with only 18% saying they prefer an in-person, instructor-led program. Fifty-four percent say they have taken advantage of subscription-based learning and value it for the quality of the content (46%), opportunities for hands-on practice (41%), updated content (33%), multiple learning methods (24%), & authorized content and year-long access to content (19%).

Although the report demonstrates a high perceived value of training, there is still a disconnect when it comes to leadership training. While 90% offer compliance training for new technology, only 17% report active leadership development programs.

FORMAL TRAINING OFFERED BY COMPANY

Online third-party training (e.g., digital, on-demand, etc.)	69%
Live instructor-led training	61%
Internally-led IT training (e.g., training staff, supervisors)	58%
Employees attend conferences and events	50%
Other	1%

TYPES OF TRAINING OFFERED BY COMPANY

Formal (instructor-led, structured)	66%
Informal (peer-to-peer, impromptu, unstructured)	54%
None	14%
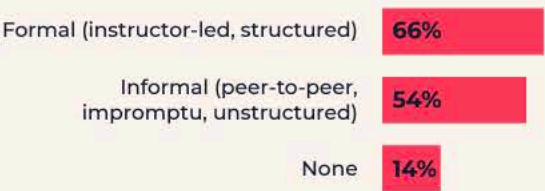
Skillsoft's 2022 IT Skills & Salary Report

JOB SATISFACTION

Seventy-three percent of respondents are satisfied with their chosen field and 37% say they feel extremely good about their job security. Across industries, employees are more likely to switch job roles than employers.

While less than a quarter switched employers in the past year, more than half of our respondents are planning to make a switch — and the number one reason for doing so is compensation.
This shows that employers need to invest in employees now, before their talent looks for satisfaction elsewhere.

Employers need to make certain IT professionals feel valued for their contributions and give them the opportunity to grow. A stagnant career path leads to a quick exit — and high turnover rates can be disastrous for an organization.

MANAGING DISRUPTION

No assessment on the state of skills and salary in the IT industry (or any other) would be complete without examining the disruptions we all faced in the past couple years. From pandemic recovery to the possibility of a global recession and rising inflation (or shrinkflation), to international conflicts, and supply chain troubles, the past year had its fair share of issues. Employees want more from their employers — especially when it comes to development and opportunities to grow — and if they don't get it, they'll take their skills elsewhere.

Most of our respondents are satisfied with the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies within their organizations. But, a quarter have experienced microaggressions, and some have experienced blatant harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace. Clearly there is still work to be done.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS

There was good news in the most recent IT Skills and Salary Report, but there is also room for improvement. As business evolves, people and the investments made in them will be as important as the technology we use. In some cases, even more so. Companies that are resilient, agile, and adaptable will succeed by building, nurturing, and retaining employee skills. The mission critical steps to success are clear:

- Determine where your skills gap exists or will exist
- Research which certifications will keep you competitive
- Create a learning environment
- Decrease skills gaps by increasing diversity
- Rely on trusted partners who will help you reach goals

JOB SATISFACTION

- 27% Extremely satisfied
- 46% Somewhat satisfied
- 17% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 8% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 2% Extremely dissatisfied

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

If 2021 was centered around settling into a new normal, 2022 has been about forging new pathways. There's no time to step back and see what's coming at you. The time to act is now.

Whether adding critical new skills to stay competitive, aligning current staff with future needs, or embracing compliance as a key part of business culture, learning is at the heart of forward movement. Upskilling, reskilling, and committing to the continual professional development of employees pays off in dividends. Employees that feel seen — and valued — by leadership will bring passion and loyalty, as well as experience and skills, to their job. And, employers who retain employees will also find it easier to recruit new talent. The good news in 2022 is that learning and development was given the respect it deserves, with companies worldwide investing in their people. Those that did looked at challenges with a growth mindset, made plans, and acted rather than reacted.
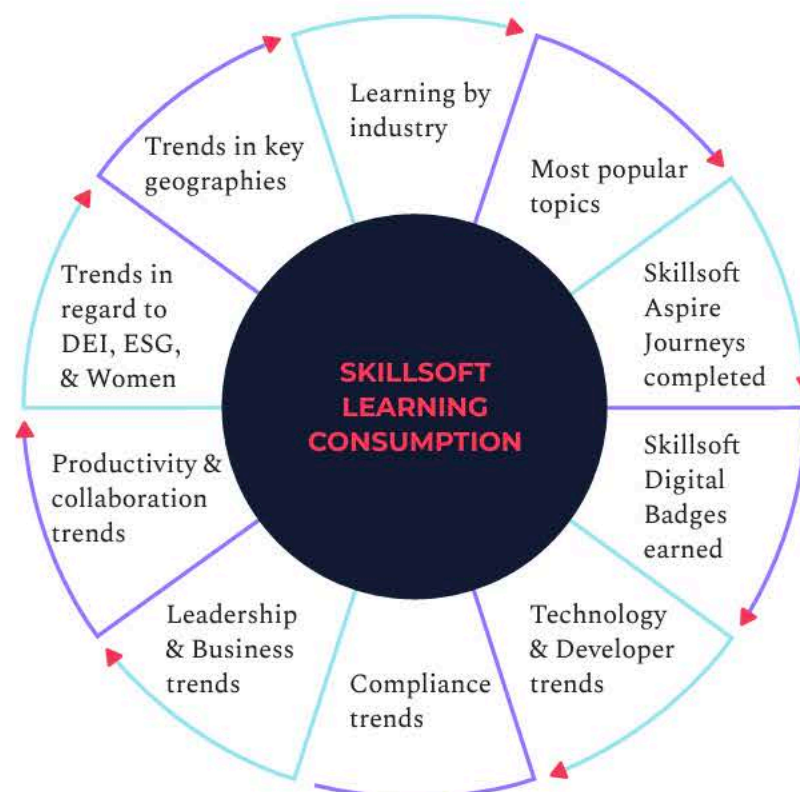
EMBRACING CHANGE

Every company is a technology company. And, technology by its very nature, is always in a state of flux. We're always looking for new innovations, ways to do things faster, smarter, with less effort. If we slow down, technology passes right by. Get stuck in one mindset and you're missing growth opportunities. That's why it's imperative for organizations to embrace change. And, for learning to keep pace with technology.

The employer that invests in its employee is ahead of the curve.

LEARNING: WHAT'S NOW? WHAT'S NEXT?

In this report, we've looked at Skillsoft learning consumption for 2022 and compared it to 2021. The results demonstrate many year-to-year consistencies — and reveal emerging trends to keep in mind for the future.

Learning by industry

Most popular topics

Skillsoft Aspire Journeys completed

Skillsoft Digital Badges earned

Technology & Developer trends

Compliance trends

Leadership & Business trends

Productivity & collaboration trends

Trends in regard to DEI, ESG, & Women

Trends in key geographies

SKILLSOFT LEARNING CONSUMPTION

Year-Over-Year Learning Consumption via Skillsoft Percipio Platform

26%
Increase in unique learners

37%
Increase in learning hours

This included,

32% Increase in Leadership & Business Skills learning hours

**39%** Increase in Technical Skills content hours

27% Increase in Compliance content hours across all platforms

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 20 INDUSTRIES THAT LEVERAGED LEARNING

The top industry, Business Services and Consulting, remained constant from 2021 to 2022. But, there were some noticeable shifts in the rest of the top 20. Manufacturing left the second spot and moved down to the fifth. Telecommunications, on the other hand, advanced from tenth on the list, to second. Government and Military made a significant jump from fourteenth to third place (due in no small part to Skillsoft Percipio being FedRAMP certified), while Banking and Finance dropped from third to seventh.

TOP INDUSTRIES 2021		TOP INDUSTRIES 2022	
#1	Business Services/Consulting	#1	Business Services/Consulting
#2	Manufacturing	#2	Telecommunications
#3	Banking/Finance	#3	Government/Military
#4	Medical	#4	Manufacturing
#5	Technology (e.g., computers, software, ISP, etc.)	#5	Retail
#6	Insurance	#6	Banking/Finance
#7	Education	#7	Education
#8	Retail	#8	Medical
#9	Pharmaceuticals	#9	Insurance
#10	Telecommunications	#10	Technology (e.g., computers, software, ISP , etc.)
#11	Aerospace	#11	Transportation
#12	Healthcare	#12	Training and Development:
#13	Transportation	#13	Non-Profit
#14	Government/Military	#14	Health Care
#15	Oil & Gas	#15	Pharmaceuticals
#16	Non-Profit	#16	Mining
#17	Training & Development	#17	Construction
#18	Legal	#18	Oil & Gas
#19	Mining	#19	Legal
#20	Media/Entertainment	#20	Aerospace
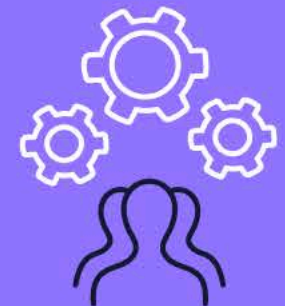
Overall, it's encouraging to see so many different industries lean into learning to develop and nurture workforce skills.

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS ACROSS DISCIPLINES VIA SKILLSOFT PERCIPIO

Looking at 2022's trending topics — from technical "hard skills" like Cloud Security and Java Programming, to cross-discipline "power skills" like Communication Essentials and Working Effectively as a Team — the depth and breadth of learning are evident.

TOP TRENDING TOPICS 2021	TOP TRENDING TOPICS 2022
Cloud Security Unconscious Bias Time Management Working Remotely Customer Service Skills Written Communication Scrum Working Effectively on a Team Trust & Relationship Building The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) Top 1 Developing Agile & Growth Mindsets Software Testing Automation Agile Microservices Architecture Mental Well-Being Managing Yourself Time Management ITIL® Foundation API Security Cloud Basics	Cloud Security Excel Working Remotely Presentation Skills Time Management Written Communication Networking Core Concepts Inspiring Engagement and Resilience Web App Vulnerability Analyst - 2022 Update Learn Agile Fundamentals IT Hardware Technician Fostering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Working Effectively on a Team Essential Customer Service Skills Communication Essentials Virtual Work in the New World Unconscious Bias Java Cloud Basics Scrum

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 20 MOST COMPLETED SKILLSOFT ASPIRE JOURNEYS

A clear, navigable path makes it easier to succeed in a learning environment. Aspire Journeys provide sequential learning that builds on current skills as learners progress and move through guided roadmaps to success.

TOP ASPIRE JOURNEYS 2021		TOP ASPIRE JOURNEYS 2022	
#1	Virtual Work in the New Normal	#1	First Time Manager Journey
#2	Leadership Development Core Journey	#2	Leadership Development Core Journey
#3	First Time Manager Journey	#3	Agile for Software Development
#4	Product Management Journey	#4	Delighting Customers with Design Thinking
#5	Delighting Customers with Design Thinking	#5	Mid-Level Manager Journey
#6	Building Resilience in Your Personal and Professional Life	#6	5G Technologies and Practices
#7	Automated Testing with Selenium	#7	Virtual Work in the New Normal
#8	Network Security Specialist to CloudOps Security Architect	#8	Customer Service Representative Journey
#9	Python Novice to Pythonista	#9	Corporate Trainer Journey
#10	Agile for Software Development	#10	Agile for All
#11	Forging New Paths: Women's Advancement in Life and Work	#11	Creating an Inclusive Culture of Trust and Belonging
#12	Software Project Lead to Advanced Scrum Master	#12	Building Resilience in Your Personal and Professional Life
#13	5G Technologies and Practices	#13	Sustainability and Restoring our Earth
#14	Inspiring Engagement and Resilience	#14	Automated Testing with Selenium
#15	Sustainability and Restoring Our Earth – Earth Day 2021	#15	Enriched Web Development with Angular 11
#16	Mid-Level Manager Journey	#16	Finance for Non-Financial Professionals Journey
#17	Enriched Web Development with Angular 11	#17	Administrative Assistant Journey
#18	Programmer to Secure Agile Programmer	#18	Forging New Paths: Women's Advancement in Life and Work
#19	Beyond Status Quo: DEI and the Future of Work	#19	Product Management Journey
#20	Human Resources Journey	#20	Leader of Leaders Journey

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 20 SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES EARNED

In 2022, learners were proud of their achievements and earned accredited records in the form of digital badges that were shared via social media channels. In fact, learners collected and celebrated 15.8 million digital badges in 2022, up 25% from 12.7 million earned in the 12 months of 2021[3].

TOP SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES 2021	TOP SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES 2022
#1 Application Security Awareness & Validation	#1 The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) Top 10 List Items
#2 Secure Application Architecture & IAM	#2 Cloud Security Fundamentals: Cloud Application Security
#3 API Security	#3 API Security
#4 The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) Top 10 List Items	#4 Application Security Awareness & Validation
#5 Cloud Security Fundamentals: Cloud Application Security	#5 Secure Application Architecture & IAM
#6 Automated Software Testing	#6 Become a Great Listener
#7 Agile Test-Driven Development	#7 Communicating with Confidence
#8 Agile Software Development – Scrum	#8 Trust Building through Effective Communication
#9 Cloud Computing Fundamentals: Introduction	#9 Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Action
#10 Need for Design Patterns & the Principles Guiding Design Patterns	#10 Becoming a DEI Ally and Agent for Change
#11 Communicating with Confidence	#11 The Art and Science of Communication
#12 Developing the Product & Sprint Backlogs	#12 Writing Effective E-mails and Instant Messages
#13 Agile Principles and Methodologies	#13 Aligning Goals and Priorities To Manage Time
#14 Release & Sprint Planning	#14 Agile Principles and Methodologies
#15 The Language of DevOps: DevOps Tools & Processes	#15 Developing Emotional Intelligence
#16 Software Data Analysis: Project Management Metrics	#16 SOLID & GRASP
#17 Using Kanban in IT & Software Development	#17 Understanding Unconscious Bias
#18 Trust Building through Effective Communication	#18 Cloud Computing Fundamentals: Introduction
#19 Understanding Unconscious Bias	#19 Maximize Your Productivity by Managing Time and Tasks
#20 Become a Great Listener	#20 Automated Software Testing

skillsoft

15.8 MILLION DIGITAL BADGES

25% Increase Over 2021

[3] This data was sourced from Skillsoft Percipio from January 2022 through December 2022.
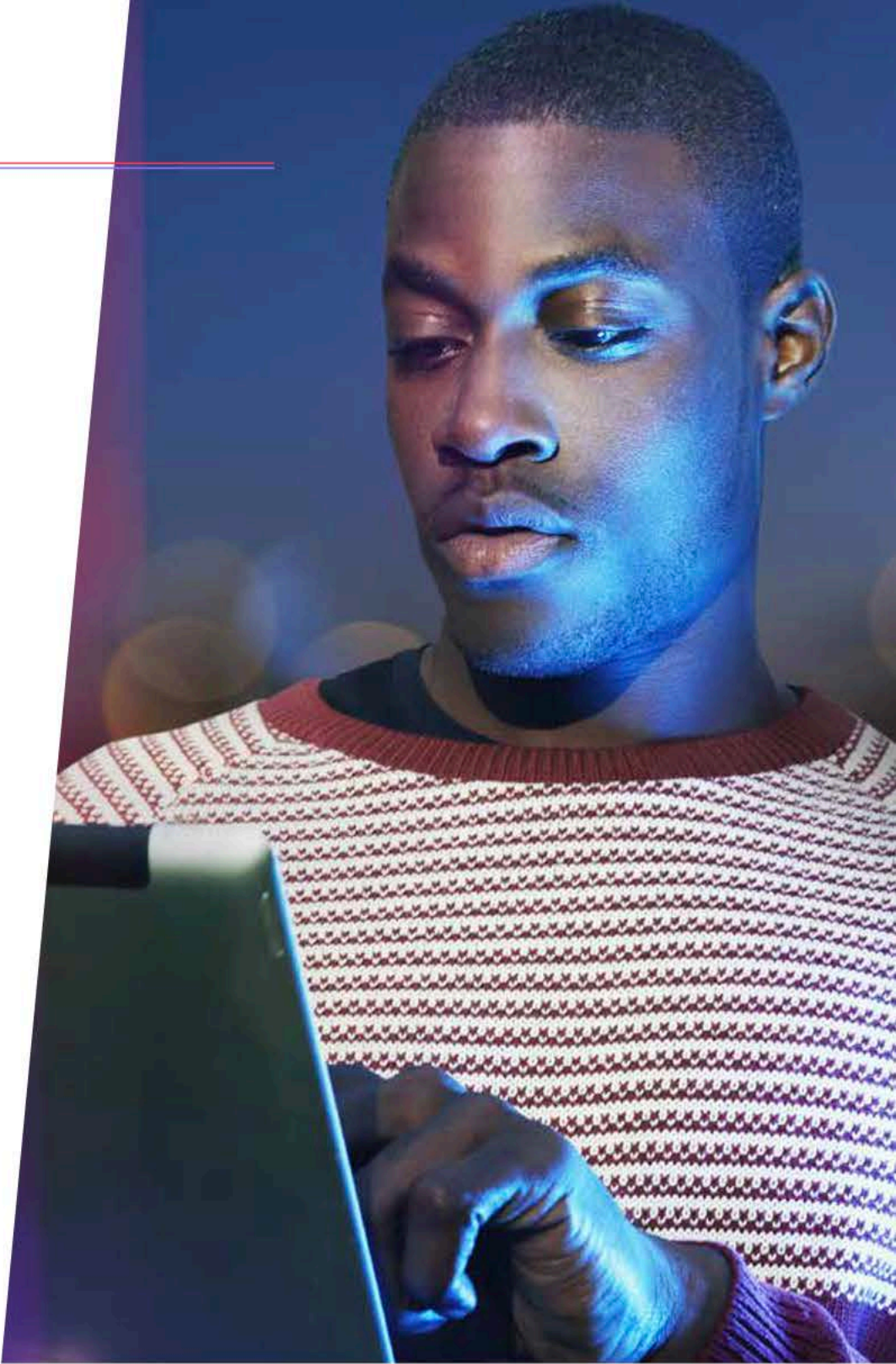
2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 10 TRENDING TOPICS: TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Once again, Cloud Security tops the list of trending Technology Skills topics. However, changes to the other items on the top 10 that nothing moves quite as fast as the speed of tech. The second and third place trends from 2021, The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) and API Security, don't even make 2022's top 10. Meanwhile, we find Networking Core Concepts, IT Hardware Technician, Java, Java SE Programmer, Security Core Concepts, Microsoft Certified Azure Fundamentals and Linux Administration on that list, none of which ranked as high in 2021.

TRENDING TOPICS 2021		TRENDING TOPICS 2022	
#1	Cloud Security	#1	Cloud Security
#2	The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) Top 10 List Items	#2	Networking Core Concepts
#3	API Security	#3	IT Hardware Technician
#4	Agile Basics	#4	Java
#5	Scrum	#5	Cloud Basics
#6	Cloud Basics	#6	Scrum
#7	CompTIA A+ Certification Prep	#7	Security Core Concepts
#8	Agile for Software Development	#8	Oracle Certified Professional, Java SE Programmer
#9	Software Testing Automation	#9	Microsoft Certified Azure Fundamentals
#10	IT Project Management	#10	Linux Administration

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 10 TRENDING TOPICS: LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS SKILLS

In 2022, business skills continued to emerge and evolve as organizations responded to disruption. Pertinent topics like Virtual Work in the New Normal enabled teams to approach challenges — and opportunities — from a common ground so they could continue to thrive in the modern workplace.

Interest in leadership, which is a competency not a role, increased as well. Whether an individual manages a large, global team or simply their own tasks and time, acquiring and strengthening leadership skills is key to success.

In the category of leadership and business, Written Communication takes over as the the top trend for 2022. This year, we see increased interest in Unconscious Bias, Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Inspiring Engagement and Resilience.

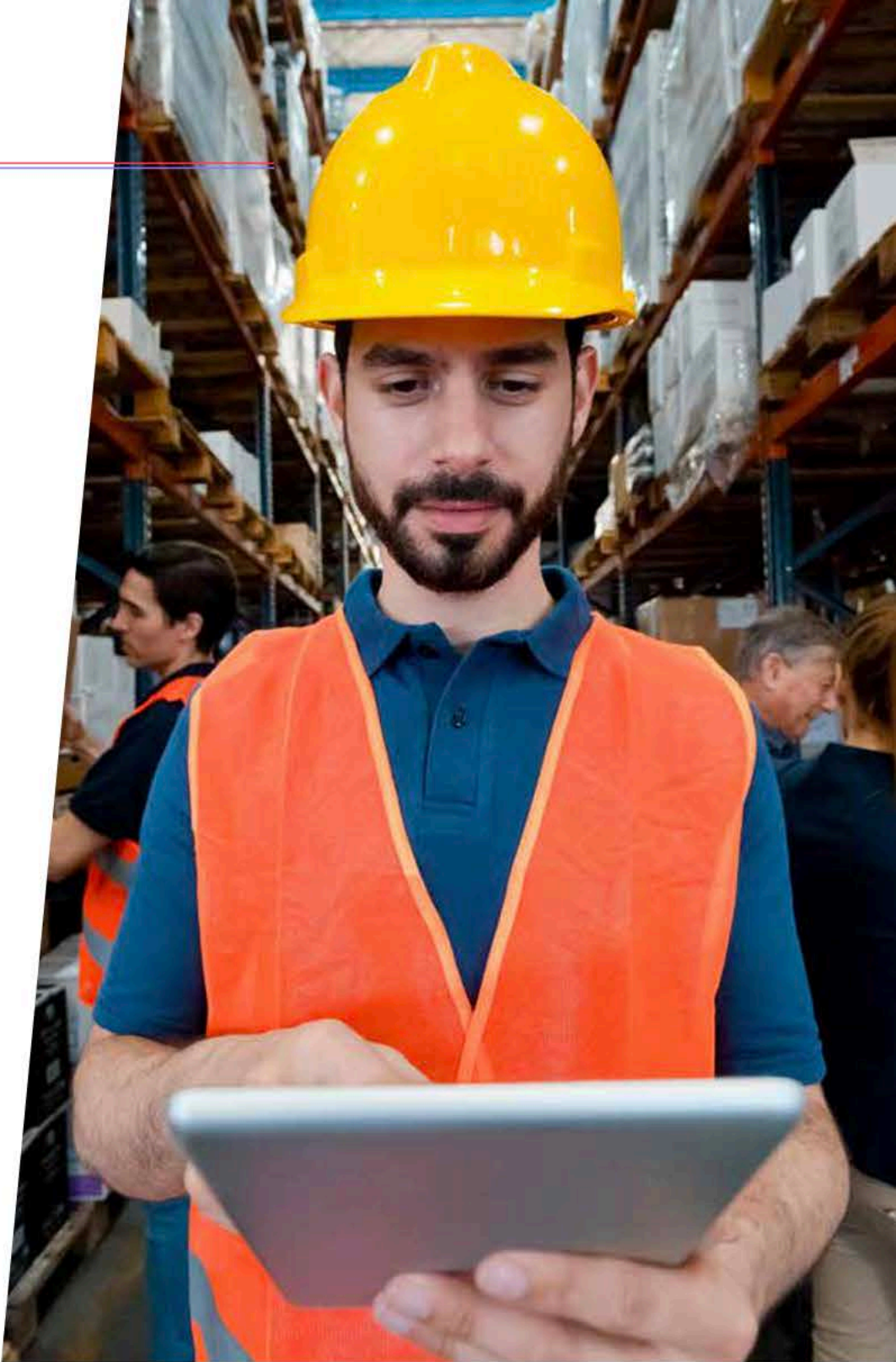| TRENDING TOPICS 2021	TRENDING TOPICS 2022
#1 Customer Service Skills	#1 Written Communication
#2 ITIL® Foundation	#2 Unconscious Bias
#3 Working Remotely	#3 Virtual Work in the New Normal
#4 Agile Project Management	#4 Working Remotely
#5 Time Management	#5 Communication Essentials
#6 Unconscious Bias	#6 Essential Customer Service Skills
#7 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets	#7 Time Management
#8 Trust and Relationship Building	#8 Learn Agile Fundamentals
#9 Communication Essentials	#9 Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
#10 Accountability and Managing Yourself	#10 Inspiring Engagement and Resilience

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 10 COURSES: COMPLIANCE

Legal and workplace safety issues affect everyone. That's why effective compliance training has to be more than a "check-the-box" activity. Forward-thinking organizations think of compliance as a mindset rather than a mandate. In fact, a thoughtful and effective compliance program, built firmly on an organization's values and principles, can be a competitive advantage.

TOP COURSES 2021		TOP COURSES 2022	
#1	Global Anti-bribery	#1	Active Shooter 2.0
#2	Global Cybersecurity Basics	#2	Information Security and Privacy
#3	Hazard Communication: An Employee's Right to Understand	#3	Anti Corruption Compliance
#4	Harassment Prevention	#4	US Professional Conduct and Anti-Harassment Compliance | US Employees
#5	Fire Safety and Prevention	#5	Professional Conduct and Anti-Harassment in the Global Workplace | Employees
#6	Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness	#6	Cybersecurity Short: Avoiding Phishing Attacks
#7	Active Shooter	#7	Fire Safety and Prevention 2.0
#8	Slips, Trips & Falls	#8	Level 2 Information Security and Privacy Compliance
#9	EU General Data Protection Regulation	#9	Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness 2.0
#10	Global Privacy and Information Security	#10	Back Safety and Injury Prevention 2.0

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

REGIONAL LEARNING CONSUMPTION

We also measured the trending topics within the 100 most consumed courses by geographic region, determined by companies headquartered in each region. Communication is key in APAC, North America, the UK, and France, while project and time dominate the list for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Learning new technologies is important in India and North America.

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN AUSTRALIA, PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND NEW ZEALAND

#	Topic
#1	Essential Customer Service Skills
#2	Networking Core Concepts
#3	Virtual Work in the New Normal
#4	IT Hardware Technician
#5	Security Core Concepts
#6	Working Effectively on a Team
#7	Communication Essentials
#8	Marketing in the Digital World
#9	JavaScript Core Concepts
#10	Presentation Skills
#11	Written Communication
#12	Harnessing Disruption through Data Analytics
#13	Windows Client
#14	Working Remotely
#15	Excel
#16	Customer Service Operations
#17	Learn Agile Fundamentals
#18	Project Management Essentials
#19	Selling Essentials
#20	Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP®)

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN FRANCE

#	Topic
#1	Excel
#2	Working Remotely
#3	Unconscious Bias
#4	PowerPoint
#5	Essential Customer Service Skills
#6	Communication Essentials
#7	Word
#8	PMP®
#9	Time Management
#10	Fostering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
#11	Python for Data Science
#12	Personal Productivity
#13	Power BI
#14	Virtual Work in the New Normal
#15	Learn Agile Fundamentals
#16	Enriched Web Development with Angular 11
#17	Data Visualization Core Concepts
#18	The Art of Great Consulting
#19	Machine Learning
#20	Google Cloud

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND

#	Topic
#1	Project Management Professional (PMP) ATP Bootcamp: 8 Day UK Cohort
#2	Project Management Fundamentals Bootcamp
#3	Essential Customer Service Skills
#4	Time Management
#5	Working Remotely
#6	Communication Essentials
#7	Virtual Work in the New Normal
#8	Excel
#9	Written Communication
#10	Project Management Essentials
#11	Selling Essentials
#12	Customer Service Operations
#13	Leadership Foundations
#14	Learn Agile Fundamentals
#15	Managing Yourself
#16	The Art of Great Consulting
#17	Presentation Skills
#18	Inspiring Engagement and Resilience
#19	Self-Development
#20	Career Planning

2022 Skillsoft Learning Consumption

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN INDIA		TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN NORTH AMERICA		TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM	
#1	Virtual Work in the New Normal	#1	Excel	#1	Fostering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
#2	Cloud Basics	#2	Written Communication	#2	Leading DEI In The Workplace
#3	Oracle SQL	#3	Cloud Security	#3	Embracing Diversity
#4	Java	#4	Unconscious Bias	#4	Web Accessibility
#5	Inspiring Engagement and Resilience	#5	Virtual Work in the New Normal	#5	Unconscious Bias
#6	Software Testing	#6	Working Remotely	#6	Excel
#7	Working Remotely	#7	Communication Essentials	#7	ITIL®
#8	Self-Development	#8	Essential Customer Service Skills	#8	Critical Thinking
#9	Time Management	#9	Time Management	#9	Communication Essentials
#10	The Art of Consulting	#10	Learn Agile Fundamentals	#10	Virtual Work in the New Normal
#11	Managing Yourself	#11	Scrum	#11	Working Remotely
#12	Communication Essentials	#12	Networking Core Concepts	#12	Managing Across Generations
#13	Marketing in the Digital World	#13	Web App Vulnerability Analyst- 2022 Update	#13	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadercamps
#14	Excel	#14	Java	#14	Time Management
#15	Working Effectively on a Team	#15	Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	#15	Essential Customer Service Skills
#16	Web App Vulnerability Analyst - 2022 Update	#16	IT Hardware Technician	#16	Keynotes
#17	Cisco Networking	#17	Presentation Skills	#17	Yellow Belt
#18	Personal Productivity	#18	Inspiring Engagement and Resilience	#18	Written Communication
#19	Presentation Skills	#19	Microsoft Certified Azure Fundamentals	#19	Java
#20	Essential Customer Service Skills	#20	Cloud Basics	#20	Managing Diversity

2022 Codecademy Learning Consumption

TECH-FORWARD LEARNING THROUGH CODECADEMY

Last year, Skillsoft acquired Codecademy, a leading online learning platform for technical skills. Through Codecademy, millions of people worldwide have unlocked modern technical skills to help them reach their potential in a tech-enabled workforce.

Search and course consumption via Codecademy's learner-driven platform provide an enlightening snapshot of current tech learning trends.

When it came to the most searched topic in 2022, Python led the way by far and Java came in second. There was also a significant disparity between the number one spot for top paths by number of unique user enrollments in 2022. Full-stack engineer held the number one spot, while front-end engineer came in second.

	TOP SEARCH CATEGORIES	TOP SUBJECTS BY PATH ENROLLMENTS	TOP COURSES BY ENROLLMENTS	TOP PATHS BY ENROLLMENTS
#1	Python	Web Development	Learn Python 3	Full-Stack Engineer
#2	Java	Data Science	Learn JavaScript	Front-End Engineer
#3	SQL	Machine Learning	Learn HTML	Code Foundations
#4	JavaScript	Computer Science	Learn Java	Computer Science
#5	HTML	Data Analytics	Learn Python	Analyze Data with SQL
#6	React	Data Visualization	Learn SQL	Data Scientist; Machine Learning Specialist
#7	CSS	Code Foundations	Learn C++	Build a Website with HTML, CSS, and GitHub Pages
#8	C++	Web Design	Learn CSS	Data Scientist: Analytics Specialist
#9	C#	Interview Prep	Learn C#	Web Development Foundations
#10	Web Development	Mobile Development	Learn React	Back End Engineer

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#4	JavaScript	Computer Science	Learn Java	Computer Science
#5	HTML	Data Analytics	Learn Python	Analyze Data with SQL
#6	React	Data Visualization	Learn SQL	Data Scientist; Machine Learning Specialist
#7	CSS	Code Foundations	Learn C++	Build a Website with HTML, CSS, and GitHub Pages
#8	C++	Web Design	Learn CSS	Data Scientist: Analytics Specialist
#9	C#	Interview Prep	Learn C#	Web Development Foundations
#10	Web Development	Mobile Development	Learn React	Back End Engineer

2022 Codecademy Learning Consumption

2022 LEARNING TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS

In 2022, the quest for new technical skills continued to increase. Kunal Ahuja, General Manager, Consumer at Codecademy, credits the uptick to remote work. "More and more people, due to digital transformation and remote work, will begin to enter the technical field and technical roles," he observes.

"Attending in-person, live training is not for everyone — especially those also juggling a full-time job and family responsibilities — and online alternatives can be more appealing. They're looking for flexible and affordable learning."

And that's where Codecademy excels.

Search and course consumption via the Codecademy platform provide an enlightening snapshot of current tech learning habits. Ahuja sees three major growing trends as we move into 2023: the continued growth of career opportunities in tech, the democratization of data science and data analytics for all, and the use of AI in programming.

Another prediction is that there will be continued upskilling in power skills outside of technical topics. Ahuja asserts, "In technical roles, you learn a lot on the job. But for many developers, their career trajectory is often determined by their problem-solving skills, ability to communicate, and work in a team."

Finally, Ahuja also anticipates the growth of learning for the purpose of onboarding via customized onboarding solutions.

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> "More and more people are entering tech roles and working for tech companies, enabled by remote work as remote teams become more mainstream. And today, technology drives every industry. Earlier, people may have thought that low code and no code tools would make the developer obsolete. That's not going to happen. Development is not about hitting buttons. There's a lot of logic that goes into it. AI will make the practice, habit, and process of development much more efficient."

KUNAL AHUJA, General Manager, Consumer @Codecademy
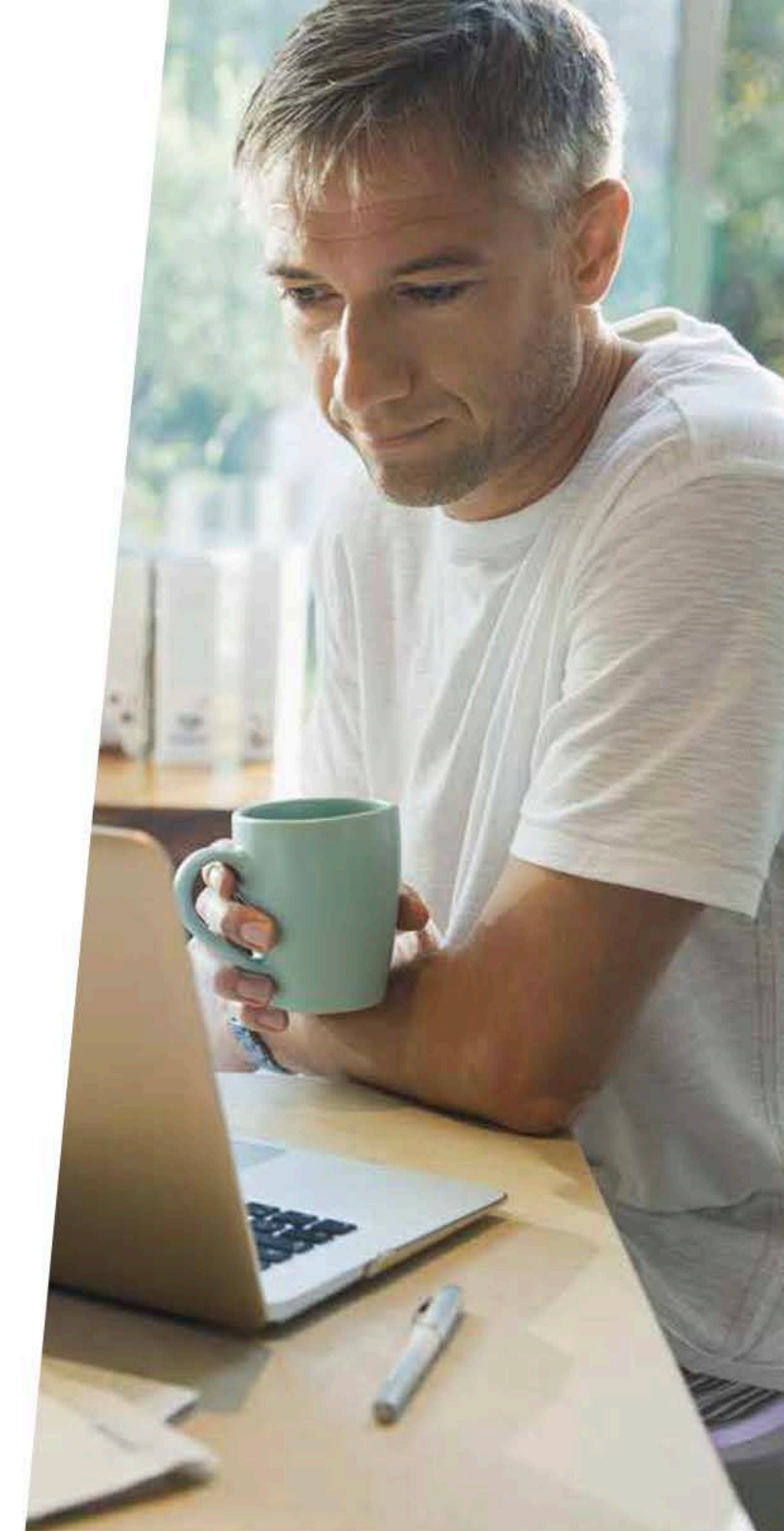
From Product Owner to Front-End Engineer at Adidas in 15 Months

SERENA ISONE
Software Developer, Adidas

I was a Product Owner at Adidas for 10 years; that's how I discovered how cool coding was. I had a comfortable salary already, but I felt limited because I wasn't learning anymore.

In August 2019, I subscribed to the 'aspiring engineer' program. I developed a plan to learn HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and React — all programs I needed to apply for a Software Engineer position.

When the pandemic struck, learning from home with Codecademy not only helped me learn new technical skills, but also guided me through the daunting process of changing careers. I prepared for technical interviews, studied data structure and algorithms, and practiced solving coding problems. The hands-on environment helped me write real code from my very first lesson.

After five months, the Head of Software Engineering asked, 'When are you going to apply?' I was confident from all the work I'd done with Codecademy. And you know what? I nailed it.

At Adidas, our motto is, 'Change is a team sport.' I had a mentor, a great organization supporting my growth, and Codecademy in my corner.

From Project Manager to UX Designer in 3 Months
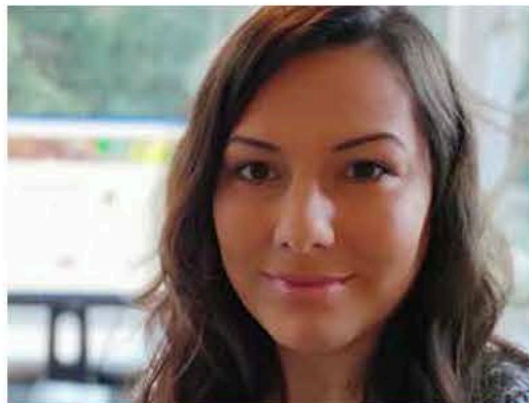
DR ELENA GORMAN
UX Designer, Qrious

In my last job as a Project Manager, we were developing a platform that connects people with tech jobs. I kept reading about user experience, and thought it was the right career for me. But I also knew I had a lot to learn.

I made a list of books, blogs, and Codecademy courses, and worked my way through them. With kids at home, it was a juggle — I was up until 2:00 in the morning studying. But I loved it so much that I had to pull myself away to go to bed.

Codecademy's UI/UX course was brilliant for learning Figma. I came out of it with real projects and something to show. Then I shared my journey on LinkedIn, which was a game-changer.

Qrious, the experience transformation design studio, didn't have a vacancy advertised, but they saw my LinkedIn post, which included coding skills learned with Codecademy.

I started my first UX course in April and was hired as a UX Designer in July. I'm proud for my children to see that women can have careers, progress, and follow their dreams.

Leadership Development is Brewing at Boston Beer Company

The Boston Beer Company began in 1984 with a generations-old family recipe Founder and Brewer Jim Koch uncovered in his father's attic. Aptly named Samuel Adams Boston Lager, in recognition of one of the U.S.'s founding fathers, that beer soon became a catalyst of the American craft beer revolution, ultimately producing millions of jobs in communities coast-to-coast.

From walking bar-to-bar with a suitcase full of beer, to leading one of the world's most awarded breweries at international beer competitions, Jim and his team at the Boston Beer Company know a thing or two about growth and innovation. In fact, their mission is "to seek long-term profitable growth by offering the highest quality product to the U.S. beer drinker." They also know that sustainable business growth is dependent on empowering employees to grow, too. One way they're doing just that is by working with Skillsoft Coaching to offer powerful leadership development opportunities.

To succeed during workforce transformation, businesses must prepare all employees to be leaders — not just the C-Suite. And in our virtual-first world, digital coaching can play a critical role throughout the employee lifecycle.

We recently checked in with Bailey Borzecki, Leadership Development Program Manager at Boston Beer Company, to see how its coaching program is developing: "We naturally follow the 70-20-10 model for learning and development. 70% comes from hands-on experiences. About 10% comes from coursework. The final piece, that critical 20%, is exposure to coaches, mentors, and masters. Skillsoft Coaching represents a huge piece of that practical magic — through relationships, conversations, encouragement, feedback, and shared expertise."

With Skillsoft Coaching, Boston Beer Company has access to:

A PERSONALIZED COACHING EXPERIENCE
Employees work one-on-one with expert, ICF-accredited coaches to define goals and develop strategies tailored to their needs.

SCALABLE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Hundreds of employees, not just a handful, benefit from coaching. Skillsoft's turnkey digital solution can be integrated with a vast collection of learning resources.

MEASURABLE BUSINESS IMPACT
Coaching engagements, satisfaction, and performance are tracked across all employees.

Boston Beer Company's leadership curriculum targets three levels: developing leaders, leaders of functions, and the executive leadership team. Coursework and coaching are designed to facilitate each level, while selection of candidates is largely based on their desire to transition, taking on new roles or responsibilities.

BOSTON BEER co.
·ESTD.1984·

"Working with Skillsoft Coaching has helped us open up new leadership development opportunities across the organization. At first, we thought it might be overwhelming: what if everyone raises their hand? But we quickly saw that people who really want to grow into leadership roles are going to find a way to do it — and if you're not on board, they'll go elsewhere. Feedback around the program has been incredibly positive so far, and we're taking learnings from our teams to make it even better. Offering coaching has found us these great, high potential folks who are loyal, motivated, and want to learn. And that's what we want in this program."

BAILEY BORZECKI,
Leadership Development
Program Manager,
Boston Beer Company

WHAT MAKES A STRONG SOCIAL COMPACT

Leading — and Growing — through Change

BY MICHELLE BOOCKOFF-BAJDEK
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
SKILLSOFT

In an age of tremendous change and upheaval, we're witnessing a new social compact between employers and employees. And, it's based on more than a paycheck.

But creating that environment is far more complex and reaches beyond pay and flexibility, although both are important.

Employers must evolve their value propositions across many dimensions to attract and retain talent. This might include creating inclusive environments, evaluating childcare and leave policies, focusing on employee well-being, and understanding and making strides across other aspects of the employee experience. Leaders must be acutely aware of these themes and be willing to connect with employees on the issues that are most important to them.

And, there's one lever, one dimension, that's essential to both companies and their employees: Growth.

Employees crave personal growth — in their abilities, in their careers, and ultimately in their professional fulfillment.

Employers crave business growth — not only financially, but growth that prepares the organization to meet new challenges, head-on.

Of course, we're used to thinking of corporate growth and individual growth separately. But, it's becoming obvious that the two are inextricably linked. Where we work, why we work, and the skills we need to develop are all changing, and business leaders need to lead their teams through the change.

Across industries and around the world, employees are pushing the companies for which they work to create better, more innovative working environments.

Leading — and Growing — through Change

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS LEAD THROUGH CHANGE?

By investing in the growth of their people, employers ensure they have what they need, which is a sustainable workforce — one that performs and adapts as the organization does — resulting in business growth. And, making the most of those opportunities is something employees must deliver back to employers.

Much of this revolves around strategic workforce transformation and adopting a "build and bridge strategy" rather than a "buy strategy." Continual learning and skilling programs are critical. And, today's organizations mustn't simply focus on "hard skills," like technical competencies. They also need to develop and nurture "power skills," such as agility, flexibility, inclusivity, and communication.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Going forward, the main story will be about organizations building a sustainable workforce, one that breathes and grows along with the business rather than the old — and less sustainable — practice of finding the skills needed from outside the organization.

In the face of economic uncertainty and especially during times of massive disruption, we know that organizations must stay nimble and competitive. And, to do that, they must invest in their people. They must make talent development — and building a sustainable workforce — a strategic imperative.

This is an opportunity for us to help build a culture of continuous learning that recognizes and empowers employees to grow as whole people, with vast potential to give to our workplaces and our world.

The best business leaders are passionate about their work. And, it seems like today, more than ever, a significant part of that passion stems from believing in the purpose of the business, one that serves customers, sustains the planet, and provides growth and development opportunities for its people.

As leaders, we're learning, too — to meet people where they are and empower them to grow both personally and professionally, even in times of upheaval.

The Importance of Leadership Skills within IT

BY ORLA DALY
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
SKILLSOFT

We all know Leadership is not about seniority or title; it's about characteristics any individual in the organization can display that deliver improved results and outcomes. It's not about what we do; its about how we do it, how we show up each and every day. Leadership skills benefit the individual, the team, and the company. Much has been written about Leadership skills, but I still find it's the most obvious of those skills that are undervalued and are areas where most all of us have something to learn and can continue to improve. Perhaps it's a reflection of the ever-changing landscape we operate in, whether that's the new norm of hybrid work, or adapting to how advances in technology continue to change what's expected and needed for us to be effective. It is no surprise therefore, that we see a wide spectrum of skill areas in the Trending Leadership Topics each year.

So, if leadership skills are key, it stands to reason they are also essential within technology teams. But which Leadership skills are most important to master?

FOUNDATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR TECHNICAL TEAMS

A key objective for any technical team is to understand how their work can advance company goals. Leadership skills are essential to understanding and delivering business outcomes. Whether that's the skills to understand and appreciate the business challenge, decipher which areas are most important to focus on, or identify and deliver the best solutions, it all requires the ability to communicate effectively, prioritize and influence, while being resilient and adaptive to change.

I am sure most IT team members have experienced being asked for an enhancement or a new solution, and when said solution was delivered, it didn't meet expectations, even if it met the specifics of the ask. Effective communication skills are critical to helping teams fully outline their business problem or need, identifying the implications of different solution options (be those people, process, data, or technology related), and enabling cross functional teams to work together to deliver a solution to meet expectations. This requires effective listening and the ability to communicate clearly with impact, crafting a strong narrative, not dissimilar to the art of storytelling.

Impactful IT leaders will ultimately spend much of their time influencing to achieve desired outcomes. As a cross-functional team, we have the benefit of seeing across the organization, with the opportunity to break down silos, and therefore advance company agendas even where it's not our direct responsibility. The ability to effectively influence is therefore key to ensure that others can see the bigger picture and ensure the best interests of the company are promoted.

Technology team members are also very familiar with the challenge of demand far exceeding available capacity, that voice that always comes across the loudest, the tyranny of the urgent over the important. Therefore, the ability to prioritize is a key leadership skill that while important in any capacity is particularly important in IT. The ability to effectively prioritize also calls on the other skills we just spoke of, the ability to communicate and influence to drive alignment and understanding of the prioritization, and subsequently the ability to get people to adhere to that prioritization.

Finally, if you have mastered the ability to communicate, influence, and have now achieved a clear set of priorities, you may feel your work is done. But, as we know, the only thing we can count on with certainty is change! This is why I would highlight resiliency as a key leadership skill to master, now more than ever.

Resilience can be considered a collection of skills or characteristics that require development and practice, such as self-awareness, openness to and acceptance of change, self-confidence, and — my favorite — perspective. Perspective is like an anchor around which the other elements of resilience can develop and thrive.

The Importance of Leadership Skills within IT

HOW LEADERSHIP SKILLS BENEFIT THE INDIVIDUAL

Like any skill development, learning a new skill is beneficial for the new skill we acquire, but equally important is the act of learning, which increases our curiosity and broadens our perspective, creating an appetite to learn and explore further.

It goes without saying, that developing leadership skills has a direct impact on our ability to be effective in our role, while elevating team performance. Leadership skills are important for career growth, but also help us gain a better understanding of how our role connects to company goals, and effectively prioritizing to solve for business challenges, which creates a greater sense of purpose and stronger engagement, key contributors to creating a more positive work environment.

We can also directly apply leadership skills we develop in advocating for ourselves or our team, broaden our networks, get exposed to or explore new areas of the business. Foundational leadership skills also spill over into how we navigate our personal lives, how we communicate, influence, prioritize our personal time, and deal with change. For every opportunity we have, to practice these skills at work, we are building the muscle.

CREATE SAFE LEARNING SPACES

Whether it's mastering a new hobby, or developing a new leadership skill, there is a sense of satisfaction and excitement when we see improvement. We also recognize if we only sporadically engage in that new hobby, we are unlikely to see much improvement. Therefore, it's important to find opportunity to practice and apply our leadership skills, to improve, gain confidence, and avoid getting rusty.

It's important to find opportunities to practice our skills, and as leaders of others, we need to create opportunities to broker learning experiences to help with new skill development. For example, for those looking to improve presentation skills, create an opportunity to present in front of a small audience to gain confidence, and then create an opportunity for that individual to present to a larger group. The individual becomes more proficient, and when others see their peers willing to go outside their comfort zone, they are also more likely to stretch themselves, augmenting the impact one individual's learning has on the overall team, creating an environment that's recognized as a safe place to learn.
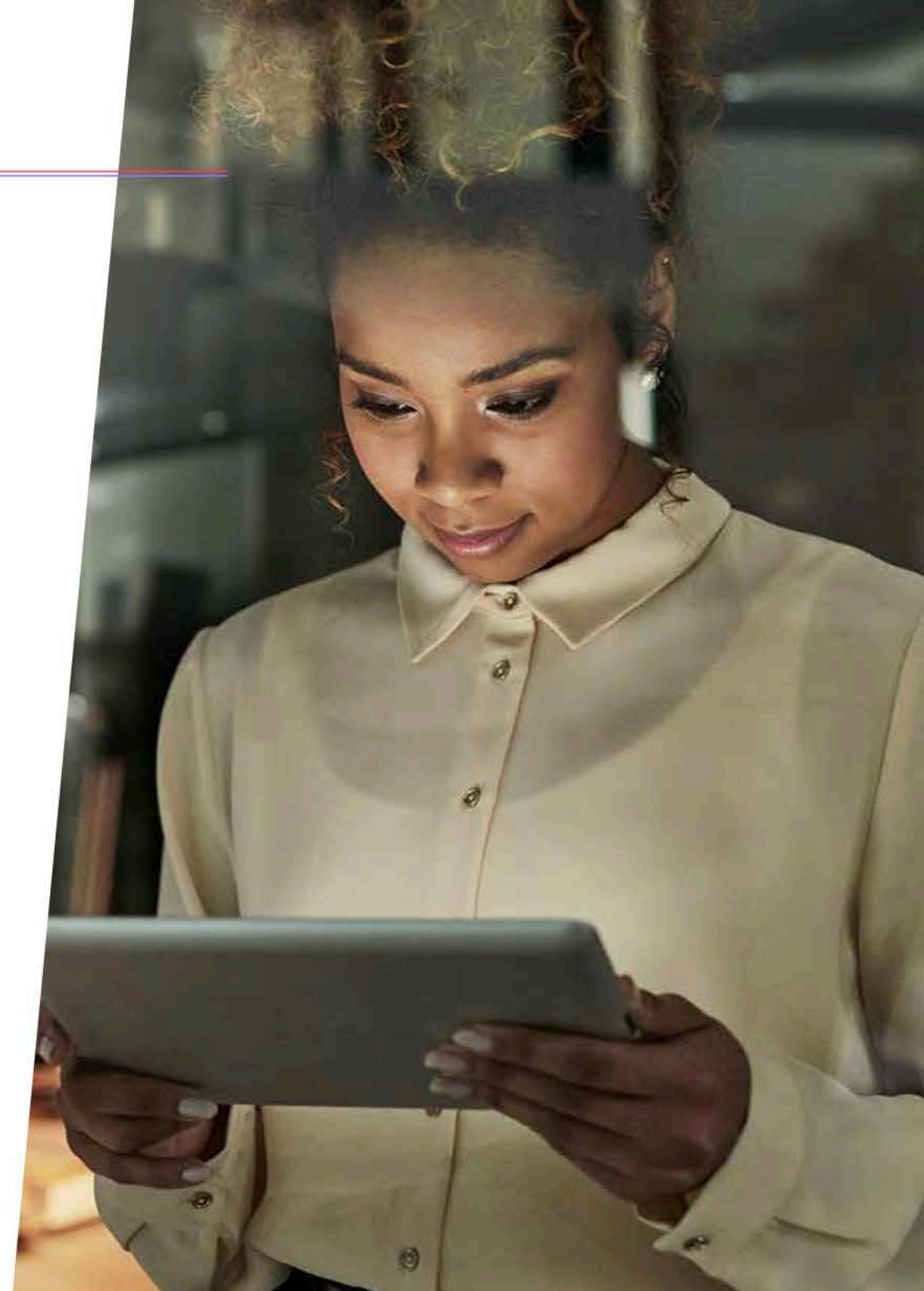
Forging New Pathways for Women

BY NESHA PAI
CPA TURNED AUTHOR
AND SPEAKER

I'm often asked how organizations can retain female employees and attract women back into the workforce.

The biggest piece of advice I have is to find ways to support women having both a career and being a mom. Moms don't want to miss out on their kids' lives, as they go by so fast. But, at the same time, they need to feel that their skills and contributions are valued and rewarded.

Here are some examples of what businesses can do:

- Instate flexible work hours.
- Provide ways to increase skills via online course scholarships or visiting instructors.
- Offer work from home opportunities, even if hybrid.
- Extend part-time and full-time work options.
- Create community with initiatives and events around women.
- Enhance employee benefits in areas that matter to women, like childcare.

Women are grateful for any of these offerings, depending on the size of your budget and company.

If there's one thing I've learned about navigating the corporate world, it's that all of our situations are different. We come from diverse backgrounds and have unique relationships to work. This is especially true for women, whether they're trying to combat gender inequality they feel at the office or are looking to re-enter the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom.

I can relate because I've experienced these issues first-hand.

OVERCOMING THE MOM-GAP

More than a decade ago, in the middle of tax season, I was sitting in my boss's office. I had been at this major accounting firm for five years, part-time as a single mom, and I was looking for more hours and a raise. When I approached him, with a list of accomplishments that illustrated my high value, he looked me in the eyes and said, "No." He told me I couldn't have a raise due to the 'mom gap' in my resume.

Without a second of hesitation, I looked at him and said, "I quit." Just like that. Without a plan or even knowing what I was going to do next.

What I did know is that I could do it better. I could create my own firm, that not only serves small businesses with higher quality, but one that supports moms who want more in their own lives. Too often, women are faced with having to choose between motherhood and a career, when that should never have to enter their mind to begin with. I knew I never wanted another mom to feel the way I did in that moment — small and unvalued.

So, that day back in 2011, I had what I look back on as my "Jerry Maguire moment." I called my one big client and explained what I could do for them. They decided to come with me. I started Pai CPA and never looked back.

Pai CPA's model is based on hiring stay-at-home moms so they can have flexibility and work from home. It gives them purpose outside of raising tiny humans. Today, I have six on my team, and they are the hardest working, most dedicated women I know. In fact, being a mom gives women an extra superpower; they are the best of the best in "quality multitasking," a phrase I coined for how moms get the work done on time and in high quality.

Forging New Pathways for Women

REENTERING THE WORKFORCE — AND REGAINING POWER

I meet with a lot of moms, many of whom have been out of the workforce a long time. Skilled, experienced, and eager to work, they wonder how to reenter the workforce and regain the career power they may have left.

First off, we live in a world where working from home is common (it wasn't in 2011 when I started my firm), and there are far more opportunities now. I tell them that there are plenty of ways to sharpen and catch up their skills.

Here's the advice I typically share:

Decide what you want to do and what motivates you.

Find online courses to fill any gaps and hone your skills.

Employers want to see that you're investing in yourself to learn a skillset that's valuable to them.

Fortunately, with technology running so much of our world, it's easy to find courses to get up to speed in any given industry.

BUILDING A WIN-WIN SITUATION

Working toward gender equity requires a concerted effort by both women and the organizations that employ them. But, it's worth it. Study after study has shown that businesses with women in leadership roles outperform those without.

Again, I speak from firsthand experience.

Pai CPA started on my kitchen table, and now has *80+ clients* and *six part-time employees*. Women are resilient and we will always find a way — especially if we create it ourselves.
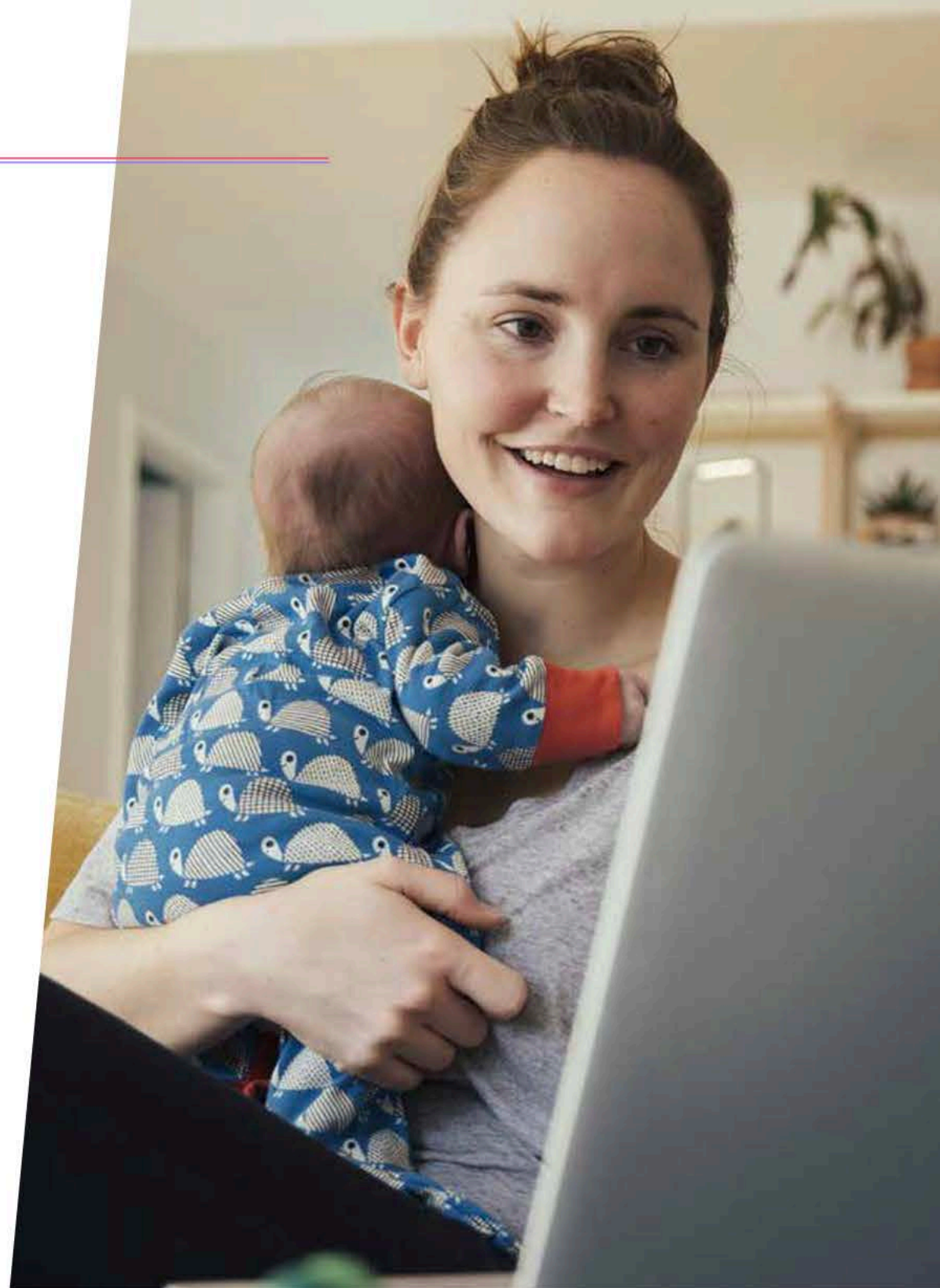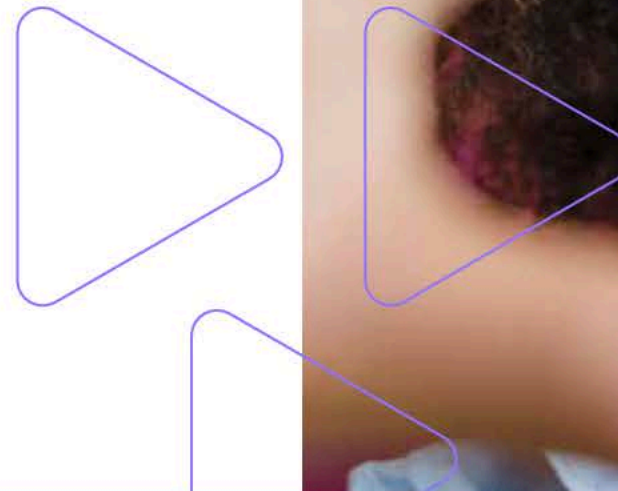
Corporate Social Responsibility at Work

As long as there have been organizations, there have been those that chose to behave ethically, to give back, and to safeguard the health and welfare of people and planet. However, we are experiencing a new era in corporate social responsibility — one in which, customers and employees are driving organizations to make or renew their commitments to the greater good.

The phrase "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) describes how organizations demonstrate accountability through economic, social, and environmental efforts. Today's CSR activities focus on issues of social justice, economic disparity, climate change, and balancing profits with purpose.

We recently conducted a Corporate Social Responsibility at Work study on how organizations are making an impact with their CSR efforts.

One of the big takeaways is that CSR efforts are on the rise. More than 60% of our respondents report an uptick in CSR interest and investment from both employers and employees alike. In fact, the vast majority report that they would leave a company that didn't support CSR efforts.

Private companies report being more likely to have a dedicated CSR budget (57%) than public companies (43%), and industrial sectors have more defined programs than the agriculture, forestry, and mining sectors.

Corporate Social Responsibility at Work

PRIORITIZING CSR

Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts lead the way when it comes to where companies are focusing their CSR energy, followed closely by fair trade and labor policies. Fewer organizations prioritize community volunteering and disaster relief.

Not surprisingly, CSR priorities differ between countries and cultures. In India, CSR is mandated by the government and often centers around education, charitable giving, and health and wellness. In the United States, top survey priorities include DEI, improving labor practices, participating in fair trade, and reducing carbon footprint. These priorities could be considered responses to a nationwide call for social justice, growing economic disparity, and consumer awareness of environmental issues threatening the future of our planet.

However, a significant percentage of survey respondents are aligned when it comes to the factor that primarily influences their CSR priorities: 40% of those who responded say it is a commitment to *doing the right thing.*

THE RESONSIBILITY OF CSR

CSR is typically spearheaded by executive leadership or human resources. But, when it comes to getting employees involved, 37% of survey respondents say that offering training opportunities to help scale CSR initiatives across the organization makes a big impact on a program's success.
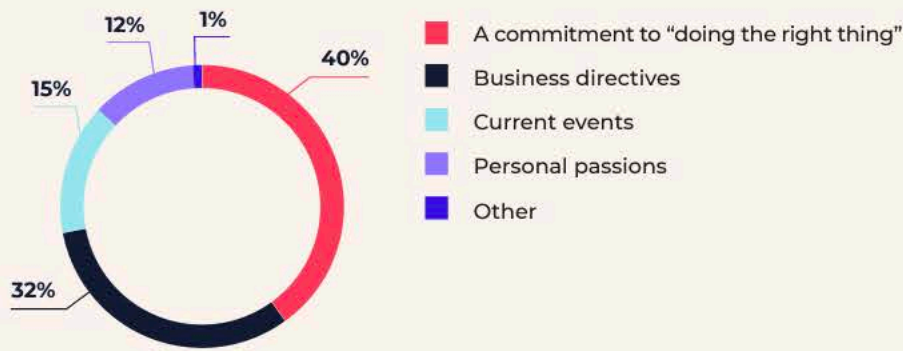
Organizations vary by country in how they report CSR initiatives. The United States doesn't require reporting, while some countries (India, China, Denmark, Malaysia, and South Africa) have reporting mandates in place. Currently, there isn't a global, cross-industry structure for reporting, although most organizations communicate key information, hold themselves accountable, and showcase areas of improvement.
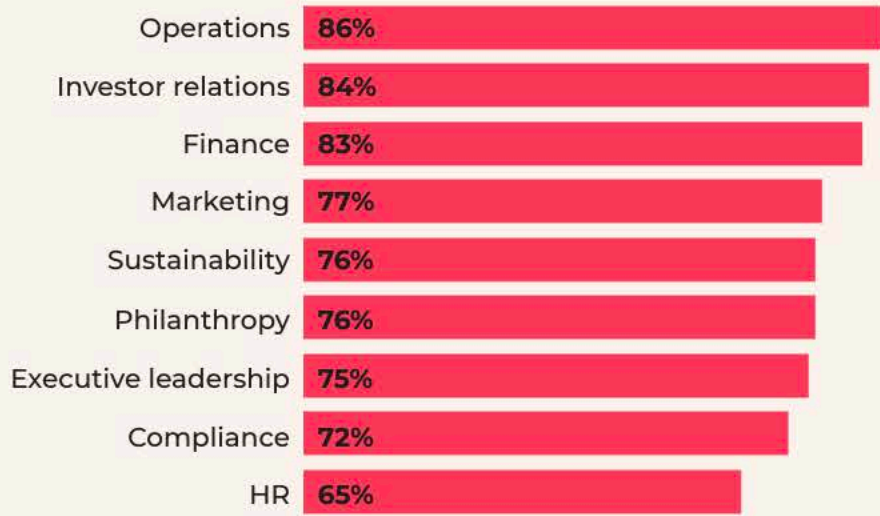
MEASURING CSR SUCCESS

It can often be difficult to quantify success metrics for CSR, given the long-term vision of most programs. Many organizations look at the overall health and security of employees and community members, social contributions, and industry awards and recognition to gauge CSR success. Most, however, don't factor in employee-satisfaction ratios, number of CSR activities completed, or community members outreached as measures of success.

The top barriers to implementing a successful CSR program include reputation value (20%), regulations and standards (18%), customer awareness (17%), and stakeholder awareness (15%). These figures drive home the importance of communicating clearly with all stakeholders and securing cross-organization buy-in from the top down.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MOST INFLUENCES YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CSR PROGRAM?

- 40% — A commitment to "doing the right thing"
- 32% — Business directives
- 15% — Current events
- 12% — Personal passions
- 1% — Other

DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR CSR EFFORTS

Department	
Operations	86%
Investor relations	84%
Finance	83%
Marketing	77%
Sustainability	76%
Philanthropy	76%
Executive leadership	75%
Compliance	72%
HR	65%

Corporate Social Responsibility at Work

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CSR AND ESG

ESG refers to an Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance framework through which organizations invest in and report outcomes of investments in their communities and the planet as a whole. However, 54% of our survey respondents use the terms CSR and ESG interchangeably.

The majority of respondents who report having a CSR program also have an ESG program. Seventy percent report having an ESG program in general, although our study shows that CSR programs are preferred because they cover a greater range of issues.

CSR tends to have a broader perspective, while ESG is more measurable. For example, 69% of respondents say that CSR is what they do within their organization from a sustainability and corporate accountability point of view; ESG is how it's reported to investors. Fifty-nine percent feel that CSR is used to communicate initiatives; ESG measures how well they adhere to the objectives of those initiatives. In simpler terms, CSR often serves as a footnote in the typical annual report, while ESG's quantifiable results are given more real estate. The study shows that nearly half of the companies who responded will be replacing their ESG efforts with CSR programs.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF CSR?

For most organizations, CSR efforts are still evolving, but successful CSR programs should follow the same blueprint to reap the highest rewards:

- Offer training to employees
- Invest in long-term plans, not short-term campaigns
- Commit time and people resources
- Create authentic connections and partnerships
- Break CSR silos and integrate throughout all departments
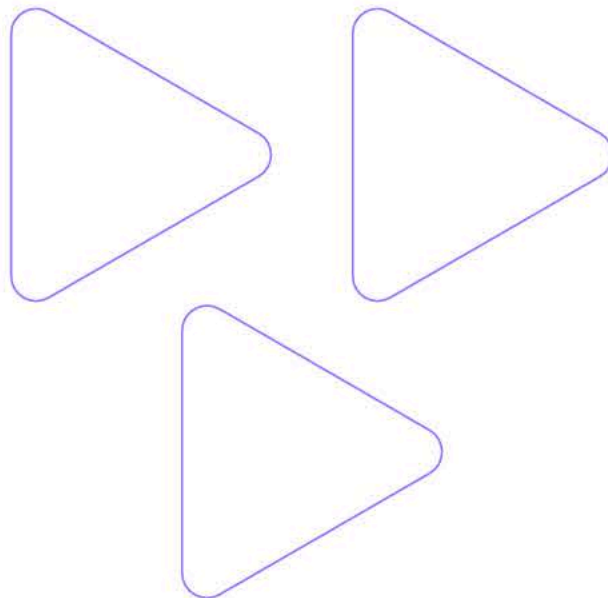
DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE AN ESG PROGRAM?

12%
14%
74%

- ■ Yes
- ■ No
- ■ Not Sure
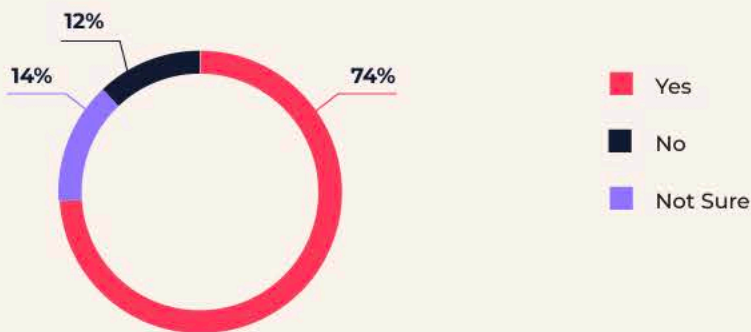
Top Environmental, Social, And Governance Courses

More and more, companies are asked to articulate and comply with commitments to the environment, to society, and to corporate governance (ESG).

ESG is used as a framework to evaluate how an organization manages risk and opportunities that shifting market & non-market conditions create.

But, ESG is also about creating and sustaining long-term value.

Organizations need to promote from within that they are trustworthy and transparent. With short-term profits in mind, ESG efforts can sometimes be overlooked. But, they are critical to longer-term, corporate value creation.

Today's consumers, employees, and investors are looking at ESG. To that end, we're seeing an increase in the number of organizations investing in ESG education. The hottest course topics for 2022, like those of 2021, point towards DEI and building a culture of inclusion.

TOP ESG COURSES 2021	TOP ESG COURSES 2022
#1 Expert Insights on Unconscious Bias	#1 Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Action
#2 Bridging the Diversity Gap	#2 Becoming a DEI Ally and Agent for Change
#3 Leading by Motivating	#3 Adopting an Inclusion Mindset at Work
#4 Acting with Diplomacy and Tact	#4 Psychological Safety: Building a Culture of Inclusion and Innovation
#5 Expert Insights on Managing a Culturally Diverse Team	#5 Expert Insights on Unconscious Bias
#6 Expert Insights on Diversity & Inclusion	#6 Acting with Diplomacy and Tact
#7 CompTIA Security+: Social Engineering & Techniques & Other Attack Types	#7 The Effects of Environmental Change on Business
#8 The Effects of Environmental Change on Business	#8 Demystifying the E in DEI
#9 Building a Strategic Commitment to Sustainability	#9 Expert Insights on Managing a Culturally Diverse Team
#10 Leadership Insights on Developing Women Leaders	#10 Leading by Motivating

Today's leaders are holding themselves accountable, ensuring their policies and practices benefit customers, employees, shareholders, and the greater community. If we are to effect lasting and meaningful change now and in the future, we need to embrace sustainability principles and guidelines for both the greater good and more responsible business.

When People Make the Difference

CVS Health is a purpose-driven company committed to "making healthier happen" together with millions of patients, members, and customers. At the core of its achievements are local presence, digital channels, and dedicated colleagues. CVS Health takes on many of the country's most pressing health care issues and works to deliver accessible, affordable, human-centered care.

From the top down, CVS Health is passionate about developing people. Its belief is that when an employee has a great day and feels good about the work they're doing, that same enthusiasm trickles down to the customer, member, and patient experience. And, that's why L&D is such an important part of its corporate culture. CVS recognizes to be great today and tomorrow, dedicated time and intentional activities focused on nurturing and developing colleagues is not only needed, but highly valued. CVS Health leverages Skillsoft to help augment the many ways it reaches colleagues where they are with what they need to grow and develop.

Skillsoft has been instrumental in partnering with L&D to curate content and create learning journeys. Spending the time and energy to create curated journeys and content is important because what matters the most to colleagues and to the business align most of the time, but not always at the same time. And Cooke says she's okay with that, because she believes that engagement and development are both personal and professional.

"The paradigm or premise my team and I work by is that corporate L&D isn't only about what you learn. It's about what you do with what you learn. It's not just knowing something new, but being able to do something new," she explains. "The curated learning journeys we've created with Skillsoft aren't just focused on what needs to be 'known,' but continues the development to include what to do with what has been learned. Working with Skillsoft to include the critical ingredient of 'what to do' makes the time and energy devoted to development much more likely to have impact, and makes the difference the colleague was hoping for when they started the learning journey."

Having excellent curated learning journeys at the ready means you meet both the business and the colleagues when they are ready to learn, grow and develop, regardless of subject matter. It's always there.

"When you think about it, it's the workforce at the front lines, their skills and purpose, that create the consumer experience. It's at the front line where we meet our patients, our members, and our customers on the phone, in the pharmacy, or clinic. We often talk a great deal about leader development, which is important, but the emphasis and investment in L&D must be where we meet our customer and that's at the frontline."
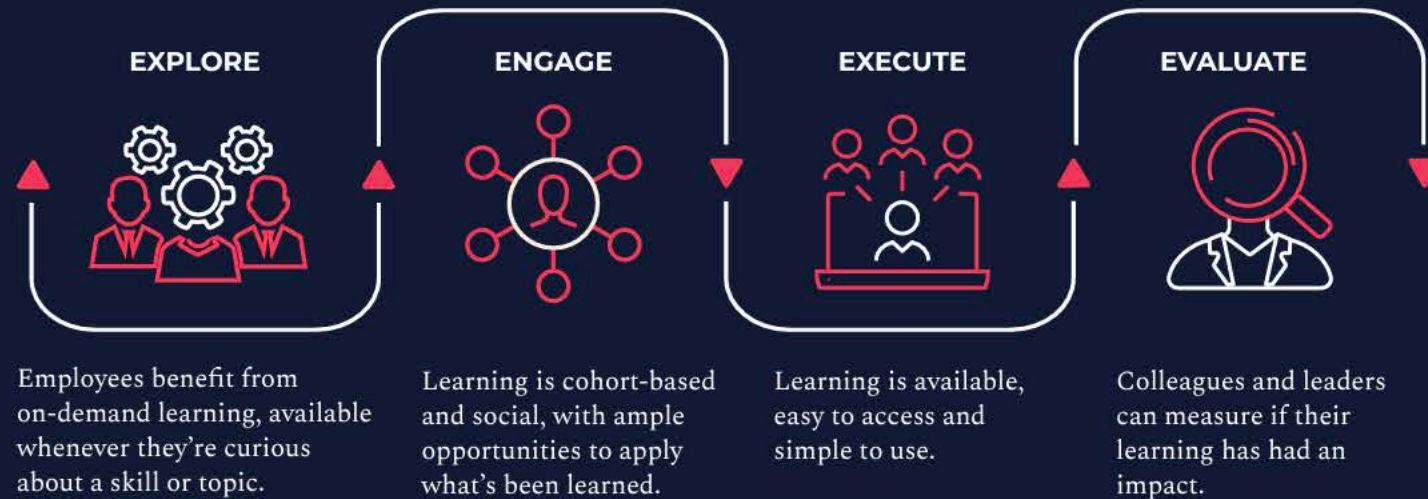
EILEEN COOKE,
VP, Enterprise Learning for CVS Health

When People Make the Difference

Learning at CVS Health is organized into "Four Es":

EXPLORE

Employees benefit from on-demand learning, available whenever they're curious about a skill or topic.

ENGAGE

Learning is cohort-based and social, with ample opportunities to apply what's been learned.

EXECUTE

Learning is available, easy to access and simple to use.

EVALUATE

Colleagues and leaders can measure if their learning has had an impact.

How well people are doing their job is of utmost importance. And, at the enterprise level, employee engagement and retention are two of many primary goals of CVS Health's L&D program. Cooke credits development with playing a big role in keeping employees passionate about their work and about being a part of the CVS Health enterprise. The goal is not just the work they're doing now but preparing them for whatever comes next.

As a large organization with multiple lines of business, there is never a shortage of rewarding L&D work to tackle. For example, CVS Health has many distribution centers that ensure all stores and pharmacies are stocked with what our customers and patients need. Leaders saw a great opportunity to reimagine approaches and processes and distribution centers that create a welcoming experience for new colleagues and engaging experience for tenured colleagues. Part of this exciting work includes L&D and an investment in onboarding, orientation, new hire training, and ongoing development. It's a powerful combination when the business and L&D come together to welcome, engage and retain colleagues.

Another role that universally presents great opportunity for L&D is that of CVS's frontline managers. Typically, frontline managers are promoted from within and know the work of their team inside and out. They supervise and greatly influence the experience of the colleagues who create CVS's customer, member, and patient experiences. And, because CVS is dedicated to ensuring that those experiences are exceptional, the organization provides exceptional manager development. The ROI on the investment in manager development can't be overstated.

Ultimately, CVS Health is committed to an L&D program that is a powerful combination of self-serve and curated for their colleagues. Cooke strongly advocates that, "You don't experience sustained high performance and success across a large complex dynamic organization unless L&D is a core component of your colleagues' work experience."

HOW TO GET STARTED

Building A Learning Taxonomy

BY MARK ONISK
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER,
SKILLSOFT

In 2022, the hot topic around learning was **building a skills taxonomy**. With 40% of core skills changing in the next five years, according to the World Economic Forum, and 50% of employees needing reskilling, organizations need a roadmap of where to go and which path will bring the most talent and skills into their fold.

A common taxonomy helps manage this complexity. It provides a way for businesses to organize and measure skill sets and a foundation for data-driven insights into talent development. In short, talent delivers a competitive edge, and the right skill set sharpens that edge.

But as we shift from a job description environment to a skill-based model, many questions arise about whether workforces have the skills they need now and into the future. And that leads to more questions about a learning taxonomy: How do I evaluate and categorize skills? How do skills build into my career architecture? How do I use them to create a path for opportunities within my workforce?

To determine what career growth and aspirations look like for the individual — and what capability development looks like for the organization — we recently sat down with three members of our *Skillsoft Executive Advisory Board:*

Shannon Costigan
Head, Leadership,
BMO Financial Group

Peter Sheppard
Head of Global Learning
Ecosystem, Ericsson

Nancy Varela
North America Learning &
Leadership Development
Lead, Accenture

Here's what they had to say about skills taxonomies ...

Building A Learning Taxonomy

In a skills-based world, how do taxonomies and ontologies accelerate progress? Why are skill taxonomies increasing in adoption?

"Skills have become a strategic imperative, and increasingly are becoming the connective tissue underpinning every aspect of people, programs, and systems (from workforce planning, job design, and hiring, to learning, performance, data, and analytics)," reports Costigan.

She further explains, "Skills taxonomies are essentially organizing frameworks to provide structure, and help companies prioritize and make sense of skills they have and those they need.

Skills ontologies look at the relationships between skills to help create a common language across platforms and contexts and manage skills data.As more and more companies are making the shift from matching people to jobs to dynamically matching skills to work, it's more important than ever to have a clear and manageable way to prioritize and interpret skills."

How has AI, ML, NLP and other technologies supported skill taxonomy development? How do you align with your current workforce hierarchy, job titles and descriptions?

Both Sheppard and Varela used a similar approach at Ericsson and Accenture of utilizing a patented algorithm to infer skills using natural language processing, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Skills are inferred on the employees' behalf and the organization determines what roles, learning and certifications have been completed and therefore, can create a holistic skill profile for someone. These profiles are confirmed by employees. The data and the algorithms automatically calculate proficiency. Once proficiencies are calculated, a person is matched to specializations.

Costigan used another approach at BMO Financial Group. She reports that they "ensure skill development efforts are anchored in what matters most to the business — and to employees. It's enabling personalization at scale, improving time to proficiency, and breaking down barriers to inclusion by leveling the playing field."

As a result, they are, "seeing the building of skill labels into job descriptions, workforce plans, hiring decisions, ongoing job and career development, talent mobility decisions, and using AI to match employees in peer-to-peer mentoring networks."

How can taxonomies and ontologies be leveraged within an organization? How do you create a skills taxonomy? What resources do you leverage?

Some business leaders started with a dedicated cross-functional skills team whose first task was to create a unique skills taxonomy. Varela used this approach at Accenture. Armed with individual skill libraries, they worked on rationalizing them into one list. They also employed an external third party to help validate the market relevance of skills. The final skills library is now the pick list for everything done throughout the HR eco-system — bringing standardization and consistency to skills.

On the flipside, BMO Financial Group made a deliberate choice to not create their own skills taxonomy. Instead, they became part of the World Economic Forum SkillsLink Alliance (WEF) – an ecosystem of employers, governments, and technology and learning providers. WEF has developed a skills taxonomy, with input from a range of learning/skills technology companies, to incorporate a universal view into their platforms.

How have taxonomies influenced learning strategy? How are skill taxonomies embedded in the business? How do you go about enlisting support from the business? And, how does the leadership of the organization participate?

According to Varela, "As the shelf life of skills continues to decrease and pace of change continues to increase, employees need to build marketable skills faster, and better, than ever." This is essential to serving clients, and to enable workforces to grow.

"As skills journeys evolve, new ways need to be developed to put skills at the center of everything — from recruiting, to onboarding and staffing, and learning how people begin to build their own skills list and see the benefits of how it shapes their employee experience," she explains.

Sheppard, Varela, and Costigan all agree that successful companies start at the top with C-level and senior leaders who recognize the importance of investing in talent development. Costigan believes that to do this, "senior leaders need to equip themselves with the skills and knowledge required to lead a digital-first organization into the future." These skills create digital transformation strategies, operating models, technical architecture, data, and analytics. Leaders then become key in prioritizing, contextualizing, evangelizing and actively sponsoring learning and skill development to advance BMO Financial Group's strategy and digital transformation.

Benchmark Assessments Propel Workforce Transformation Strategies

More and more clients are making significant investments to ensure their organization stays competitive, future-ready, and poised for innovation. But the challenge is, how do enterprise leaders know they have the talent to maximize those investments? How can they ensure their workforce's skills match changing corporate goals, strategies, markets, and business models — especially when hiring new talent is costly?

In 2022, Skillsoft launched Skill Benchmarks within our immersive learning platform to empower organizations to assess, fortify, index, and track in-house skills to align with the strategic needs of their business. Skill Benchmarks enable leaders to make informed, data-driven decisions based on a talent inventory to put the right people into the right roles at the right time.

Skill Benchmarks take an innovative, criterion-based approach to assessing skill proficiency. Rather than comparing knowledge to the performance of other learners, our approach measures capabilities and mastery of the subject matter against specific objectives defined by leading subject matter experts. This makes learning more aligned to what each organization requires to be successful today and in the future.

In 2022, the top Benchmarks revolved around communication. This might not be surprising as the how we work, where we work, when we work, and whom we work with transformed in the post-pandemic world. More employees worked from home. Meetings weren't in person. Face-to-face became screen-to-screen. Traditional means of communication changed — and smart companies kept pace with these changes. Teamwork, adaptability, and security were also hot topics.

TOP SKILL BENCHMARKS 2022

#	Skill
#1	Communication Essentials
#2	Customer Service Essentials
#3	Presentation Skills
#4	Excel 365 (2021)
#5	Oral Communication
#6	Python Programming Proficiency
#7	Written Communication
#8	Agile Methodologies
#9	Excel 2019
#10	Innovation & Creativity
#11	Driving Performance
#12	Microsoft Teams 2022
#13	Effective Teamwork
#14	Security+: Architecture and Design Competency
#15	Time Management & Managing Priorities
#16	Problem Solving & Decision Making
#17	Adaptability
#18	Security+: Attacks, Threats, and Vulnerabilities Competency
#19	Building Collaborative Relationships
#20	Managing Yourself

Shared Growth adds up to Sweet Success

The Ferrero Group has a strong global presence, and Ferrero products like Nutella, Tic Tac and Kinder are sold and enjoyed, directly or through authorized retailers, in more than 170 countries. Today, the organization uses Skillsoft to support its learning and development in a variety of ways as part of Ferrero University, the corporate learning function inside the company.

As the pandemic hit, Ferrero was still working on adopting a new learning management system and slowly migrating to a more blended learning model. While some training had been conducted via video conferencing platforms, the company were not heavy users of a virtual classroom approach and while there was eLearning, it wasn't heavily subscribed and usage was low. The University team also needed to support a company growing immensely, beyond the strong Europe reach to a multinational organization. addressing the learning needs of a more diverse employee base.

As the business's learning program matured, one big push was to utilize the Ferrero University platforms and content to integrate new hires, support line managers in managing differently and to disseminate the company Know How across functional areas.

Management wanted to work with a key segment of their population to support the line manager in the shift from managing presence to performance – a key change in a virtual workforce forced to work from home in the pandemic. They also felt the need to address the aging population of their workforce because knowledge was retiring along with the individuals who were stewards of much of the company's proprietary knowledge.

With the shift from skills-based learning to a content driven approach, Mary Jo Anderson, Director, Head of Ferrero University, appreciated that the Percipio learning platform didn't dictate specific learning, but instead encouraged people to explore curated journeys and channels. With the help of a strong communications campaign encouraging entrance into the learning platform, Anderson saw some significant wins.

With the help of Skillsoft, Ferrero was able to switch gears quickly to meet the demands of pandemic-era business and adopt blended, 24/7 on-demand learning. Skillsoft's Percipio platform rounded out the University's learning offerings making it easier to keep learners engaged inside Ferrero's firewall, instead of going through Google to access other learning platforms. **Currently Ferrero has 12,000 expert 2.0 licenses.**

"We were examining who was getting in and who was engaging with the Percipio platform. We weren't looking necessarily at completions. The great thing was that once they got into Skillsoft Percipio, we could map where they were going. This allowed us to react to the learner behavior and ensure we could continue to give them more of what they accessed before."

MARY JO ANDERSON,
Director, Head of Ferrero University

Shared Growth adds up to Sweet Success

Ferrero, with the help of Skillsoft, was able to focus on three pillars within the organization:

The Welcome To Ferrero pillar, which showcases the spirit of the company through a "mini-MBA" of their value chain. Contents in various languages were integrated with proprietary online learning to support integration of the many people hired in the pandemic who never were able to get to an office.

The Know How Academy pillar focused efforts to develop and capture the institutional know-how in the company and siphon it down into learning aligned with the needs of each function providing business continuity. Skillsoft content has been embedded into the Know How frameworks that drive functional skill development.

Leadership pillar, which has seen the most growth in the last few years in terms of new content. Keeping pace with evolving management and leadership practices, this pillar consists of a bespoke master's program through Bocconi University in Milan and a manager excellence initiative that focuses on engaging line managers in the development of their people and in the accountability for their actions toward themselves, their team and the company as a whole.

Anderson was also impressed with the speed of content curation. "Oftentimes, we'd say, look, we need this and within 24 hours, we got something back from our customer support team."

Users have been happy with the 24/7 availability and the breadth and variety of the content — particularly video formats that can be downloaded for learning anytime, anywhere, on any device.

After this success, Ferrero has big plans for the future. "We've been kicking the tires on the Percipio learning experience platform mining functionality because we can get really good data from the system and then use that data to drive new programs." The next step will be diving deeper and exploring the artificial intelligence and how it can be used to maximize simulated learning in the era of digitalization.

Ferrero University uses the tagline, "Together we grow," and they're seeing the rewards. As employees have access to greater knowledge banks, they're growing their skills and directing where they want to learn. All of that will result in support Ferrero's growing business. A partnership like Ferrero and Skillsoft – success in learning never tasted so sweet.

Section IV

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

# 2023 Digital Learning Predictions – Our Experts Weigh In

The Great Resignation. The Great Reshuffle. Quiet quitting. And, the newly-coined phrase, shift shock. 2022 has certainly had its fair share of twists and turns when it comes to the global labor market. While many have attempted to capture the latest trend with catchy terminology, it's fair to say that "uncertainty" accurately sums up the last 12 months.

What we can say with certainty is that this year has been a wake-up call for both employers and employees. While there has, at times, been tension between the two sides, a few themes have risen to the surface providing significant opportunities to create a plan and impact meaningful change that benefits the entire workforce and business:

- Employees don't view work in the same way they did even just a few years ago. And, pressure has never been greater for employers to proactively plan for the future to stay current, relevant, and competitive...

- At the end of the day, everyone is craving growth. Employees want more enriching and rewarding careers, while organizations want a sustainable, adaptable workforce. A social compact has emerged underpinned by learning and skilling...

- As a result, investing in learning and growth is no longer a nice-to-have, but rather a business imperative.

With all signs pointing to 2023 starting off down an equally "uncertain" path, we sat down with three of our experts to attempt to demystify the year ahead with regards to digital learning and workforce transformation to provide suggestions on how we can move forward with a mindset of mutual growth. These predictions were all derived through observed trends, professional insights, and intimate knowledge of our industry. *Let's dive in*.
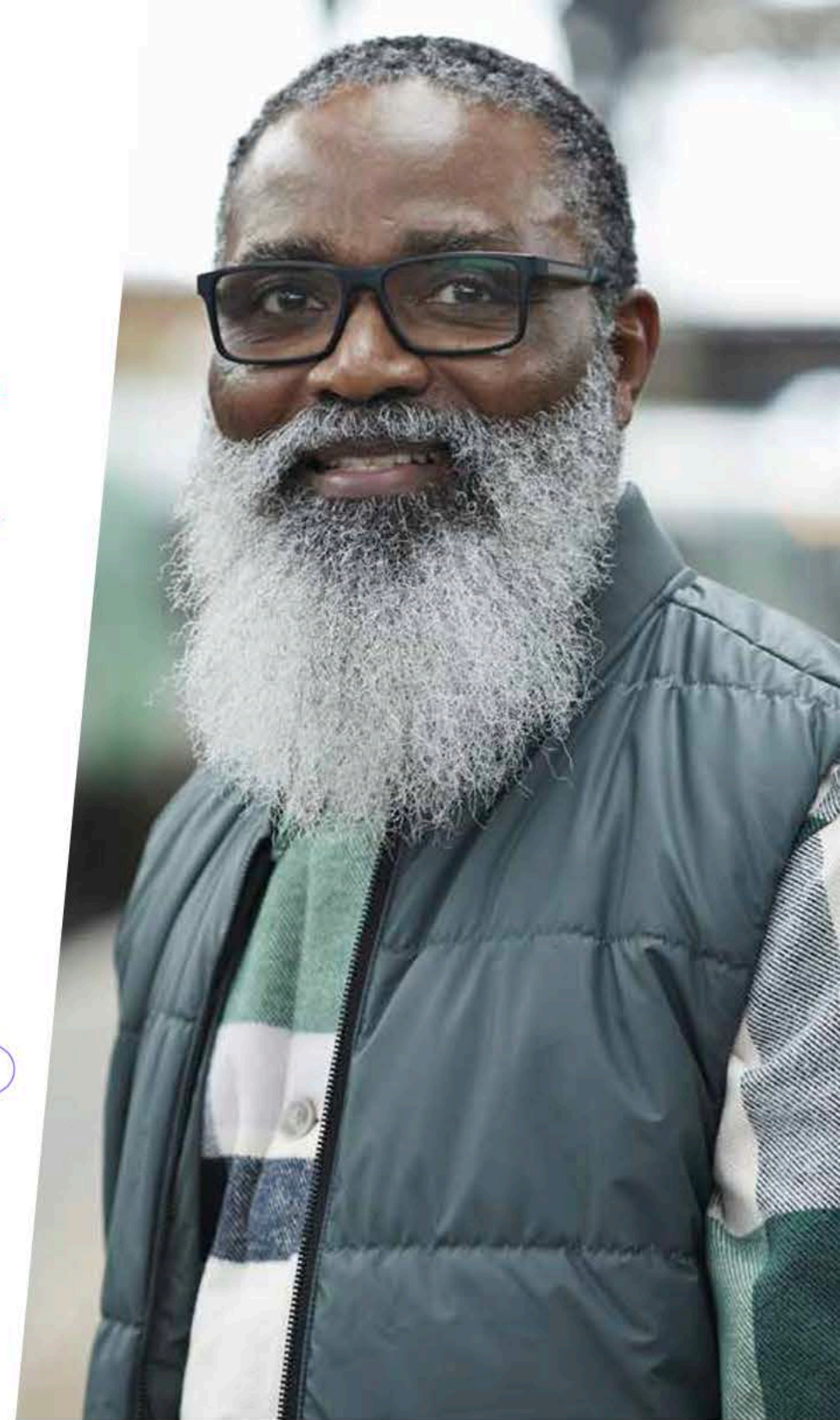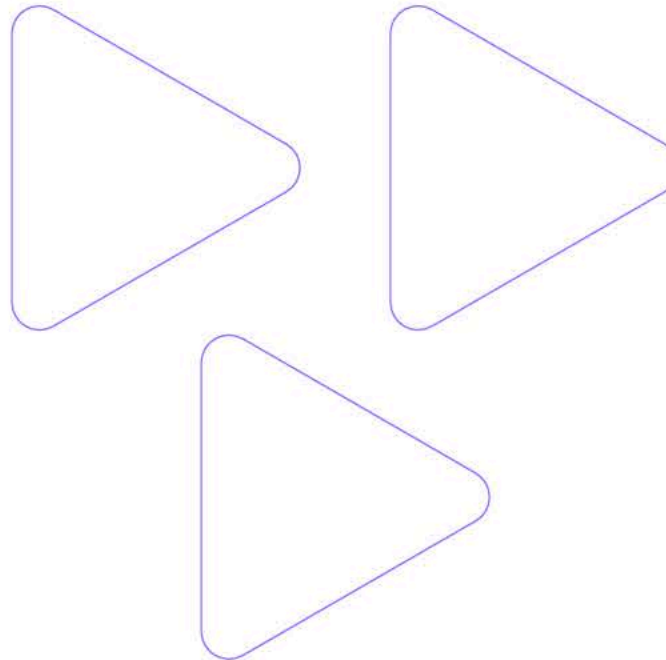
Sustaining Growth in Uncertain Times Requires a "Full-Stack" Culture

MARK ONISK
CCO, Skillsoft

We're living in a time where organizations are getting smaller and employees are absorbing more responsibilities — likely in areas that they aren't necessarily experts in. As this shift continues and existing talent is required to take on new challenges, there must be even more urgency placed on learning and training to build broad and deep skill sets — or full-stack capabilities. More classically defined as the "T-shape" employee, the ability of the workforce to agilely shift between adjacent tasks and projects will require an increasingly diversified skillset, while maintaining critical specializations, as enterprises navigate the economic murkiness that is 2023.

In the tech world, for instance, developers can't just be focused on building front end applications. They also need to be able to do the back end, or full-stack. Now, full-stack extends to every function whether it be sales, marketing, operations, product, or technology.

Building a full-stack culture — where all employees have a level of proficiency in everything from power skills like problem solving to tech skills like data analysis — is a win-win for employers and employees alike. For the former, it transforms an organization into one built upon adaptability and agility, while also helping to retain momentum in uncertain times. For the latter, individuals become more efficient with their time, have more command over where, how, and on what they want to work, and cushion their careers in the event of an unforeseen change.

The Role of the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer Will be (Re)Defined

ASHA PALMER
SVP, Compliance Solutions, Skillsoft

Years ago, the executive role of Chief People Officer (CPO) rose in popularity. Organizations realized that if they were going to refer to their people as their most valuable asset, then their people would need executive-level representation. CPOs are responsible for overseeing human resources and ensuring that employees have what they need to effectively do their jobs.

2023 will be the year of the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer (CECO) — a nod to the increasing value that organizations are placing on ethics and compliance. But, even as the CECO role is now being elevated around the world, we need to think carefully about the responsibility it shoulders, or should shoulder. CECOs are stewards of corporate culture; they are responsible for regulatory, societal, cultural, and legal risk. Their job description has become more complex than a typical Chief Compliance Officer, which has traditionally focused more on purely regulatory compliance. CECOs do more than make sure that people comply with laws.

Even if your organization has the most gorgeous code of conduct that has ever been written, if you have not moved ethics and compliance to an executive role responsible for the cultural stability in your organization, you're at risk for misconduct. Your CECO should be critically analyzing what's working — and what's not working — for your organization, and helping to build and shape your corporate culture.

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Programmatic Learning Will Evolve into Assessments with Outcomes

Organizations that have an effective culture of learning are deliberate about employee development aligned with strategic business needs. They assess and benchmark skills, build and maintain individual development plans, and provide blended learning programs that future-fit employees for roles of the future.

In a world where efficiency and performance are essential, blended, multi-modal learning will become even more important next year. Best-in-class companies will infuse learning methods like videos, books, and live and virtual instructor-led training (ILT), while using all-in-one platforms that engage the learner with recommendations, social cues, badges, goals, reminders, and much more.

In 2023, falling behind and failing to invest in the growth of employees through a blended approach to learning will be a guarantee for obsolescence.

APRATIM PURAKAYASTHA
CTO & CPO, Skillsoft

Mental Health Will be Front and Center at Every Organization

To deliver on their key strategic initiatives, organizations must ensure their employees can perform at their top potential. The relationship between work and wellness can no longer be fragmented.

Research shows that only 34% of employees say their company's leadership speaks openly about mental health, and only three in five employees agree that their manager cares about their emotional well-being. When it comes to employee well-being, it is a shared responsibility between the organizations and their employees as burnout continues to rise. For many decades, hospitals, insurance companies, and businesses have treated mental health as a step-sibling of physical health. That will change in 2023.

According to the CDC, nearly 1 in 5 Americans experience mental illness in any given year. We will see corporate policies evolve to address workplace burnout and provide optimal conditions for employees to perform at their best. We will see a rise in mental health startups and more investors investing in wellness solutions. And we will see organizations providing employees with tools and resources to take charge of their mental wellness.

RASHIM MOGHA
GM, Leadership & Business, Skillsoft

Ensuring your organization recognizes mental health and has proper support for employees is a must-have to create a more inclusive workplace environment.

When building out your plans for 2023 keep in mind that learning, training, culture, compliance, and employee wellness should top priorities for your organization to keep pace of.

Additional Resources

IT SKILLS & SALARY REPORT
The 17th annual survey — one of the largest of its kind — asks professionals about compensation, certifications, job roles, challenges, and more.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT WORK
Skillsoft's first annual CSR survey asked professionals to share how their organizations are approaching sustainability to benchmark our collective progress.

WOMEN IN TECH REPORT
Findings from our in-depth survey help demonstrate how to close organizational gaps and arrive at meaningful solutions to empower women in tech.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION LEARNING CENTER
Find Leadercamps, led by DEI coaches, as well as books, videos, and other tools on this timely topic. Build a workplace culture around DEI leadership.

TRAINING DAY: CLOSE THE IT SKILLS GAP WITH A WELL-SCRIPTED RESKILLING PLAN
CIOs face a series of challenging hurdles. Download the IDG-Skillsoft white paper to see why 98% of them say training and skills development are today's top priorities.

CASE STUDIES
Read how employers in every industry across the globe have made a new compact with employees centered around growth. They've made learning a powerful competitive edge.
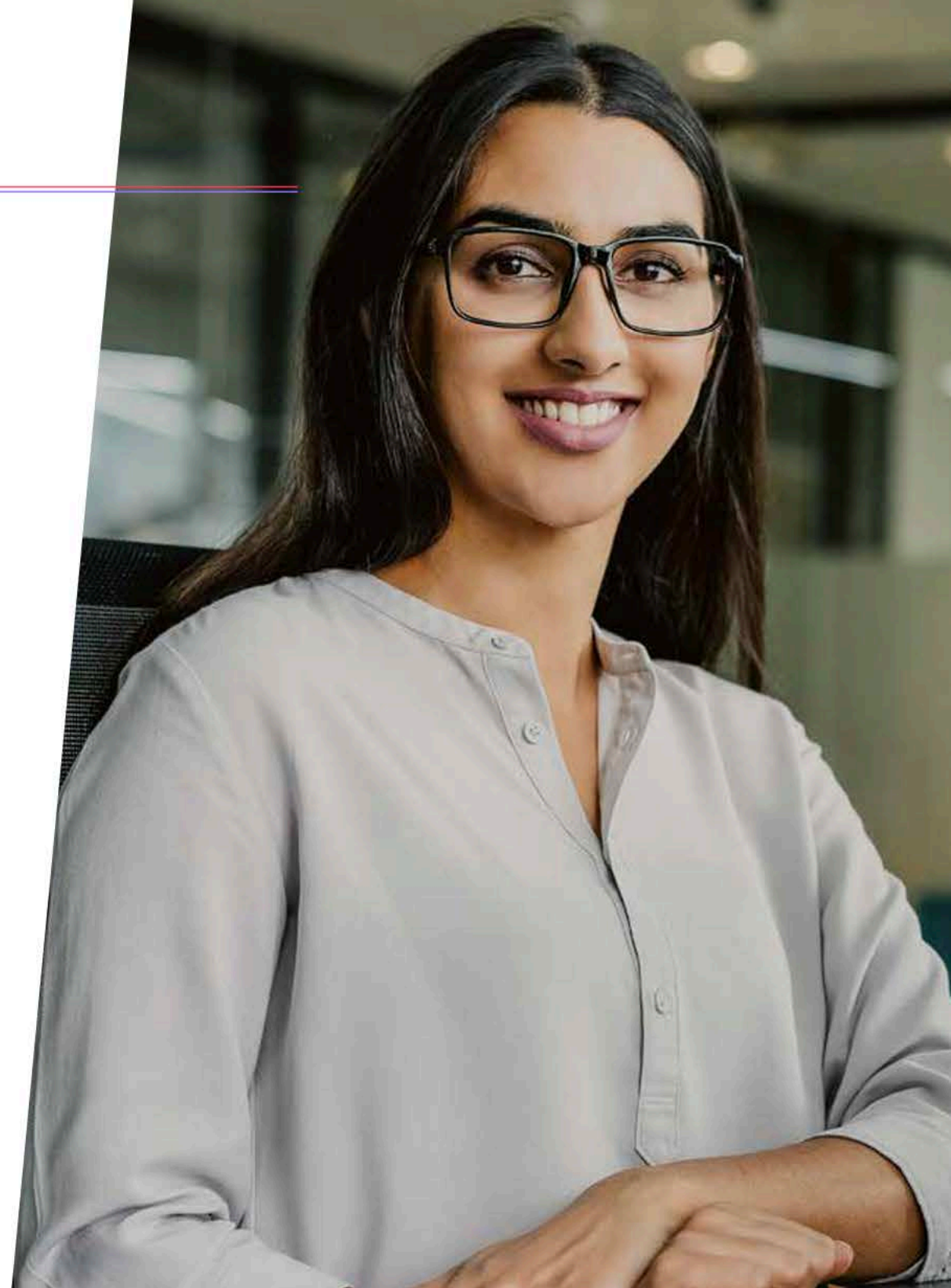
THE EDGE PODCAST
Listen to a variety of guests — from customers, to partners, to industry influencers — engaging in thought-provoking conversations and open dialogue on learning and growth in the workplace.

SKILLSOFT BLOG
Share our team's insights on everything from the latest learning industry research and trends to timely tips for success. Subscribe today and get the latest right in your inbox.

INVESTOR RELATIONS
Skillsoft delivers transformative learning experiences that propel organizations and people to grow together. Find the latest news, financials, stock data, and other resources for our investor community.

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About Skillsoft

Skillsoft (NYSE: SKIL) delivers transformative learning experiences that propel organizations and people to grow together. The Company partners with enterprise organizations and serves a global community of learners to prepare today's employees for tomorrow's economy. With Skillsoft, customers gain access to blended, multimodal learning experiences that do more than build skills, they grow a more capable, adaptive, and engaged workforce. Through a portfolio of best-in-class content, a platform that is personalized and connected to customer needs, world-class tech and a broad ecosystem of partners, Skillsoft drives continuous growth and performance for employees and their organizations by overcoming critical skill gaps and unlocking human potential.

Learn more at www.skillsoft.com.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Please contact Cameron Martin
cameron.martin@skillsoft.com