

# LEAN INTO LEARNING

**2021** ANNUAL LEARNING REPORT

skillsoft®



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# FOREWORD

“If there’s one thing we’ve learned, it’s that we never stop learning.”

### The future is now...

That’s something we live and breathe at Skillsoft. Our vision is to be the most highly valued provider of learning solutions, preparing the workforce of today with the skills for tomorrow. Over the past year, we’ve become accustomed to a “new normal.” And we can’t always predict where the “next normal” will lead. That’s why it’s so important for organizations to invest in skilling that keeps pace with change — and with the needs of their most important asset, their people.

In our 2021 Lean into Learning Report, we illuminate the latest learning trends, based on multiple surveys and learning consumption. But we’re diving deeper than data. Through inspiring customer stories, you’ll hear how organizations are transforming the way they do business — and empowering their teams. And, through guest contributions from the Skillsoft leadership team, along with top IDC, Forrester, and Brandon Hall Group analysts, you’ll have access to insights on the current state of learning and predictions for the future.

As we emerge from the uncertainty of 2020 and 2021, we must acknowledge that the future of work has already arrived. While organizations ease out of crisis mode and get back to long-term planning, many are keen to keep a hybrid, if not fully remote, workforce in play. As we support our customers through their L&D transformations, here’s what our Skillsoft executives are hearing most.



Organizations around the globe are still responding to — and reinventing themselves because of — the events of the past two years.



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# YOUR BEST TALENT WILL LEAVE IF YOU'RE NOT INVESTING IN THEIR SKILLS

According to [The Year 2021 For Skilling: A Pulse Survey](#), 88% of businesses rated building skills and capabilities as the topmost priority.

The key to success isn't about learning a single tool or process. A new and better tool will always come along. Success is about retaining talented individuals who are excited to learn with an infrastructure that enables them to do so. "The Great Resignation" has taught us that employees want to do work that matters and is harmonious with their lives outside of the office.

Organizations that provide a way to transform the skills of their talent in a meaningful way, with a transparent career trajectory, see the most success.

# CRACKING THE "CODE": THE IMPORTANCE OF TECH SKILLS IN A NEW WORLD

Today's world runs on programming. To be successful and ready for the next normal, companies must continually invest in skills that drive organizational performance. That means committing to continuous training — not just for enterprise technology professionals, but across the organization. All departments will need to build technical skills and competencies. Smart leaders, whether their role is in IT or not, are staying abreast of the latest trends, ongoing certifications, languages, and more through carefully curated learning channels that combine video learning, hands-on practice labs, virtual mentoring, and leading certification courses.

In conversations with our customers, we've learned that real-world experience cannot be gained by self-study or classroom instruction alone. Learning by doing is the name of the game. To that end, we recommend empowering your teams with virtual practice, where tech skills can be almost instantly applied in a safe virtual environment, and intensive Bootcamps, for immersive, live, instructor-led experiences. By experimenting with live applications, learners retain valuable skills — and deliver maximum value to their organizations.

# MEANINGFUL DEI INITIATIVES WILL BE THE GOLDEN RULE — AND A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

We've talked about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for years. Now, it's time to take action. That means developing and nurturing skills to achieve a more equitable workplace. Think of the next phase as DEI 2.0. Listening is still critically important. But our customers agree; it's time to act.

Not only is fostering a diverse and equitable culture the right thing to do — it's the smart thing to do. A recent [McKinsey study](#), conducted on more than 1,000 companies in 15 countries, found that companies with gender-diverse executive teams were 25% more likely to outperform financially. And if there was ethnic or cultural diversity among executives in the company, the likelihood of outperforming increased by 36%.

Organizations that invest in strong DEI programs will see higher employee engagement and retention, because people want to be a part of an organization where their opinions are valued, and where they feel they belong.





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# COLLABORATIVE, IMMERSIVE LEARNING IS KEY TO SUCCESS

Forward-thinking leaders are creating meaningful and engaging programs using blended learning methods — infusing self-paced, team-oriented, and instructor-led training, as well as live courses, hands-on labs, bootcamps, and more — to appeal to multiple training preferences and styles. In fact, Brandon Hall Group found that because of their experience during the pandemic, 35% of organizations have applied approaches that make virtual instructor-led training (VILT) more collaborative, social, and community-building.

But how? By looking at the success of gamer culture for inspiration.

Gamers worldwide have wide social networks of people they've never met face to face, but with whom they collaborate seamlessly to achieve in-game tasks. Leaders are experimenting with novel and collaborative learning methods, such as using VR headsets for onboarding and live virtual strategy sessions.

# PERSONALIZED COACHING WILL HELP THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS STAY AHEAD

Organizations see the value in accelerating professional development by providing a personal coach who can assess strengths and facilitate new skills in a thoughtful way that encourages growth. Building leadership competencies must be an integral part of skilling across the organization, as quality talent becomes increasingly scarce.

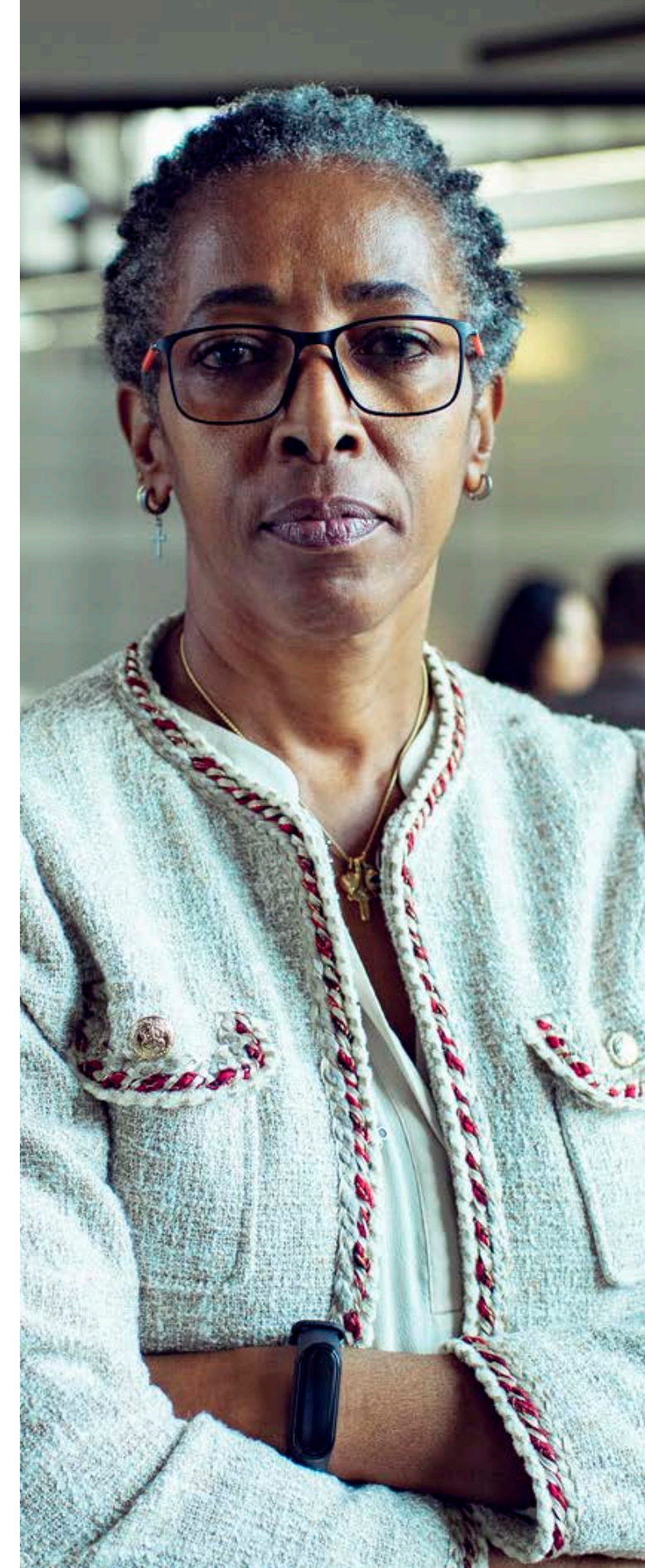
In a world that has become rapidly virtualized, we can also expect an increased investment in digital coaching, throughout the employee lifecycle. Customized digital coaching enables organizations to accelerate onboarding, build better managers, attract and retain top talent, support inclusivity, and manage change. By adding individualized, one-on-one, executive coaching to a robust culture of learning, you can better engage current and future leaders, effect lasting behavioral change, and experience a measurable impact to business success.

# IT'S TIME TO BUILD A STRATEGIC COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Today, the pressures on companies to be more socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable are mounting on many fronts. Consumers and shareholders expect more than lip service — they want demonstrated commitment.

As the planet's environment changes, so do its effects on the business world. Environmental changes impact business practices. From natural resources to supply chains, to logistics, to energy sources, to customer behaviors and demographics, businesses must adapt or be left behind. That's why it's mission-critical to align business strategies with sustainability efforts — and train your leaders on how to remain financially successful while becoming socially and environmentally responsible.

How will your organization prepare for the next normal and the next? Take the first step now with Skillsoft's 2021 Lean Into Learning Report.



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# WELCOME



Unprecedented challenges call for unprecedented transformations. Looking back over another pandemic year, we see more clearly than ever the need for companies to embrace change in order to succeed.

At Skillsoft, we've worked side by side with our customers as they reinvent the way they do business and, most importantly, the ways in which they inspire, educate, and empower their employees.

What we've heard from customers across industries and around the globe is that the war for talent is real — and it's urgent. Attitudes toward work are changing for many workers. It's increasingly remote, flexible, and mobile. And when the worker isn't changing, the work is.

Today, greatly accelerated by COVID-19, every company is a technology company — so every company's success depends on its ability to execute digitally and continue to invest in new technology-driven offerings, operations, and people. And yet, most companies are unable to attract and retain the technical talent required to keep up. A recent survey conducted by Fortune and **Deloitte** found that the struggle to find talent is top of mind for CEOs. Seventy-one percent responded that the labor and skills shortage could disrupt their business over the course of the year — a higher response than any other issue. Our own research has found that 80% of IT decision-makers face skills gaps and 38% are unable to fill three or more positions.

It doesn't have to be this way. Despite what we've heard about the Great Resignation, there's another movement growing in response, which promises to be the Skilling Revolution. Organizations that thrive are creating a culture of learning, where every employee can develop new skills and competencies and is given the tools to succeed in the next normal. Competency is the new currency.

Here at Skillsoft, we believe that learning transforms organizations — and lives. Our customers are redrawing the business battleground by making learning a key corporate strategy. Not only are they winning the war for talent, but they're also enhancing loyalty and performance, and creating a culture of ever-improving skills where everyone can achieve their fullest potential.

By embracing learning and development at all levels — from the frontlines to the boardroom — we can all create an environment where everyone wins.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Tarr'.

**JEFF TARR**  
Chief Executive Officer



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# THE STATE OF SKILLING





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# THE AFTERMATH OF COVID-19

When we published our [Lean into Learning Annual Report for 2020](#), we wrote about the “Eye of the Storm,” because that’s where we had suddenly found ourselves.

Three seismic shifts had convened to profoundly disrupt so-called “business as usual”:

- A global health crisis: COVID-19
- A widespread social justice movement
- And worldwide economic uncertainty

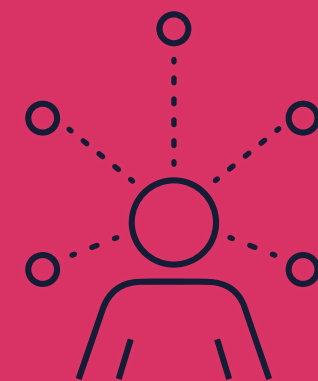
Businesses around the globe, across every industry, faced unparalleled change and challenges. Workforces went remote. Reskilling and upskilling became paramount to fill skills gaps and keep teams employed. Digital transformation accelerated practically overnight — even for companies and industries that were previously years away from it.

## LEADERS FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE EYE OF A PERFECT STORM

Change is so often thought of as a negative (and, of course, much of the change we experienced over the past two years was negative). But change can also mean opportunity.

We’ve all lived through tremendous disruption. If you’re like most of Skillsoft’s customers, things are still in a state of flux.

- Globally, workforces are still remote or operating in a hybrid model.
- Myriad industries have had to evolve their operations — from supply chain management and manufacturing; to customer service, sales, marketing; and everything in between.
- Employees are reassessing their priorities; in some cases, leaving the workforce for early retirement or activities they feel are more purposeful. In others, finding jobs that align with their personal passions or provide better economic prospects.
- Which leads us to the skills gap — a reality that started before the pandemic. Today, that gap has become even more difficult to fill.



New power skills — like agility, communication, resiliency, and adaptability — became essential as everyone adjusted to a new “normal” that was anything but normal.



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# DISRUPTION HAS DRIVEN REINVENTION

Around the world, access to and encouragement of learning played a central role for employees and employers alike. Consumption of learning increased exponentially, and new topics emerged as not just popular, but mission-critical.

The good news for learners, learning professionals, and the learning industry is that regardless of when and how we come out of the current situation, work has changed forever — and that means there is a very real need for learning.

- Personal flexibility and autonomy won't go away.
- Skills will remain more important than traditional roles.
- Digital transformation isn't some far-off goal; it's here and it's now.
- And learning will continue to play a pivotal role in building a future-fit workforce ready to respond to what's next — whatever “next” looks like.

The nature of work — and consequently, the nature of the workforce — has evolved at a rapid pace in recent years. From the emergence of remote teams to enabling technologies, from digital-first to global disruptions ... the next normal will arrive fast on the heels of the new normal.

It's becoming more and more challenging to hire for the skills needed today, and virtually impossible to predict the skills needed tomorrow. (We'll go into the skills gap in depth in the next section and later in this report.) And traditional recruitment methods aren't sustainable.

# ONE SOLUTION IS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE: TRANSFORMATION THROUGH LEARNING

Today's leaders must become the voice of the workforce and the architects of company cultures that value, reward, and benefit from ongoing learning. They must champion the democratization of learning, making reskilling and upskilling more accessible to all.

The urgency is underscored by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its 2021 [Insight Report, Upskilling for Shared Prosperity](#). “Even before COVID-19, the rise of automation and new technologies was transforming the world of work, resulting in an urgent need for large-scale upskilling and reskilling. Now this need has become even more important.” The WEF's findings focus on the potential upside of upskilling at scale:

- Wide-scale investment in upskilling has the potential to boost GDP by \$6.5 trillion by 2030.
- Regions and economies with the biggest gains are those in which the skills gaps are larger and the potential is greatest to improve productivity through skills augmentation aligned with new technology.
- Progress on reversing polarization and reshaping the workforce is feasible.
- Upskilling could lead to the net creation of 5.3 million new jobs by 2030.

Charged with helping learners, employees, managers, and organizations reach their full potential, leaders are making a commitment to upskilling. And they're discovering new ways to motivate, inspire, recognize, and reward achievement and excellence.

Because reinvention begins with people.



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# 2021 TRENDS IN LEARNING



The skills gap is affecting businesses of all sizes, across all industries, in all locations. This lack of qualified and properly trained employees in key positions is leaving businesses understaffed and struggling to keep pace with consumer demands. Skills are simply not keeping pace with technology, leaving millions of positions unfilled and driving a major impact on the economy.

As an example, the IT industry is facing a major skills gap as new technologies emerge. **IDC predicts** that digital transformation related IT skill shortages will affect 90% of organizations by 2025, and skills gaps will cost more than \$6.5 trillion globally through 2025<sup>1</sup>.

But it's not just IT that is feeling the pinch; a range of other industries are too. For example, **Deloitte reports** that the skills gap in manufacturing could leave as many as 2.1 million jobs unfilled by 2030. According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Home Builders and reported by **Bloomberg**, 85% of construction firms expect future cost and availability problems due to a lack of skilled workers. And, in a **McKinsey survey**, 22% of nurses indicated that they may leave their current position — particularly concerning given how the pandemic has increased the need for healthcare.

## DIGGING IN DEEP

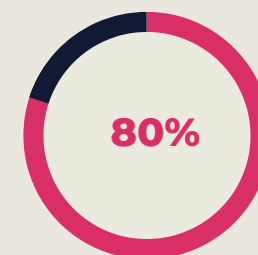
Skillsoft recently conducted a survey with IDC to uncover current learning trends. We wanted to find out how organizations use learning, gauge their attitudes about training, and assess their professional development goals for the future.

This study delivers valuable insight into the skills gap crisis including:

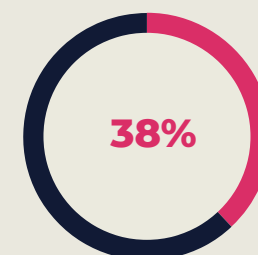
- COVID-19's impact on training and development
- The impact of gaps in technological knowledge and skills
- Challenges associated with upskilling/reskilling
- Elective training vs. required training
- Deciding factors for skilling/reskilling
- Areas of concern and in-demand certifications

Armed with this knowledge, managers and decision-makers are better qualified to bridge the skills gap in their own organization.

According to the recent **Skillsoft's Global Knowledge Skills and Salary Report**



IT decision-makers face skills gaps



Unable to fill three or more positions

<sup>1</sup> IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Future of Work 2022 Predictions, Doc # US47290521, October 2021



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DEMOGRAPHICS

We spoke to both director- and manager-level executives from a variety of industries. Eighty-five percent of our respondents identify their role within their organizations as director or above. The most common industries associated with this study are technology (45%), financial services (37%), and retail, wholesale, and distribution (36%). The majority of respondents come from organizations that employ 20,000 or more employees.

THE RESULTS

Decision-makers are greatly concerned about the skills gap, with 83% reporting that they are making training and development a critical priority within their organization. Only 9% view it as somewhat of an important priority.

COVID-19 changed how the world operates.

Organizations across the globe relied heavily on technology as they figured out how to work remotely with employees, vendors, and customers. But that wasn't the only effect of the pandemic. Supply chain issues became — and are still — commonplace. Scores of long-term workers took early retirement or rearranged priorities. Working parents had to make tough decisions about career and family.

It's safe to say that COVID-19 changed how we live. And for 86% of the study's respondents, COVID-19 increases the importance of IT training and development within their organization. Only 8% of directors report that it decreased their interest.

What do organizations hope to get out of IT training and development? The results vary somewhat between directors and managers:



The slight difference in priorities illustrates that directors are looking at big-picture, longer-term strategy, while managers are concerned with more immediate problems such as getting product to market faster and keeping employees happy.

The gaps in technical knowledge and skills over the past 12 to 18 months have had a major impact on decision makers. Eighty-nine percent of respondents (directors and managers combined) report a loss in revenue. Seventy-six percent saw a loss of business to competitors and 72% saw declining customer satisfaction. These responses demonstrate that a lack of skills is having a serious impact on the bottom line of many organizations.

Unfortunately, far too many organizations are struggling with how to upskill or reskill their employees to alleviate skills gaps. Sixty-five percent of director+ level respondents and 67% of managers report they still have a real challenge with their existing training solutions not being optimal for remote employees, even though the majority report that more than half of their required and elective courses are accessible to remote employees via books, videos, online, and other means.

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Decision-makers are also challenged with finding training programs that are comprehensive enough for all their needs. They also find it problematic that employees have limited opportunities to practice or apply what they learn.

While most organizations surveyed do require mandatory training for IT employees, our respondents are split on whether non-required training is available to all employees or just some. It’s also interesting to note that far more directors view the elective training and or certifications offered to employees as comprehensively covering a wide range of technology related topics. Only 14% of managers feel that non-required courses are comprehensive. Most managers (86%) view the elective training as somewhat limiting and only covering some technology-related topics.

Ninety-six percent of directors and 80% of managers are allotting a specific number of hours to employees for the purpose of training, but the amount of time varies. The majority earmark 50 to 100 hours a year towards the pursuit of additional training or certifications. 40% are allowing 25 to 50 hours. Only 20% are giving their employees more than 100 hours to learn new skills.

One must question whether giving more hours to training would alleviate some of the loss in revenue and business that so many organizations report.

Most director-level positions (89%) are putting the controls for training in the hands of the CIO or heads of IT. Managers are split as to who is involved in setting the technology upskilling and reskilling agenda in their organization with a three-way tie between executive management, the CIO, or the CSO/CISO.

We asked survey participants which technology training areas would be most important over the next 12 months. Again, directors and managers have different opinions when asked for their top five in order of importance:

DIRECTORS	MANAGERS
Data Analytics & Visualization/BI	Infrastructure & Operations
Digital Transformation	Digital Transformation
Infrastructure & Operations	Cloud/Multi-Cloud
Cloud/Multi-Cloud	Data Analytics & Visualization/BI
Productivity & Collaboration	DevOps/Agile

The top five training programs/certifications that responding organizations are currently offering are: cybersecurity, IT services, IT project management, network operations, and professional development/leadership.

From a skills standpoint, the most critical data-related challenges for IT and business leaders for the next 12 months are big data processing, data security, data integration, data analytics, and data security.

It’s evident from our survey responses that organizations recognize the need for additional training. They know what their challenges are and the areas where they need support. But what matters most to them when it comes to selecting IT training solutions? Eighty percent see it as critical that training has 24/7 availability. Other critical needs are the ability to meet learners where they are with respect to expertise levels, opportunities to practice skills and apply their learning, and a broad and deep learning library for the whole organization.

It’s clear that in order to be successful, organizations need to trust a learning solution partner who addresses their deficient skills, works with their employees where and when they need it, and can transform gaps into opportunities.



Allot hours to employees for IT training



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# 2021 PERCIPPIO LEARNING CONSUMPTION

After so much disruption, 2021 became a year of perfecting our new virtual reality and improving how we live and work.

Businesses quickly learned that the more agile they become, the better they can plan for the next change — whatever and whenever that may be. Many organizations relied heavily on upskilling and reskilling employees. They recognized that just as an enterprise needs to be nimble in times of disruption, employees need opportunities to acquire and perfect new skills.

It was also a year of learning, as we provided valuable content to millions of learners who spent tens of millions of hours absorbing new skills.

The challenge lies in determining which roles require which competencies, how to deliver them, and when. While this task might seem insurmountable, companies that have made a commitment to robust, ongoing skills development, supported at every level in the organization, can more accurately determine training needs.

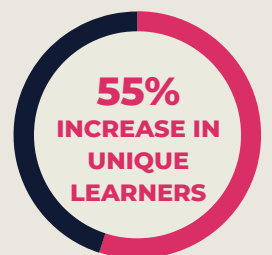
## LEARNING IS FLUID

Organizations are shifting their mindset towards learning because technology is outpacing skills. What was in-demand yesterday, might not be today, and almost certainly won't be tomorrow. Technology and compliance, once thought to be more rigid, change rapidly. Many competencies and roles that are now commonplace, like social media influencer, cloud architect, telemedicine provider, and drone operator, didn't exist just 10 years ago.

Learners can't learn for just one role or one skill and call it a day. They need to be agile and forward-thinking. And that's why a good learning partner is so important to guide employees on their journey. Agility, adaptability, and resiliency have become the power words — and skills — of the future for both organizations and learners alike.

A growth mindset does just what it promises. It helps organizations harness their power to grow. Learning builds a future-ready workforce that doesn't get bogged down by the natural evolution of a changing workplace. Learning gives rise to the next generation of problem-solvers, troubleshooters, and innovators.

Learning consumption via Skillsoft's Percipio platform



This included,

30%

Increase in Leadership and Business content hours,

36%

Increase in Technology and Developer content hours,

120%

Increase in Compliance content hours.

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WHAT MATTERS NOW?

We looked at learning consumption in 2021 and compared it to 2020 in a number of key areas:

- Learning by industry
- Most popular topics overall
- Skillsoft Aspire Journeys taken
- Skillsoft digital badges earned
- Technology and Developer trending topics
- Compliance trending topics
- Leadership and Business trending topics
- Productivity and Collaboration trending topics
- Trending topics in key geographies

In some cases, the results were very similar year-to-year. In others, we saw changes in levels of interest — some due to how the world continued to respond to the pandemic, and some indicating emerging skills.

TOP 20 INDUSTRIES THAT  
LEVERAGED LEARNING

Everyone should be learning, and learning is for everyone.

The top 20 industries that made learning and development a priority in 2021 remain roughly the same as 2020. One noticeable change, surprisingly, was healthcare, which in 2020 barely made the top 20 list. In 2021, it jumped five places to become number 12 on the list. Perhaps a lack of time in 2020 as healthcare workers dealt with busy COVID-19 work schedules attributed to its lack of training consumption.



TOP INDUSTRIES 2020		TOP INDUSTRIES 2021	
#1	Business Services/Consulting	#1	Business Services/Consulting
#2	Manufacturing	#2	Manufacturing
#3	Banking/Finance	#3	Banking/Finance
#4	Education	#4	Medical
#5	Medical	#5	Technology (e.g., computers, software, ISP, etc.)
#6	Insurance	#6	Insurance
#7	Technology (e.g., computers, software, ISP, etc.)	#7	Education
#8	Pharmaceuticals	#8	Retail
#9	Retail	#9	Pharmaceuticals
#10	Telecommunications	#10	Telecommunications
#11	Aerospace	#11	Aerospace
#12	Government/Military	#12	Healthcare
#13	Non-Profit	#13	Transportation
#14	Oil & Gas	#14	Government/Military
#15	Transportation	#15	Oil & Gas
#16	Legal	#16	Non-Profit
#17	Healthcare	#17	Training and Development
#18	Training and Development	#18	Legal
#19	Hospitality	#19	Mining
#20	Construction	#20	Media/Entertainment



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# TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS ACROSS DISCIPLINES VIA PERCPIO

As expected for 2021, the most consumed topics by learners include multiple IT and technology-related topics. Security is clearly a subject that attracted attention, as did Agile development. However, nearly half the list of the top 10 topics comprises more general, power skills — which made up the bulk of the most popular topics in 2020— such as communication, understanding unconscious bias, building trust, and developing growth and agile mindsets.

## TRENDING TOPICS 2020

Scrum  
Working Effectively On A Team  
Unconscious Bias  
Trust And Relationship Building  
Managing Yourself  
Microsoft Teams Agile  
Communication Essentials  
Written Communication  
Working Remotely  
Fostering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
ITIL® Foundation  
Mental Well-being  
Workplace Safety & Compliance  
Time Management  
Customer Service Skills  
Effective Virtual Teams  
Presentation Skills  
Cloud Basics Excel

## TRENDING TOPICS 2021

Customer Service Skills  
OWASP  
Working Remotely  
Microservices Architecture  
Unconscious Bias  
Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets  
Working Effectively on a Team  
Workplace Safety & Compliance  
Cloud Basics Scrum  
Cloud Security  
Software Testing Automation  
Time Management  
Managing Yourself Agile  
Written Communication  
Trust and Relationship Building  
Mental Well-Being  
ITIL® Foundation  
API Security

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# TOP 20 MOST COMPLETED PERCIPIO ASPIRE JOURNEYS

Even the most motivated employee can find it challenging to know how to go about — or even get started — learning in a particular area. Without a clear path, learning can be confusing and unwieldy.

Skillsoft helps learners achieve their goals with proprietary Aspire Journeys. These pathways provide sequential learning that builds on current skills as learners progress and move through guided roadmaps to success.

TOP PERCIPIO ASPIRE JOURNEYS 2020	TOP PERCIPIO ASPIRE JOURNEYS 2021
#1 Virtual Work in the New Normal	#1 Virtual Work in the New Normal
#2 Leadership Development Core Journey	#2 Leadership Development Core Journey
#3 Software Project Lead to Advanced Scrum Master	#3 First Time Manager Journey
#4 Python Novice to Pythonista	#4 Product Management Journey
#5 First Time Manager Journey	#5 Delighting Customers with Design Thinking
#6 Network Security Specialist to CloudOps Security Architect	#6 Building Resilience in Your Personal and Professional Life
#7 Automated Testing with Selenium	#7 Automated Testing with Selenium
#8 Software Tester to DevOps Automated Tester	#8 Network Security Specialist to CloudOps Security Architect
#9 Mid-Level Manager Journey	#9 Python Novice to Pythonista
#10 Security Analyst to Security Architect	#10 Agile for Software Development
#11 Programmer to Secure Agile Programmer	#11 Forging New Paths: Women's Advancement In Life and Work
#12 Penetration Tester to SecOps Engineer	#12 Software Project Lead to Advanced Scrum Master
#13 Data Analyst to Data Scientist	#13 5G Technologies and Practices
#14 Leader of Leaders Journey	#14 Inspiring Engagement and Resilience
#15 Software Project Analyst to Senior Software Project Manager	#15 Sustainability and Restoring Our Earth - Earth Day 2021
#16 Digital Visionary Mindset Journey	#16 Mid-Level Manager Journey
#17 Web Programmer to Apprentice Programmer	#17 Enriched Web Development with Angular 11
#18 Innovation Mindset Journey	#18 Programmer to Secure Agile Programmer
#19 Enterprise Developer to DevOps Engineer	#19 Beyond Status Quo: DEI and the Future of Work
#20 Building Resilience in Your Personal and Professional Life	#20 Human Resources Journey



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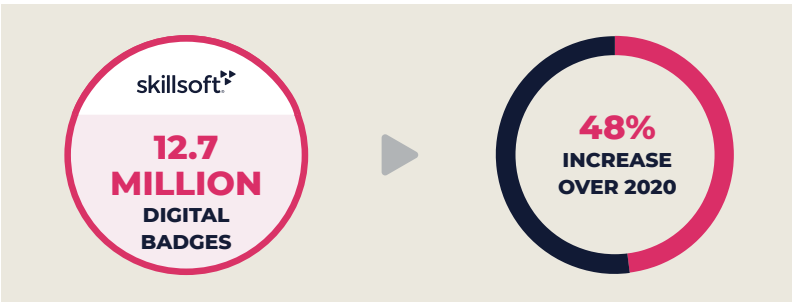
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TOP 20 SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES EARNED VIA PERCIPPIO

In 2021, learners celebrated, measured, and recorded their accomplishments with 12.7 million digital badges, an increase of 48% over 2020. These badges were earned upon completion of Skillsoft courses and/or Percipio Aspire Journeys. Once earned, they were shared via social media channels and served as personal — and accredited — records of achievements.



TOP SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES 2020	TOP SKILLSOFT DIGITAL BADGES 2021
#1 Understanding Unconscious Bias	#1 Application Security Awareness & Validation
#2 Communicating with Confidence	#2 Secure Application Architecture & IAM
#3 Contributing as a Virtual Team Member	#3 API Security
#4 Cloud Computing Fundamentals: Introduction	#4 OWASP Top 10 List Items
#5 Overcoming Your Own Unconscious Biases	#5 Cloud Security Fundamentals: Cloud Application Security
#6 Become a Great Listener	#6 Automated Software Testing
#7 Trust Building through Effective Communication	#7 Agile Test-Driven Development
#8 Agile Software Development - Scrum	#8 Agile Software Development - Scrum
#9 The Art and Science of Communication	#9 Cloud Computing Fundamentals: Introduction
#10 Writing Effective Emails and Instant Messages	#10 Need for Design Patterns & the Principles Guiding Design Patterns
#11 Maximize Your Productivity by Managing Time and Tasks	#11 Communicating with Confidence
#12 Interacting with Customers	#12 Developing the Product & Sprint Backlogs
#13 Expert Insights on Unconscious Bias	#13 Agile Principles and Methodologies
#14 Establishing Effective Virtual Teams	#14 Release & Sprint Planning
#15 Communicating Effectively with Customers	#15 The Language of DevOps: DevOps Tools & Processes
#16 Developing a Growth Mindset	#16 Software Data Analysis: Project Management Metrics
#17 Controlling Conflict, Stress, and Time in Customer Service	#17 Using Kanban in IT & Software Development
#18 Agile Principles and Methodologies	#18 Trust Building through Effective Communication
#19 Aligning Goals and Priorities To Manage Time	#19 Understanding Unconscious Bias
#20 Take a Deep Breath and Manage Your Stress	#20 Become a Great Listener

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TOP 10 TRENDING TOPICS VIA PERCIPPIO: TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPER

Technology continues to evolve rapidly with little interruption during the pandemic, with major changes happening faster than tech professionals change roles.

For instance, two of the three most consumed topics in 2021 – Cloud Security and OWASP – didn’t even make our Top 10 list in 2020. Meanwhile, Cloud Security, the most consumed topic in 2021, was barely in the Top 10 in 2020 in the 8th position.

Consumption of technology content continued to grow, too. Amidst the most disruptive year for cyber-attacks, Skillsoft observed nearly 4 million more accesses to security-related content in Percipio, a 30 percent increase year-over-year.

TRENDING TOPICS 2020	TRENDING TOPICS 2021
#1 Cloud Basics	#1 Cloud Security
#2 Agile Basics	#2 OWASP
#3 Azure Fundamentals	#3 API Security
#4 Python	#4 Agile Basics
#5 DevOps Engineering	#5 Scrum
#6 Security Core Concepts	#6 Cloud Basics
#7 Scrum	#7 CompTIA A+ Certification Prep
#8 Cloud Security	#8 Agile for Software Development
#9 Artificial Intelligence	#9 Software Testing Automation
#10 Agile for Software Development	#10 IT Project Management





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TOP 10 COURSES VIA PERCPIO: COMPLIANCE

There is no room for error when it comes to compliance or compliance training.

Not surprisingly, in 2020 we saw interest in a lot of compliance topics concerned with COVID-19. This year, we saw a growing concern for cybersecurity and workplace safety.

TRENDING COURSES 2020	TRENDING COURSES 2021
#1 Global Cybersecurity Basics	#1 Global Anti-bribery
#2 Active Shooter	#2 Global Cybersecurity Basics
#3 Safety Short: Coronaviruses and COVID-19	#3 Hazard Communication: An Employee's Right to Understand
#4 Slips, Trips, and Falls	#4 Harassment Prevention
#5 Fire Safety and Prevention	#5 Fire Safety and Prevention
#6 Hazard Communication: An Employee's Right to Understand	#6 Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness
#7 Workplace Harassment Prevention for Employees, Version	#7 Active Shooter
#8 Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness	#8 Slips, Trips, and Falls
#9 Global Anti-bribery	#9 EU General Data Protection Regulation
#10 Global Privacy and Information Security	#10 Global Privacy and Information Security



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TOP 10 TRENDING TOPICS VIA PERCIPIO: LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS

Employers are best served by training that develops a productive blend of personal and business technical skills. Given the continued disruption organizations and their employees faced in 2021, skills that spiked in demand in 2020—like communication, customer service, trust building, and mental well-being—remain in the top 10.

TRENDING TOPICS 2020	TRENDING TOPICS 2021
#1 Communication Essentials (Spoken & Written)	#1 Customer Service Skills
#2 Working Remotely	#2 ITIL® Foundation
#3 Customer Service Skills	#3 Working Remotely
#4 Unconscious Bias	#4 Agile Project Management
#5 ITIL® Foundation	#5 Time Management
#6 Time Management	#6 Unconscious Bias
#7 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets	#7 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets
#8 Presentation Skills	#8 Trust and Relationship Building
#9 Trust and Relationship Building	#9 Communication Essentials
#10 Mental Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence	#10 Accountability and Managing Yourself





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REGIONAL LEARNING CONSUMPTION VIA PERCIPIO

We also measured the trending topics within the 100 most consumed courses by geographic region, determined by companies headquartered in region. Compliance is key in the DACH region and France, while power skills dominate the list for Australia. Different technologies rise to the top for India, North America, and the United Kingdom.

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN APAC

- #1 Essential Customer Service
- #2 Working Remotely
- #3 Selling Essentials
- #4 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets
- #5 Compliance Health & Safety
- #6 Presentation Skills
- #7 Communications Essentials
- #8 Time Management
- #9 Trust and Relationship Building
- #10 CompTIA A+ Certification Prep
- #11 Big Data
- #12 Work/Life Balance
- #13 Legal Compliance
- #14 Digital Marketing/Social Media
- #15 Working Effectively on a Team
- #16 Customer Success Management
- #17 Customer Experience
- #18 Mental Well-Being
- #19 Written Communication
- #20 Listening Skills

39% INCREASE  
IN APAC'S TECH & DEV LEARNING

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN FRANCE

- #1 Business Ethics
- #2 Conflicts of Interest
- #3 Written Communication
- #4 Customer Service Skills
- #5 ITIL® Foundation
- #6 Cloud Basics
- #7 Microsoft Teams
- #8 Agile Project Management
- #9 Corporate Security Fundamentals
- #10 Working Remotely
- #11 Microsoft Azure Fundamentals
- #12 Unconscious Bias
- #13 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- #14 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets
- #15 Trust Building
- #16 Time Management
- #17 Internet of Things
- #18 Managing a Crisis
- #19 Email Productivity
- #20 Managing Yourself

22% INCREASE  
IN FRANCE'S LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS LEARNING

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TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN DACH

- #1 Anti-Bribery
- #2 Insider Trading
- #3 Power BI
- #4 Working Remotely
- #5 Data Analytics Literacy
- #6 Time Management
- #7 Excel
- #8 SQL Database Administration
- #9 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets
- #10 Digital Marketing/Social Media
- #11 Customer Service Skills
- #12 Communications Essentials
- #13 Personal Productivity
- #14 Presentation Skills
- #15 JavaScript
- #16 Clean Coding
- #17 Agile Project Management
- #18 Trust Building
- #19 Data Visualization
- #20 Women & Leadership

394% INCREASE  
OVERALL IN DACH'S LEARNING

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN INDIA

- #1 ITIL® Foundation
- #2 Agile Basics
- #3 Agile Software Development
- #4 Cloud Basics
- #5 Email Productivity
- #6 Scrum
- #7 Time Management
- #8 Working Remotely
- #9 IT Project Management
- #10 Customer Service Skills
- #11 Communications Essentials
- #12 Managing Yourself
- #13 Customer Success Management
- #14 Written Communication
- #15 Developing a Growth Mindset
- #16 Collaboration
- #17 Cloud Security
- #18 Cross-Cultural Management
- #19 Legal Compliance (Sexual Harassment Prevention)
- #20 Listening Skills

54% INCREASE  
IN INDIA'S TECH & DEV LEARNING



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TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN NORTH AMERICA

- #1 Global Anti-bribery
- #2 Cybersecurity
- #3 Compliance Health & Safety
- #4 Cloud Security
- #5 API Security
- #6 OWASP
- #7 Agile
- #8 Unconscious Bias
- #9 Customer Service Skills
- #10 Scrum
- #11 Software Testing Automation
- #12 Developing Growth and Agile Mindsets
- #13 Microservices Architecture
- #14 Cloud Basics
- #15 DevOps Engineering
- #16 IT Project Management
- #17 Jenkins for DevOps
- #18 Introduction to Docker
- #19 Communications Essentials
- #20 Trust Building

24% INCREASE  
IN NORTH AMERICA’S TECH & DEV LEARNING

TOP 20 TRENDING TOPICS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

- #1 Cybersecurity
- #2 EU GDPR
- #3 Global Anti-Bribery and Antitrust
- #4 ITIL® Foundation
- #5 Customer Service Skills
- #6 Working Remotely
- #7 Compliance Health & Safety
- #8 Cross-Cultural Management
- #9 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- #10 Time Management
- #11 Communication Essentials
- #12 Written Communication
- #13 Digital Transformation
- #14 Trust Building
- #15 Developing Agile and Growth Mindsets
- #16 Agile Project Management
- #17 Managing Yourself
- #18 Listening Skills
- #19 Critical Thinking
- #20 Being an Effective Team Member

243% INCREASE  
IN UK’S TECH & DEV LEARNING

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# SKILLSOFT'S GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE 2021 IT SKILLS AND SALARY REPORT

Recently we conducted one of the industry's largest studies of technology professionals. **Skillsoft's Global Knowledge 2021 IT Skills and Salary Report** focuses on the most in-demand skills; current salaries and other compensation; training, leadership development, and certifications; and overall career satisfaction.

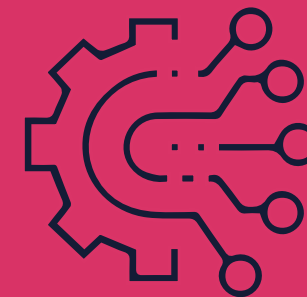
More than 9,300 IT professionals participated, including both staff and decision-makers. We've published findings broken down by region: North America; Latin America; Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); and Asia Pacific, as well as examined worldwide trends.

As nearly every industry was forced to accelerate digital transformation, IT found themselves responsible for driving significant change. This resulted in an overall good year for those in the field — including the majority of our survey respondents, who reported pay increases in 2021.

But there were downsides. Both IT staff and IT decision-makers experienced stress, a lack of training, and organizations that didn't support them. Adding to the overarching pressure was an industry-wide skills gap. It left IT professionals feeling unmotivated and undervalued. Left unaddressed, this effectively derailed initiatives and lowered projected returns on tech investments.

Hiring was a big challenge. The majority of IT decision-makers reported it to be somewhat difficult or extremely difficult. Many reported not being able to fill two to four positions in the past 12 months.

When we analyze what's happened in the IT industry, we uncover valuable insight for moving forward. Let's look at some of the summarized findings we uncovered.



This year, we were particularly interested in uncovering the state — and state of mind — of tech professionals as the world responded to and began recovering from COVID-19 and other disruptors.



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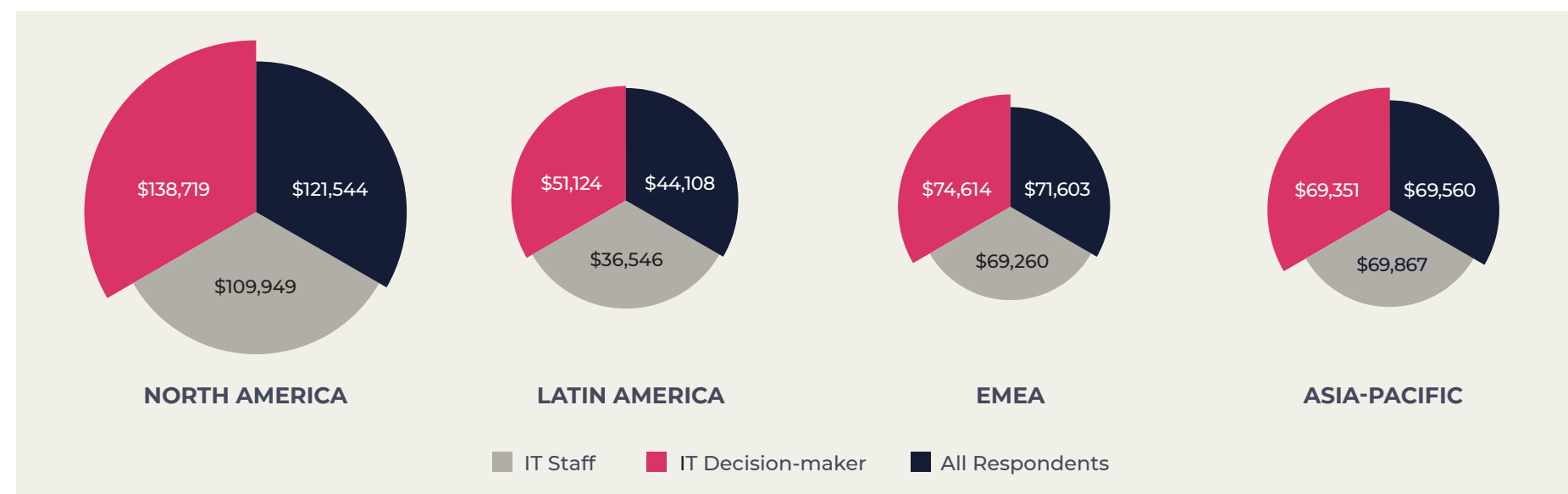
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# SALARIES

Average salaries increased in nearly every region we surveyed. North America led in base salaries with \$121,544 annually. The biggest jump was seen in the Asia-Pacific region, which increased by 10.2% in a single year. 2021 was also a good year for bonuses, with 57-69% of IT decision-makers and 43-55% of IT staff earning a bonus.

Fifty-two percent of surveyed IT professionals felt that pay increases could be attributed to their job performance. The increase in salary also implies that organizations are paying more to find, hire, and retain employees — particularly in critical, high-demand areas. The higher-paying salaried positions for 2021 were in cloud, risk management, security, and IT architecture and design.



# CERTIFICATIONS

IT professionals were honing their skills or developing new ones in 2021. Ninety-two percent reported holding at least one certification — up 5% over the previous year with Latin America and EMEA leading that trend. Increases in salary, new job offers, and overall improvements in the quality of assigned work were cited as benefits that are a direct result of additional training.

The survey results indicate that certifications deliver value to both organizations and employees. Certification is an important vehicle to validate one's knowledge and skills in a specific domain. Nearly half of those surveyed saw an improvement in their work post-certification. Almost as many reported feeling more engaged in their work and/or faster at performing their jobs.

In the United States and Canada, Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect is the top earning certification (\$160,961 in 2021) for a third straight year. The top five highest salaries by certification are: Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect, Google Certified Professional Data Engineer, AWS Certified Solutions Architect — Associate, Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC), and Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP).



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IT DECISION-MAKER INSIGHTS

Across the globe, IT decision-makers report heavy workloads and gaps in IT staff skills as the biggest issues they face. In fact, in 2021, 76% of IT decision-makers worldwide reported experiencing skills gaps. While there is no single explanation for this, the majority of decision-makers believe that the rate of technological change is outpacing skills development.

Increases in stress, project duration, and operating costs, as well as decreased quality and ability to meet business objectives, are the unfortunate consequences. Over-burdened staff don't have time to gain valuable skills through training and certifications. And, more often than not, IT budgets, which were significantly cut in 2021, don't allow for additional skill building.

There's some good news, however. IT departments are investing in key areas like cybersecurity and cloud computing. Coincidentally, these are the two most difficult hiring areas. This is important to note because investing in employee development can close skills gaps in key areas and help retain hard-to-replace talent.

Nine out of ten managers have a plan in place to address the skills gap, and over 50% believe the answer is training existing staff. IT staff are in favor of this plan, as they crave learning and development for personal growth — and if they're not getting it from their current employer, they'll move on.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For the third year in a row, more than half of IT professionals reported that a lack of learning and development is the main reason for changing employers. The number one reason (74%) given for why IT professionals want to train is to build new skills. Half of the survey respondents who trained for certification found the quality of their work improved and 32% felt they were more engaged in their work.

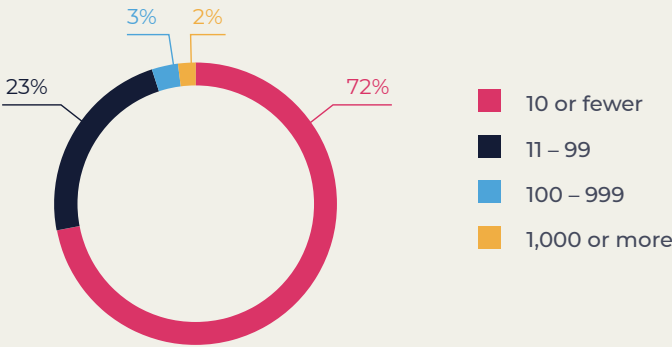
Clearly, organizations need to invest in the professional growth of their IT departments before it's too late.

Our survey showed that IT professionals prefer a more structured approach to skill development (66%) compared to a less formal methodology. Worldwide, we found that over the last 12 months, the majority of IT professionals actively participated in web-based, on-demand training sessions (73%).

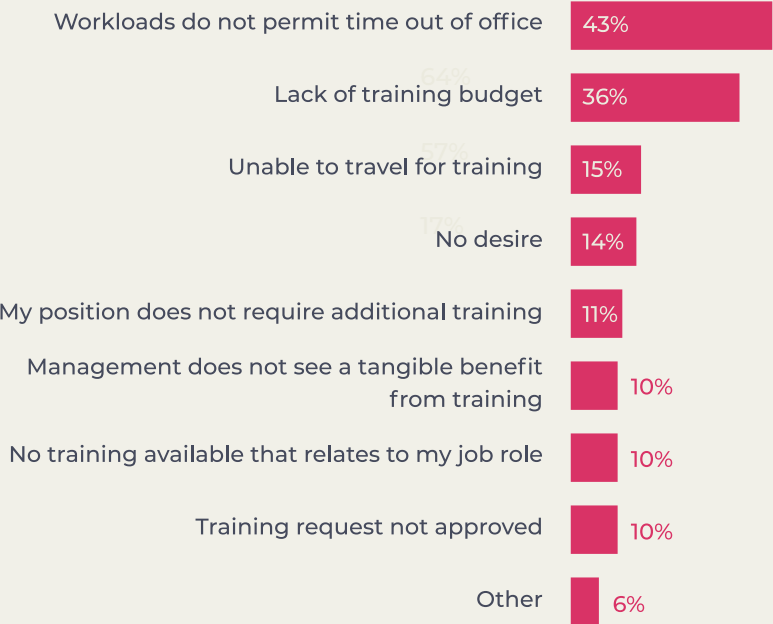
Formal training isn't an option for all of our respondents. Thirty-seven percent of IT decision-makers report their organization does not provide employees formal training to keep their skills up-to-date. Consequently, employees have to informally learn new skills to help the organization achieve its goals.

The top five informal learning resources used globally in the last 12 months were: webinars; researching a topic online; books, textbooks, manuals; downloading white papers/technical guides; attending seminars, luncheons, or conferences.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES SUPPORTED



TRAINING INHIBITORS



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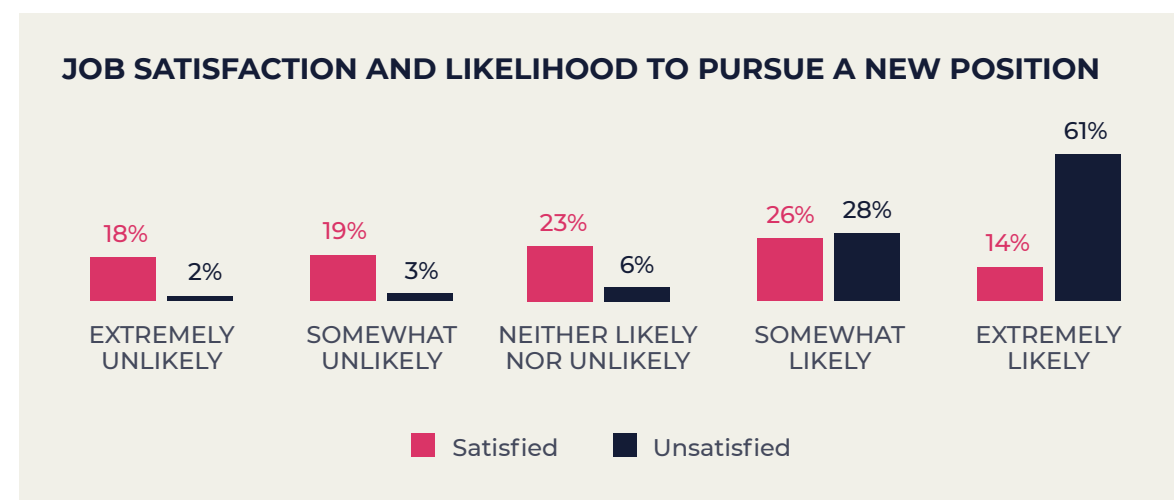
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# JOB SATISFACTION

Sixty percent of IT professionals who are satisfied in their jobs want to stay in their current positions. However, the other side of that equation is that 89% of unsatisfied employees seek out new opportunities, and the reasons for leaving are not all income-based. Over 50% of job seekers cite opportunities for growth and development as the main driver for changing employers or job roles.

The vast majority of IT professionals are feeling secure in their jobs, and layoffs remain low compared to other industries. They are not, however, feeling good about their workload. Managing workload is the number one challenge for 36% of the respondents. Lack of career development and growth opportunities is the second reason given, which ties back to the number one reason for changing jobs.



# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Forty-two percent of IT decision-makers report difficulty meeting quality objectives and 36% report decreased ability to meet business objectives. Additionally, [according to IDC](#), “By 2022, the financial impact of the IT skills gap will grow to \$775 billion worldwide.” Quite simply, delays are costing money<sup>2</sup>.

A culture of learning needs to be in place — sooner rather than later. Without it, IT professionals will continue dealing with cumbersome workloads because talent retention is a problem and qualified candidates can’t be found or aren’t affordable.

Organizations need to take a hard look at skills gaps and recognize that the primary way to combat the labor shortage and close deficiencies is through continuously upskilling employees. They need to invest in their people.

A training budget is one of the most strategic investments an organization can — and must — make. This unites the employee and the organization to identify, manage, and close skills gaps. When this happens, employees feel valued, salaries increase, and recruiting and retaining employees becomes easier. Additionally, productivity, morale, and innovation increase, organizational goals are achieved, and revenue grows.

The key takeaway for IT is that learning is an all-around win.



<sup>2</sup> IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Services 2020 Predictions, Doc # US44800319, October 2019



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# REALIZING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF EMPLOYEES

The desire to continuously innovate has kept Canon at the forefront of imaging excellence throughout its 85-year history. From cameras to commercial printers, and business consultancy to healthcare technologies, Canon enriches lives and businesses through imaging innovation. And they owe much of that innovation to their continued commitment to skilling.

Employing over 13,500 people across the EMEA region, Canon's Kyosei corporate philosophy, 'living and working together for the common good,' is a philosophy the company extends to its employees. Canon fosters an empowered culture, while supporting flexible working, career development, and access to learning the future-fit digital skills required to drive innovation and transformation.

Gerard Pieterse, Director Learning & Development, spearheads Canon EMEA's ambition to create a self-development and learning culture throughout the entire company. He has this to say: "Ultimately, working with Skillsoft is about realizing the full potential of our employees."

Canon's objectives include:

- Ensure full integration of Percipio with the Canon Development Hub
- Provide easy access to relevant expert knowledge and experiences
- Deliver a best-in-class user experience
- Increase involvement of leaders and managers
- Deliver learning in a collaborative way
- Maximize the return on human capital employed
- Measure ROI

Today, with a huge range of curated channels mapped to critical competencies, and the capability to assign learning paths to specific teams, Percipio is enabling Canon to further expand self-directed learning, with over 5,600 learners to date accessing Percipio across over 6,000 channels. By using an organizational Maturity Index, the L&D team can track and assess the development of their learning culture, and map positive trends towards their goals.

"With Percipio available via MS teams, we have created a positive view on virtual learning," says Gerard. "We can now go to the next level by integrating the management and leadership offering in our Management Development Program to keep our programs up to date ... Together, we learn more."



"The power of Percipio became even more clear during the Coronavirus crisis. My passion is really the success of our learners. Enabling people to learn and to develop themselves, to get the best out of themselves. Like many other companies, we were doing that in a traditional way, with face-to-face trainings and live events. We never thought that we were able to do that virtually. To offer our team the best expert learning available, any time, at any place."

**GERARD PIETERSE**  
**DIRECTOR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT,**  
**CANON EMEA**

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# GUIDE TO OVERCOMING SKILLS GAPS



- Understand organizational goals
- Identify skills required to meet those goals
- Audit current skills to identify what you're missing

- Reengineer job postings to focus on specific measurable skills (not years of experience)
- Tap into new applicant pools and underrepresented groups

- Focus learning program and curriculum on needed skills
- Seek out effective, multimodal learning options for better retention, application

- Invest in skill-centered learning and development
- Build and embrace a culture of continuous learning
- Recognize and reward learning

- Formalize one-to-one mentoring and coaching programs
- Expand programs to include participants at every level
- Provide highly personalized guidance and feedback

- Invest in robust talent development so employees feel valued (and valuable)
- Promote from within whenever possible
- Measure employee satisfaction frequently and adjust programs as needed

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# PERSPECTIVE

## CUSHING ANDERSON

Program Vice President, IT Education and Certification, IDC



## CUSHING ANDERSON

Responsible for managing the research agenda, field research, and custom research projects for IDC's Business Consulting, and IT Education and Certification research programs. Mr. Anderson's research coverage ranges from the value business consulting firms deliver to their clients to the selection criteria used when selecting transformation training for the IT organization. He conducts regular research on the views and experiences of enterprises with global consulting firms. And he frequently evaluates the impact of various types of training and certification have on IT organizational performance.

After such a busy year (maybe two, who can keep count), learning and development has changed as much as any other business operation. Tools and processes continue to increasingly reflect a focus on how learners learn, on removing friction and inconvenience from learning while expanding and better curating learning experiences to improve learners' outcomes.

I'm going to focus on four trends that I think will be very influential to learning and development organizations, and learners themselves, in the next year:

- Action-oriented learning
- Expanded Access to Learning
- Learning Paths
- Increased use of Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT)

## ACTION-ORIENTED LEARNING

The cloud is everywhere, and seems to affect practically everything: smart elevators, parking lots, driverless cars and drone taxis, farming and managing powerplants. It impacts how we shop, watch TV, monitor our health, pay our bills, and even forecast weather. One more thing we can thank the cloud for: the increased use of labs and simulated environments.

Learning leaders and instructional designers have always known that providing learners with an opportunity to practice what they learn can dramatically increase retention and application. Similarly, having learners work on projects — either meaningful, real-world projects or high-fidelity simulations — can give them confidence in their knowledge, and increase the speed with which they apply their new skill to the job.

This is never truer than when learning a new technology skill. The gold-standard approach has been to give the learner real-time access to the technology and walk them through what they need to do for their jobs. But in many cases, giving learners access to a technology or access to a new piece of hardware is impractical. Training companies and educational institutions haven't been able to afford the equipment or the spare licenses that sit idle between classes.

But the cloud has two features that make accessing new technology less expensive:

- It can virtualize a solution, meaning it can share a fully functioning copy of a piece of hardware or software without actually having a new or unique copy of that solution.
- And it can fractionalize the cost of that access to reflect just the time the virtual copy is being used.



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With those features, training companies have increasingly wrapped instruction, tools, and tips around these virtualized copies to give students an immersive learning experience that more closely resembles actual work: the problems, the tools, the time constraints that they'll face on the job. This is a big win for learners.

Still not mainstream, but increasingly available, are simulations and action learning for non-tech skills. These support learning interpersonal skills, like interviewing, giving feedback, and selling. Some learning providers are building meaningful projects into their instruction, so after a course is complete, learners have something useful to take back to their jobs. I've seen courses that help learners develop a product launch plan, a marketing campaign idea, or a learning evaluation strategy. In the parlance of adult learning theory, the increased use of "action learning" is a great trend that will positively impact learners' ability to leverage and apply new skills.

## EXPANDED ACCESS TO LEARNING

Another benefit of the cloud is what some people are calling the "Netflixification" of learning. The approach is to make broad libraries of content available to the broadest set of employees at a relatively low-cost subscription fee. And then, in addition to assigning courses for specific organizational objectives, the organization encourages employees to choose the content they want to consume. This on-demand learning content may help achieve specific objectives, or it might prepare employees for promotion or a career change, or even a more personal pursuit, like learning a new language.

But these programs still need to demonstrate some specific organizational benefits in order to be sustained. When organizations consider making content available, they typically have specific objectives they hope to achieve. Each of these outcomes are influenced by a range of factors, but broad access (and consumption) to learning may be a valuable contributor.

## LEARNING PATHS

Aside from the social awkwardness, bad hair days, and trying to finish *Wuthering Heights* before the third period quiz, going to high school or college now seems easy. After selecting a major in college or electives in high school, there was a prescribed set of courses you had to take in order to graduate. Complete the courses and you believed you were ready for the next step.

At work, professional development is more uncertain, especially when an individual learner has access to a full smorgasbord of content.

Some employees will wait for their supervisor to sign them up for class. More self-motivated learners might be clear about what they want to do — "I want a job in marketing analytics," or to "Become an application developer," or "A better manager" — but they don't know how to prepare for it. They look at all the course options and are unsure what to do, what would help them be successful in the new role, or best demonstrate their suitability for a position to a hiring manager or a candidate screening bot. Preset learning paths or learning journeys present a specific set and sequence of classes that prepare the learner for a new role.

Preset learning journeys have become more sophisticated. Curated by experts and considering both skills that lead to success and the kinds of skills that hiring managers (and bots) are looking for, modern learning journeys can also adapt the prescribed content to what the learner already knows. They can present each learner with a customized set of classes or experiences designed to help them reach their goals more effectively. Because journeys build on and add to what the learner already knows, they increase performance and readiness for new positions or roles.

As organizations take greater advantage of more modern learning journeys, their learners may end up taking fewer courses — but the results are employees that have more value to the enterprise.



What should I take to be ready for promotion, or to be qualified to start a new career or my dream job?

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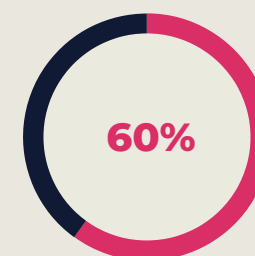
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# INCREASED USE OF VIRTUAL INSTRUCTOR-LED TRAINING

The pandemic has accelerated what is likely to be a permanent shift in delivery modalities away from classroom training toward virtual instructor-led training (VILT). Since even before Socrates and Plato debated philosophy, students and teachers were almost always in the same place, at the same time. With the invention of books, then the radio, then television, then video, there has been an ongoing push by learners, instructors, schools, and training companies to scale instruction and make learning more accessible to dispersed students through distance learning. Eventually, personal computers, the Internet and digital learning seemed to promise even greater democratization.

During the pandemic, most classroom learning was canceled. But learners in schools and companies still needed instruction — and VILT became the go-to option, sometimes to great success, sometimes not. One of the lasting changes to learning at all levels will be the broad use of VILT, and less frequent but more targeted use of classroom-based instruction. It's likely that up to 60% of employer-sponsored training will remain online. Corporate learners and learning organizations have found that for classes that are one to five hours long, VILT is convenient and effective. Online multi-day experiences are still considered a slog, but learners and their employers are going to turn to VILT experiences even for multi-day experiences.



Employer-sponsored training will remain online after the pandemic because it's proven to be more convenient and effective

## LET'S COMBINE THOSE TRENDS

In her book *Bossypants*, Tina Fey shared a very useful maxim: "The second rule of improvisation is not only to say yes, but YES, AND." While she was describing improv, she was also describing how to be a good colleague and how to be a good partner in general. And that maxim applies to learning and development trends, too.

If we combine the trends I've just discussed, I think we end up with a pretty impressive opportunity for organizations in 2022.





SECTION II

# 2021 AND THE ACCELERATION OF THE **HYBRID** **WORKFORCE**





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# THE FUTURE OF WORK

It's no surprise that the world changed as a result of COVID-19. One of the most noticeable transformations was the way people work. Forced to close doors while functioning at full capacity, companies and their workers set up remote "offices" and adapted to the new normal.

What started in crisis mode is now the business model for many enterprises. While some workers have returned or will return to offices, most work in a new hybrid capacity — and this creates an equal supply of challenges, opportunities, and adjustments.

The days of clocking in five days a week, heading to your workspace, and staying there for the next eight-plus hours is officially over for many of us. Our workplaces are no longer static cubicles. Meetings aren't held around long conference room tables. And working face-to-face isn't necessary for successful collaboration.

Organizations across the globe are freeing themselves of physical space as workforces remain 100% remote or have transitioned to a hybrid version of in-office and at-home workdays. The good news is that team-based collaborative learning experiences are working.

While many businesses see real benefits to this new work mode, there are challenges. One of the issues is how do businesses create a hybrid learning model that keeps people connected and skills up-to-date.

Virtual collaboration isn't entirely new. Enterprises with multiple geographically diverse offices have been doing it long before the pandemic. But the challenge in shifting from "some remote work" to "all remote work" is how to evolve and scale quickly, as well as how to keep employees engaged with tasks and team members — all while maintaining productivity.

Many companies just weren't able to react as fast and effectively as their businesses demanded. The real challenge came in keeping employees aligned with one another and with workflow in real time while having to upskill and reskill remote workforces.

Companies are now looking at increased threats from external forces such as cybersecurity risks, data privacy risks, compliance issues, and health risks. But they're also facing internal challenges with lack of time for learning, decreased learning budgets, choosing the right learning technology, and aligning learning activities with business goals.

It's a changing world. Skills need to be current and forward-moving in order to keep up with the pace. Businesses that can't skill, reskill, and upskill will fall behind.

In times of flux, agility, flexibility, and reliability are what matter most. Companies need to adapt with ever-evolving skillsets. Building competencies and filling skills gaps need to be at the forefront of all plans moving forward.

It's clear that companies that thrive will adapt seamlessly to the next new change. Companies that remain stagnant in how they handle learning processes and technologies will find that their businesses will also remain woefully immobile.

In a recent survey commissioned from Brandon Hall Group

91%

Respondents note that team-based collaborative learning experiences allow employees to share knowledge and ideas

84%

See enhanced cohesion among teammates and colleagues

71%

See increased retention of information

More than half of the respondents believe their employees' jobs will evolve as they are tasked with managing remote teams and dealing with digital transformation and resiliency in the workforce.

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# DRIVING DEEPER KNOWLEDGE — AND GREATER ROI



Black Knight, Inc. is a premier provider of software, data and analytics supporting the mortgage and home equity loan lifecycle. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, technology in the mortgage industry was rapidly advancing. As lenders and servicers continue to face an increasingly complex and regulated industry, they rely on Black Knight to help them address challenges and navigate an ever-changing landscape. Having deep knowledge of products and services that can help lenders and servicers solve industry issues is mission-critical for Black Knight and its employees.

To prepare its workforce for the hybrid future of work, Black Knight turned to Skillsoft to help fulfill its vision for a data-driven learning and development program that could uncover skills gaps in real-time, empower employees to become experts in critical fields, and foster a learning culture of growth and innovation across the organization.

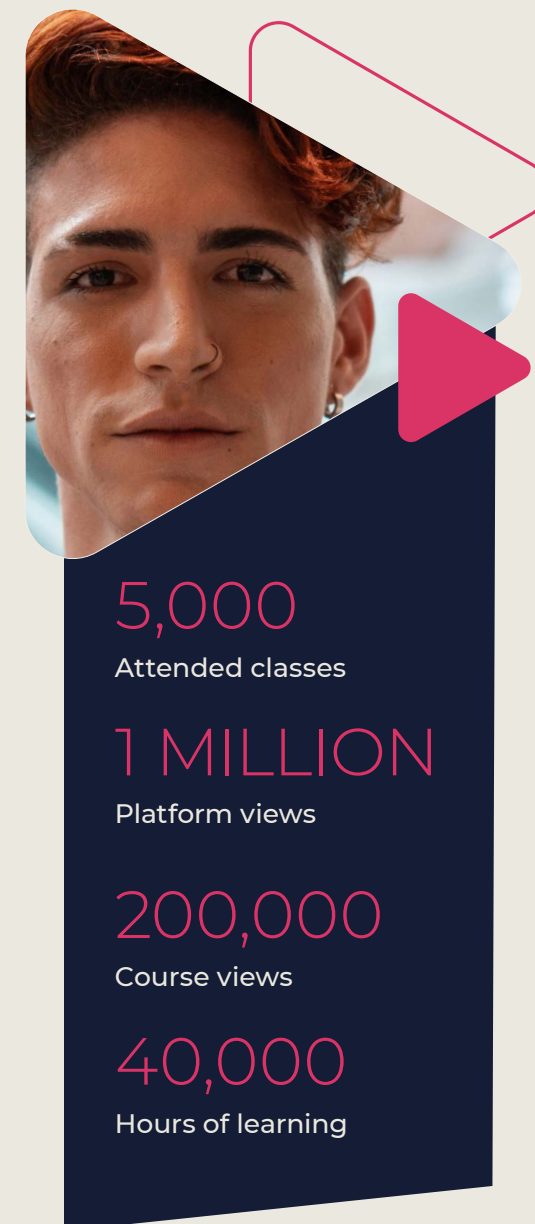
To support its employees' continuous learning and development, Black Knight offers a number of opportunities including, Black Knight University, an internal program providing a variety of relevant and engaging course topics related to professional growth, industry and Black Knight products. This is coupled Percipio, which is immediately granted to all employees once they begin working at Black Knight, as well as a robust new-hire journey, custom online training programs, leadership programs, expert-led town halls and over 100 virtual hands-on labs where employees can build their skills and then test for technical certifications — all while working remotely.

For Black Knight, investing in the development of its people has been a remarkable success: Their learning program has helped to improve the organization's employee retention, reducing turnover for top talent high performers from 4.5% to under 2% within one year. Black Knight supported employees new to their industry with a comprehensive Mortgage 101 series with introductions to all aspects of the mortgage process and 5-minute overview videos for all its products. To further support its 750 new employees in 2021, Black Knight created a 12-week New Hire journey that enabled the gradual education of employees to the Black Knight culture and provide support during the critical first 90 days while partnered with a buddy.

In 2021 alone, the benefit-to-cost ratio for Black Knight's learning program was a return of \$18 for every dollar invested in Skillsoft Percipio, and the total ROI benefit was more than \$3.7 million. Key technical skills gaps were filled with over 500 completed agile certifications, and employees demonstrated over 90% tracked pass rate on certification preparation tracks.

And the program continues to grow. In 2021, over 5,000 Black Knight employees attended classes. And on Percipio, Black Knight has seen over one million platform views, more than 200,000 course views and almost 40,000 hours of learning completed. With over 90% of employees to date voluntarily accessing non-required learning, we'd say the future of learning looks bright at Black Knight.

We salute Black Knight for its vision and commitment to the success of its clients — and its biggest asset, the people.





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# ADDRESSING THE PINK PANDEMIC

Virtually every person on Earth was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many continue to be affected personally and professionally — especially women. Aptly coined the “Pink Pandemic,” this shared experience proved to be a devastating loss to women who, just months before the pandemic hit, held more jobs in the U.S. than men.

COVID-19 changed everything.

Female-dominated businesses, like hospitality and retail, took a nosedive. Women, who typically earn less than their male counterparts, had to take time away from their work, leave jobs to care for families, or combine childrearing with professional responsibilities, while seeing fewer raises and promotions than men.

But women are resilient. Today they are showing a fresh perspective, energy, and dedication to ensure they rebound and regain influence, power, and capital. They’re doing this through the power of learning and development as a vehicle of advancement and empowerment.

By acting now, we have the ability to overcome gender biases. In return the world becomes measurably stronger, healthier, more secure and successful when women have equal opportunity.

There are three key pillars on which we can help women take back their hard-fought ground:

- Female Empowerment
- Effective Allyship
- Organizational Responsibility

Each pillar can support women, advance them in the workplace and help regain the ground we’ve lost to the pandemic.



# 90%

Increase in  
consumption of  
learning content  
designed to help  
women thrive in  
the workplace.





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How can women help themselves regain power and influence?

- **Connection** — The value of a support system is more vital than ever.
- **Competency** — Seek out and attain in-demand skills.
- **Community** — Build a village of support.

How can allies help women enact real change?

- **Awareness** — Recognize bias where it exists.
- **Advocacy** — Intentionally enable women.
- **Action** — Promote genuine change by taking action.

What can organizations do to create and sustain gender equity?

- **Empowerment** — Ensure power structures are enabling diversity.
- **Enablement** — Invest in upskilling, reskilling, and developing women
- **Engagement** — Nourish a culture that addresses women's needs.

When it comes to recovering from the Pink Pandemic and building stronger organizations going forward, our success depends on our alignment with each other.

**FOR MORE ABOUT THE PINK PANDEMIC, READ THE SKILLSOFT 360 REPORT**

**FOR ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS, LISTEN TO OUR 3-PART PODCAST WOMEN IN EXODUS**

**TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN IGNITE MEANINGFUL CHANGE, TAKE THE 5-PART COURSE: THE PINK PANDEMIC: A RECOVERY PLAN FOR WOMEN, ALLIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS**



## WOMEN AND LEARNING

2021 saw increases in curricula supporting women

+13%

**Women in Leadership: Mastering Key Leadership Competencies**

+20%

**Women in Leadership: Building Your Infrastructure for Leadership**

+90%

**Leadership Insights: Developing Women Leaders**



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# PERSPECTIVE

## A CONVERSATION WITH KRISTY WALLACE

CEO, Ellevate Network



### Tell us about the work you're doing now at Ellevate Network.

Our work has changed so much in many ways but stays central to what we're all about — building a community of women who come together to support one another, making space for real conversations that tackle the challenges we're facing every day in business and in our lives, and gaining inspiration and diversity of perspective.

When we look at what's happened over the past months, we're seeing the nature of how we build connections and relationships has changed. Many of us are feeling a bit overwhelmed with the virtual experience and not really making the depth of connection.

I'm so unbelievably proud of Ellevate and our community because we're doing the exact opposite. We're coming together on a weekly basis for our Roundtables, which are safe spaces to talk honestly about what's going on at work. I've seen firsthand at these Roundtables how powerful it is to talk things out with peers — both to hear that you're not alone and to crowdsource new ideas.

### So many women have lost jobs or had had to leave the workforce because they are caregivers. The loss of a job means a loss of income, but doesn't it also mean a loss of community?

It absolutely does. That community, having a network, is so important. If you're thinking about how to set boundaries — which is top of mind for so many, but particularly for many caregivers who are navigating this — you can learn a lot from your peers, feel validated, and feel a little bit less alone. But without that community behind you, it's easy to feel lost.

This is where we come in with Squads, which take Roundtables to that next level. In Squads, women come together for 12 weeks with the same group to really dig deep into new ideas, different perspectives, and next steps to tackle whatever hurdle they're facing. We've heard from so many people after finishing a Squads cycle about how important it was to have people to keep them accountable to their goals, and who could help them find answers to the big questions.

### What sort of changes have you seen as your programs evolved?

At Ellevate, we're seeing women who are questioning what's next or they're looking to start a business, switch industries, or grow in their current career, but don't know how to take that next step or what to do. There are all of these questions that are coming up and we want to create that space where you can have those conversations and you can get advice and support. You can have someone say, "You want to get into technology and this is specifically the area that I think you would excel. Let me give you advice and help you to clarify what that is."



### KRISTY WALLACE

CEO of Ellevate Network, and is responsible for executing Ellevate Network's mission of changing the culture of business from the inside out by providing professional women with a supportive community to lean on and learn from. She directs the Network's staff, is responsible for business growth and strategy, and works closely with Ellevate's Chapter Leaders, Business Partners, and Champions to further Ellevate's impact. Kristy is host of the Ellevate Podcast: *Conversations with Women Changing the Face of Business* and is also a regular speaker and thought leader on Leadership, Diversity, Social Entrepreneurship, Networking, and Entrepreneurialism. Most recently, Kristy was recognized as a Woman of Influence by the New York Business Journal.

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**Learning plays such an important role in helping women re-skill and reenter the workforce. It can help lift women up, rebound, and regain influence, power, and capital.**

Absolutely. Through learning, women are able to really build that expertise, to learn and to gain those skills that lead to opportunity. That's true success. So, women are able to identify what it is that they want to do by tapping into expertise and advice, and then leverage learning tools and resources to build their skills and make that dream a reality. That is the perfect pairing.

### **Tell us about the EllevestHER Forward Fellowship Program.**

When you're a recipient of the EllevestHER Forward Fellowship, you are part of a community of 250,000 women who are there to support you. You'll get access to two cycles of Squads and a year's worth of weekly Roundtables, workshops and networking events with your local community, and Ellevest's annual Mobilize Women Summit.

If you've lost your job due to COVID-19, you'll now have a network that's invested in helping you make your dreams a reality. The EllevestHER Forward Fellowship is about a year of women really making the time to invest in themselves to get what they need to succeed. It allows them to make space every week to ensure that they're moving forward and continuing to find that success, that support, and that opportunity.

**We couldn't be more excited to move forward with our new partnership with Ellevest Network. It's our collective responsibility to build new pathways to a more equitable future for all.**



## **SPONSORING THE ELLEVESTHER FELLOWSHIP**

Over the past year, Skillsoft has elevated the topic of the Pink Pandemic, and created unique learning curricula that focus on how we can help women move forward.

That's why we're proud to sponsor Ellevest Network's 2022 EllevestHER Forward Fellowship program, a fund designed to alleviate the economic burden of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and support their journey back to the workplace.

Two-hundred-fifty selected fellows will gain access to Ellevest's programs; two 12-week online mentoring Squads; weekly Roundtables; Ellevest's annual Mobilize Women Summit; and more. And all fellows will receive access to Skillsoft's Percipio learning platform and its vast catalog of learning resources.



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# SKILLSOFT 2021 WOMEN IN TECH REPORT

The tech field is exploding with new opportunities, challenges, and innovations as the world experiences a massive digital transformation, accelerated by COVID-19. Every company, regardless of industry, is looking for new ways to work, produce, partner, and serve customers in a digital world.

It's an exciting time, but it's also plagued by critical issues. The new normal has exponentially increased an existing tech skills gap. Technology simply evolves too fast, and it's impossible to foresee and fill for the competencies that will be needed tomorrow. In fact, filling roles has become one of the most critical issues for everyone from HR manager to CEO.

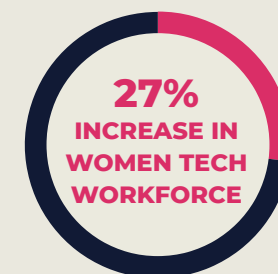
And that's why women in tech are such a valuable — if as yet untapped — resource.

Women have long been underrepresented and undervalued in tech. But organizations are starting to recognize their potential contribution. In the past 50 years, women have grown from 7% of the tech workforce to 27%. It's not rapid-fire acceleration, but there is forward movement.

Hoping to illuminate areas for meaningful change, we examined the current state of women in tech careers, how they feel about their challenges and opportunities, and what they need to succeed. **The Skillsoft 2021 Women in Tech Report** is a first-of-its-kind study.

We gathered relevant and timely data from 1,100 women surveyed in the United States, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom. The report offers insight into the state of women working in tech, as well as their current barriers to inclusion, and opportunities for advancement. It also identifies solutions to help empower women in tech, and promote meaningful gender diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Seventy percent of the women surveyed report that men outnumber them at work at ratios of 2-to-1 or greater. So, do women in tech have different needs or wants than men? Yes and no. The answer isn't so simple.



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GENDER IMBALANCE

Just like their male counterparts, women want professional development and training. In fact, 86% of the women surveyed ranked this as very important or extremely important — more so than employer-sponsored childcare or a bigger paycheck. Professional development and training are seen as a means to a bigger payoff in the long run. With increased skills, women are able to advance their careers, collect a bigger salary, and create more opportunities for themselves and their families.

But women differ from men when it comes to equity in salaries. 38% of the women surveyed in this study cite earning equitable compensation as a leading challenge. This is followed by a lack of work-life balance and lack of overall equity with male counterparts.

CERTIFICATIONS

Training and certifications are seen by many as a potential solution. The majority of women surveyed felt that certifications led to more responsibility. 34% reported earning a raise with advanced training and 32% earned a promotion. 19% took their certifications and landed new jobs in different organizations.

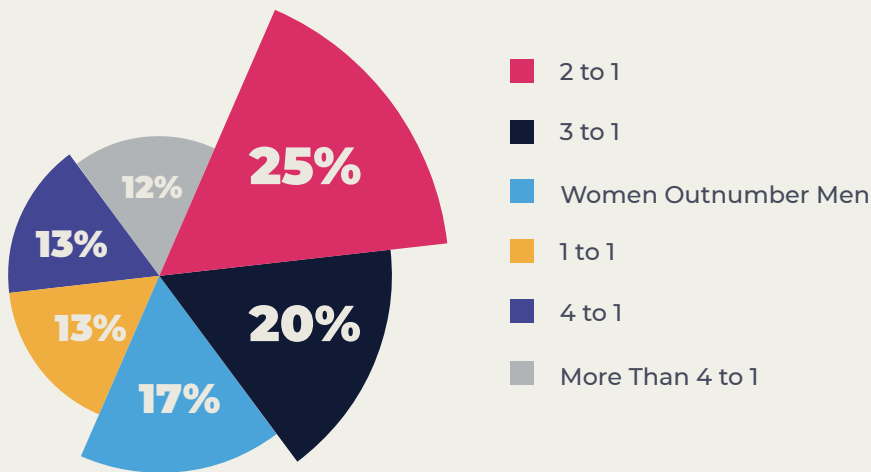
Project management led the way for certification for women in tech, although business analysis and cybersecurity are their leading areas of interest. This correlates with recent data from Skillsoft’s Global Knowledge 2021 IT Skills and Salary Report. In that report, more than 9,300 IT professionals ranked cybersecurity as highest in salary and the top investment area.

However, only 22% and 18% of women in tech hold certifications in these areas. This creates a great opportunity for women to fill crucial shortages and skills gaps — and put themselves on the path to higher-paying jobs. It also creates opportunities to dispel gender-related skepticism in the workplace and build credibility, an ongoing concern for many of the women we surveyed.

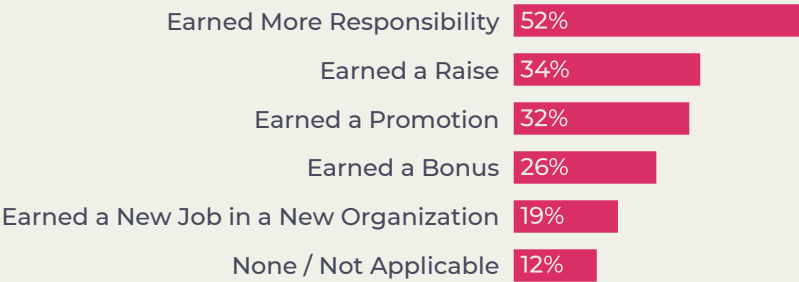
OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

The good news is that, overall, women in tech are satisfied with their chosen careers. Forty-seven percent of our respondents in North America and Europe report that they are somewhat satisfied and 44% say they are extremely satisfied. The major contributing factor to their satisfaction level is perceived job security.

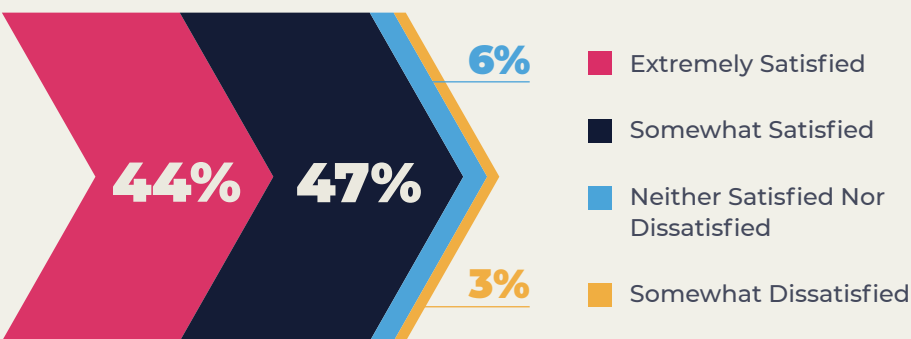
RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN



HOW HAS BEING CERTIFIED HELPED YOU ADVANCE YOUR TECH-RELATED CAREER?



OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION



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IMPORTANT ISSUES /CHALLENGES

The survey uncovered some regional differences. Women in the United States and Canada shared the most dissatisfaction with their pay and work-life balance. However, in the United Kingdom and France, the greatest areas of dissatisfaction were with employer benefits and pay.

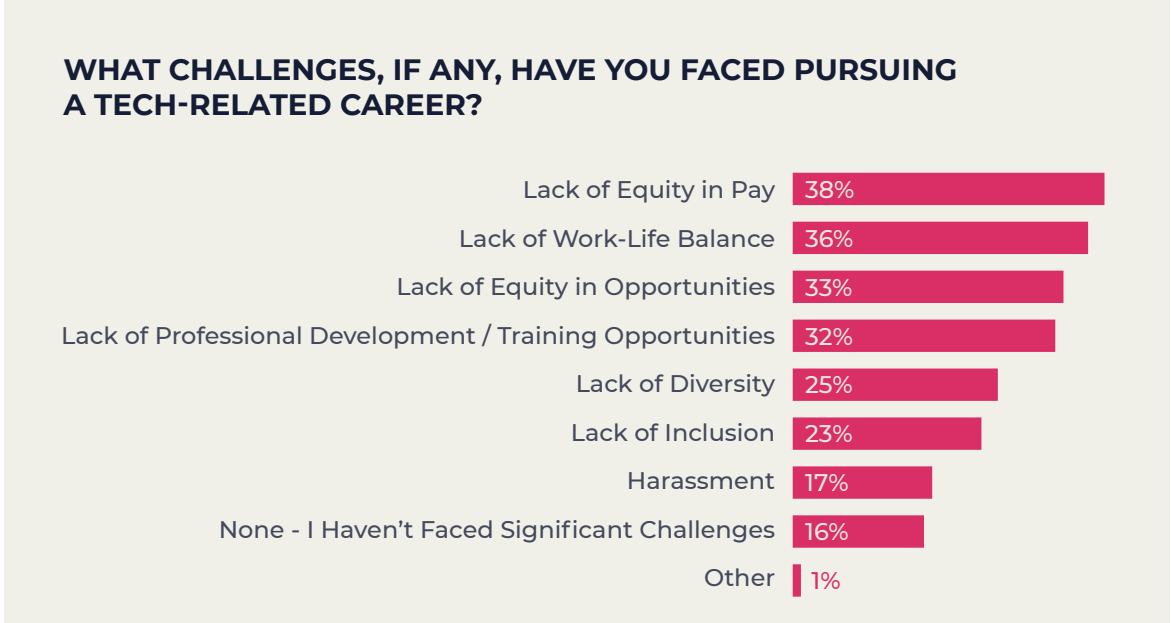
When it comes to employee benefits, women also differ slightly based on location. In the United States, women view health insurance as the number one employee benefit. Childcare ranked at the bottom in importance to American women. Canadian women are looking for health insurance, paid time off, and flexible working hours. In the United Kingdom, women want professional training and flexible hours, as well as remote work opportunities and maternity leave. French women want paid time off, health insurance, and professional development.

The geographic differences may be attributed to what women in tech are currently getting and what they’re not. For example, most American women don’t get paid childcare as a benefit, so likely don’t even view it as a viable option.

As mentioned earlier, equity is a big issue for women in tech — and working women in general. Consider the findings of a study done by Qualtrics and The Boardlist. They found that in the United States during the pandemic, 34% of men working remotely with children at home received a promotion, versus 9% of women in the same situation. Twenty-six percent of men with children at home said they received a pay raise while working remotely, compared to 13% of women with children at home. In Europe, women lost jobs four times more often than men.

Women in IT also feel that they have to work much harder than male coworkers to gain respect and many have experienced skepticism or dismissiveness from male peers. According to the [Skillsoft Global Knowledge 2021 Skills and Salary Report](#), the highest percentage of men in leadership roles have 15-20 years of experience, while the highest percentage of women have 26 or more years on the job.

Clearly there is work to be done when it comes to gender equity.



ENCOURAGEMENT/ADVICE

Let’s take a look at some of the positive situations that women are facing. The average salary for a female tech professional is \$91,373, which is an 8% increase year-over-year.

Further, a large number of female participants work in auditing and cybersecurity, while a higher percentage of the men work in infrastructure, networking, and communications. The male-dominated fields have an average salary 27% less than auditing/compliance and 32% less than cybersecurity.

More encouraging news is that women, more so than men, take the initiative to mentor/coach other women. They want more women in the field, and they want them to succeed. The number one way they see this happening is through professional development and training.

Developing talent — including women — and lessening the skills gap is a win-win. Advanced training leads to improved productivity and resolution times, better onboarding, increased confidence, and a decrease in skills gaps.

Strong, empowered women are positioned to break through barriers. More organizations must address current disparities if they hope to be prepared for the future.

DOWNLOAD THE SKILLSOFT  
2021 WOMEN IN TECH REPORT



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# CLOSING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH WOMEN IN ACTION™

As a leading global climate solutions innovator, Trane Technologies is committed to taking bold action to do what's right and create a better planet for all. Recently named to Forbes list of the World's Best Employers, the company has curated a culture that is uplifting and engaging, with diverse and inclusive practices that enable opportunity for all.

Trane Technologies has been committed to advancing diversity and inclusion since 2010. They've accelerated their progress by joining business coalitions that share their passion for closing the gender and racial equality gap including Paradigm4Parity and CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion.

Even though 21.7% of leadership positions in the company were held by women in 2020 — 2x the average for S&P 1500 companies — Trane Technologies knew there was more work to be done. And, with in-person learning on hold indefinitely, it had to be done differently. In September of 2020, Cherie Hicks, Trane Technologies' Leadership Development Strategist, approached Skillsoft to expand Trane Technologies' Women in Action™ Leadership Development Program. In a voluntary, self-directed, remote learning journey (only one of several Learning and Development programs for women) 1,165 women have explored how to:

- Build a more competitive and well-rounded workforce by promoting more women and providing leadership support
- Overcome gender biases and build their personal leadership "brand"
- Boost confidence, manage perfectionism, and develop resilience
- Embody the power of "soft skills" like empathy, communication, and collaboration
- And much more

Short training lessons were easy to integrate into busy schedules, and monthly topics were structured to build leadership skills at all levels from emerging to senior.

In all, participants logged 4,565 learning hours and earned 1,130 sharable badges. According to Skillsoft's own Dr. Erika Schmidt, a member of our eLearning team who helped Trane Technologies develop the course, it wasn't only the numbers that were impressive: "The energy and excitement around learning this way was palpable. In fact, I was blown away."

Trane Technologies continues to refine and grow their learning programs to better align with the real-life needs of an increasingly hybrid workforce. Recently, we checked in with Cherie to gain a better understanding of how their first Women in Action™ Leadership training helped guide the way forward:

"I honestly think it was a total game changer for our employees — and our organization. When women change, everything around them changes for the better."

We couldn't agree more. We're proud to partner with Trane Technologies, as they continue to champion a healthier planet — and a more equitable workplace for all.



**"Great learning experience! I truly enjoyed learning more about emotional intelligence and critical thinking. Thanks for this learning opportunity!"**

**WOMEN IN ACTION™ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT**



**4,565**  
Learning hours

**1,130**  
Sharable badges earned



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# TEAM-BASED LEARNING RESEARCH

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED FOR SKILLSOFT BY BRANDON HALL GROUP

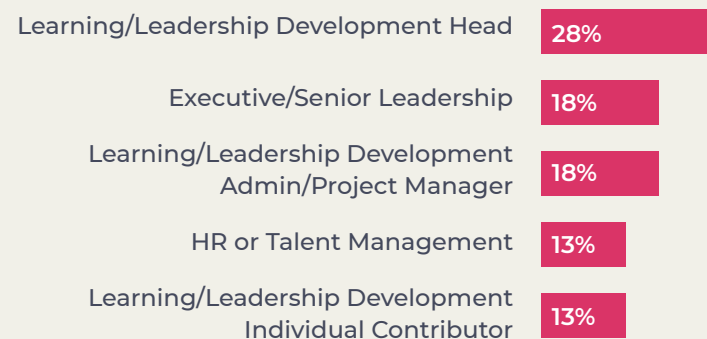
In Fall 2021, Skillsoft commissioned Brandon Hall Group to explore how organizations are approaching learning in a post-pandemic world. The resulting study, Exploring the Role of Team-Based Learning for a Hybrid, Post-Pandemic Workforce, included critical questions organizations must answer going forward.

Two main themes emerged. It became clear that L&D professionals need to enable digitally disburged learners to build, share, and apply skills together. And logistical hurdles must be overcome to empower workforces with future-fit skills.

The study included over 100 businesses of various sizes — 54% employed 100 to 4,999 employees; 46% classified themselves as large organizations with over 5,000 employees.

It was important to speak to a range of titles within these companies with a variety of responsibilities.

### THE TOP FIVE ROLES OF STUDY RESPONDENTS



Respondents agreed that the idea of “workplace” as a noun has changed dramatically in terms of how we work and learn. It’s no longer limited to a specific physical space. In the pandemic, we proved that in many cases, virtual collaboration can be just as effective as face-to-face. So, what’s next?

In the coming months, we’ll see a mix of employees who’ll return to the office full-time, continue working remotely, or seek a balance between the two. Now, we’ll not only get to witness how effective a hybrid mix of physical and digital coworking can be; we’ll also get to see how enterprises approach creating a hybrid learning model that can keep people connected from a skill-building perspective.



**Brandon Hall Group is the only professional development company that offers data, research, insights, and certification to Learning and Talent executives and organizations.**

**For nearly 30 years, Brandon Hall Group has empowered, recognized and certified excellence in organizations around the world influencing the development of over 10,000,000 employees and executives.**

**Brandon Hall Group delivers evidence-based insights in the areas of Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Diversity and Inclusion, Talent Acquisition and HR/Workforce Management for corporate organizations and HCM solution providers.**



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People have been working together via digital tools long before the pandemic created such a large population of remote workers. The challenges arrive, however, in developing a strategy for a future of work where the needs of the business are changing ever faster, and the dynamics of the workforce will always be in flux. Companies that have never had to deal with keeping employees in synch with one another will have to rapidly upskill and reskill a workforce in which synchronous engagements are scarce.

Organizations need a strategy that not only delivers the skills the business needs right now but is able to adjust and adapt to deliver future skills that have not yet been identified. This will require an agile approach to the people, processes, and technologies that deliver learning. Learning will have to do even more to adapt to the way people work.

As organizations seek to improve learning in a hybrid, post-pandemic environment, they must answer several critical questions, including:

- Do we have the ecosystem/infrastructure to create an effective learning environment for a hybrid workforce?
- Are we in a position to develop the skills the business will require in the future?
- Do we have the technology, content, skills, and competencies to create and deliver effective virtual instructor-led learning?
- Are we leveraging in-person instructor-led training properly to reflect today's need for a more blended approach?

## FIVE STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING IN A HYBRID, POST-PANDEMIC WORKFORCE

Develop virtual instructor-led programs with a focus on the learner and their learning environment. Simply re-purposing in-person ILT will not suffice. VILT requires different types of content, interactivity, and facilitation skills.



Leverage the collaboration and communication tools people are already using. Bringing learning into the workflow in today's environment requires learning to be accessible in places like Microsoft Teams, Webex, Zoom, and other tools.



Focus on developing a workforce that can be agile and thrive in a remote or hybrid environment. Leaders need more skill development in managing remote teams, and organizations must prioritize agility.



As organizations strive to keep people connected and engaged, ensure you develop learning programs where people can learn together, no matter where they're located.



Don't rush back into "ILT-as-usual" once conditions allow. Think about how the ILT experience fits into the new hybrid environment. Re-imagine the classroom itself and the experience it provides.



- The concept of the workplace has changed permanently
- Collaboration — and L&D — must be flexible enough for changing workforce paradigms
- Skilling strategy has to be highly effective today and agile enough to solve skilling challenges of the future



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# STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

Encore, formerly PSAV, has been creating transformative event experiences that connect and inspire for decades — of any size, at any venue, anywhere in the world. With a customer-first mindset and a hospitality focus, they offer an unmatched breadth of event production services to support their customers through every step in the event planning and management process.

In 2019, Encore celebrated a banner year of growth and revenue. And with more than 14,000 skilled professionals across 2,100 global locations, they had already begun to develop cohesive, branded digital learning and talent solutions that would get results — and recognize team members as the heart of their brand. Their innovative “Focus on You” Employee Value Proposition, that includes Encore University, featured five academies including over 10,000 learning activities, along with role-based skills training plans and corresponding Certifications.

When COVID-19 forced the events industry to completely reinvent their way of working, Encore was already ahead of the learning curve. Still, despite their own deep experience in hybrid events, Encore was forced to furlough the majority of their hourly team members as the pandemic struck, and their customers struggled to pivot to full-on virtual events. Those employees that remained needed to quickly upskill to meet the technical demands of a new day.

In a recent interview, Derek Blake, Encore Divisional Vice President, Global Learning & Development said, “Live events came to a screeching halt overnight in a way no one could have predicted. Hoping it would be a short-term thing, we decided to get as proactive as possible on the learning and development side. We accelerated a bunch of projects that were on our wish list that we could never get to while we were so busy. As business recovered and transformed in 2021, we executed a Return-to-Work initiative welcoming back over 4,000 Team Members.”

Developed in swift response to extraordinary times, their new initiatives were designed to support both customers and employees:

- **Presentation Stages™** offer safe, professional spaces around the world built for expert production and streaming of customer messages for hybrid or virtual events.
- **MeetSAFE™**, the company’s new health and safety protocols, lead the charge to create safe meeting guidelines with enhanced cleaning methods and physical distancing.
- Return to Work / New Hire Experience, leveraged cutting edge “initiative” functionality allowing Team Members easy access to impactful content to prepare them for a new Encore.
- Skills Certification on Encore’s own internal platforms empowers team members with career-building security.
- New Leadership Level 100 Certification based on “servant leadership” includes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion based on the Franklin Covey content.
- Their campaign for a change model, “Leading Through Uncertain Times” — along with a wellness campaign for Encore’s entire global work force — helps support personal and professional health.



**“It couldn’t have happened without the right partnerships in place. We’re fortunate to have partnered with Skillsoft. As we move forward, the culture of continuous learning has set us up for success with a strong team ready to tackle whatever comes next.”**

**DEREK BLAKE,  
ENCORE DIVISIONAL  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
GLOBAL LEARNING &  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## A CONVERSATION FEATURING KATY TYNAN

Principal Analyst, Forrester

FORRESTER



### KATY TYNAN

Works at the intersection of people and technology. With a strong focus on leadership and organizational development, Katy supports CIOs, CMOs, and chief human resources officers in their work to optimize customer experience through a highly engaged, inclusive workforce. The author of numerous books and publications, Katy has deep expertise in the practice of leadership at all levels of the organization. Her most recent book, *How Did I Not See This Coming? A New Manager's Guide to Avoiding Total Disaster*, was published by ATD Press in 2016. Katy helps Forrester clients build a science-based approach to delivering industry-leading employee experience.

Early in 2022, Skillsoft's Chief Learning Officer, Kristi Hummel, hosted "The Future of Work: Reimagining Digital Learning for the Modern Workforce," a fireside chat featuring guest speaker, Forrester's Katy Tynan. [You can watch the recorded webinar here.](#)

### When building a culture of learning, what is the single most important thing for organizations to invest in?

Katy: First let's remember that learning culture has two parts. One is how an organization promotes the growth and development of each individual in terms of their skills. The second is how an organization practices incremental innovation through their response to failure, and their ability to engage in smart risk-taking. With that in mind, the most important investment an organization can make is in their leaders at all levels to support a coaching culture, to actively encourage and enable learning from mistakes, and to foster a strong sense of psychological safety.

### When seeking to create a future-fit workforce, what is the single most important thing for organizations to invest in?

Katy: Again, calling back to the elements of future fitness from an individual perspective, we think of three dimensions.

- How well you are
- How well you think (curiosity, agility, and risk assessment)
- How ready you are to act

As organizations seek to enable a future fit workforce, they can and should consider all three dimensions. Creating an environment that supports these capabilities includes considering the employee experience and how it impacts the overall wellness of each individual, considering leaders and how they actively promote and enable each person's ability to be curious, agile, and take risks, and considering the technology and resources that exist to support moving from readiness to action. While individuals can and should take accountability for their own growth in these areas, organizations can support them through promoting learning culture, investing in leaders, and fostering a healthy culture.



For more on learning culture, please see my report [Drive Organizational Adaptivity with a Future-Fit Learning Culture.](#)

For more on future fitness, please see James McQuivey's report [Improve Your Future Fitness Fast.](#)



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## What strategies must organizations deploy to both attract and retain talent in today's workforce? And what are the key characteristics that will drive both individuals and organizations to achieve growth in the next 5-10 years?

**Katy:** In 2021, organizations faced The Great Resignation. What is the single most significant disruption organizations must anticipate in 2022? If 2020 was the year of disruption, and 2021 was the year of recalibration, 2022 will be the year of the new normal. Many organizations are planning to shift to hybrid or anywhere work strategies to support evolving workforce demands. High-value talent is continuing to vote with their feet by choosing organizations that are committing to flexible work policies and providing more options to better balance work and life. Companies that do this well will become talent magnets, able to attract and retain the workforce they need to be successful. Those that don't will struggle with their strategic priorities as they will be forced into a reactive mode by turnover and low levels of engagement.

## Where does corporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion go from here?

**Katy:** The conversation around DEI continues to evolve as organizations who kicked off DEI initiatives in the spring of 2020 begin to see results and outcomes from that work. While the events of that time were the catalyst for some organizations to address this topic for the first time, many other organizations have been doing this work for decades and offer important learning opportunities and case studies for others who are newer to the work. With the SEC's shift to modernize disclosures to encompass more data on human capital, we will likely see increased levels of reporting even beyond those that have been offered voluntarily, or those required by organizations such as NASDAQ and the S&P500. This data allows us to clearly see the difference in financial and organizational performance between diverse organizations and their more homogenous counterparts. And as we see diverse organizations continue to outperform and lead, it provides the data that skeptics have been waiting for regarding the business value of DEI.

## What do employers think is important to do to retain talent? What do employees think is important for employers to do to retain talent?

**Katy:** While a lot of the guidance that we give people these days around retaining talent is about the fundamentals, it's also important to consider that the pandemic has fundamentally changed how people view work and their employers.

From the perspective of fundamentals, we know that people often leave because they don't feel like they have opportunities to grow and develop. We also know that the direct manager has a tremendous amount of influence on the daily experiences of employees. So, investing in leaders, and supporting career growth and development are always two good places to start when we consider talent retention.

However, as we have recently seen a wave of resignations in the wake of the pandemic, some other factors are also coming into play. In healthcare, retail, and hospitality (industries particularly hard-hit by resignations), many are leaving because they need to care for others, either because they are sick, or because caregiving resources have been disrupted. For high-value talent, such as tech talent, we see people quitting in order to get the flexible work arrangements they want, as well as to take advantage of higher salary offers. Retaining talent is rarely about a silver bullet solution that will make your whole workforce happy. It's about the daily experiences that employees have with their schedules, their teams, their managers, and their technology. That's why it is so critical to invest in and deeply understand employee experience (EX).



For more on the opportunity of anywhere work, see J.P. Gownder's report **Don't Miss Your Anywhere Work Opportunity.**

For more on this, see my report **Inclusive Leadership Enhances the Power of Creativity.**



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We hope you've found our annual Lean into Learning Report useful. And we hope you've been inspired by the real-life stories of organizations that have harnessed the power of learning to help employees thrive — today and tomorrow.

Remember — while data is important, it's how we respond to the challenges it reveals that matters most. In fact, from new leadership programs to diversity initiatives — and from tech skills to power skills — we've been thrilled to witness the learning revolution that continues to unfold.

Across the globe, we are living in an era of unprecedented disruption. But with disruption comes opportunity: to leave behind what no longer serves, embrace new ways of working and living, and create a culture of lifelong learning available to all.

Meanwhile, keep leaning into learning. And, if you're ready to take the leap, we're here for you. Approximately 75% of the Fortune 1000 trust us to help their people overcome critical skill gaps and drive demonstrable change. In fact, we train more people than any other company.

When leaders and learners open themselves to learning, the future is wide open. We can't wait to see you unleash your edge.



With over  
**180,000 tools, 29  
languages, and  
the broadest and  
deepest library of  
courses, books,  
and videos to help  
you stay sharp,  
Skillsoft can help  
your organization  
chart a path  
forward with  
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### WELCOME TO AN OPEN FUTURE

Are you open to fresh ideas, new ways of working, and unlocking your potential? Watch our “I am open” video.

### PERCIPPIO VIDEO

Watch how Skillsoft’s intelligent learning platform Percipio helps people — and organizations — adapt, evolve, grow, and thrive.

### PERSPECTIVES 2021

Discover how you can tackle corporate learning and skills transformation challenges through complimentary on-demand event access.

### CASE STUDIES

Learn how organizations in every industry across the globe have made learning a powerful competitive edge.

### THE EDGE PODCAST

Listen to a variety of guests, engaging in thought-provoking conversations and open dialogue on learning and growth in the workplace.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION LEARNING CENTER

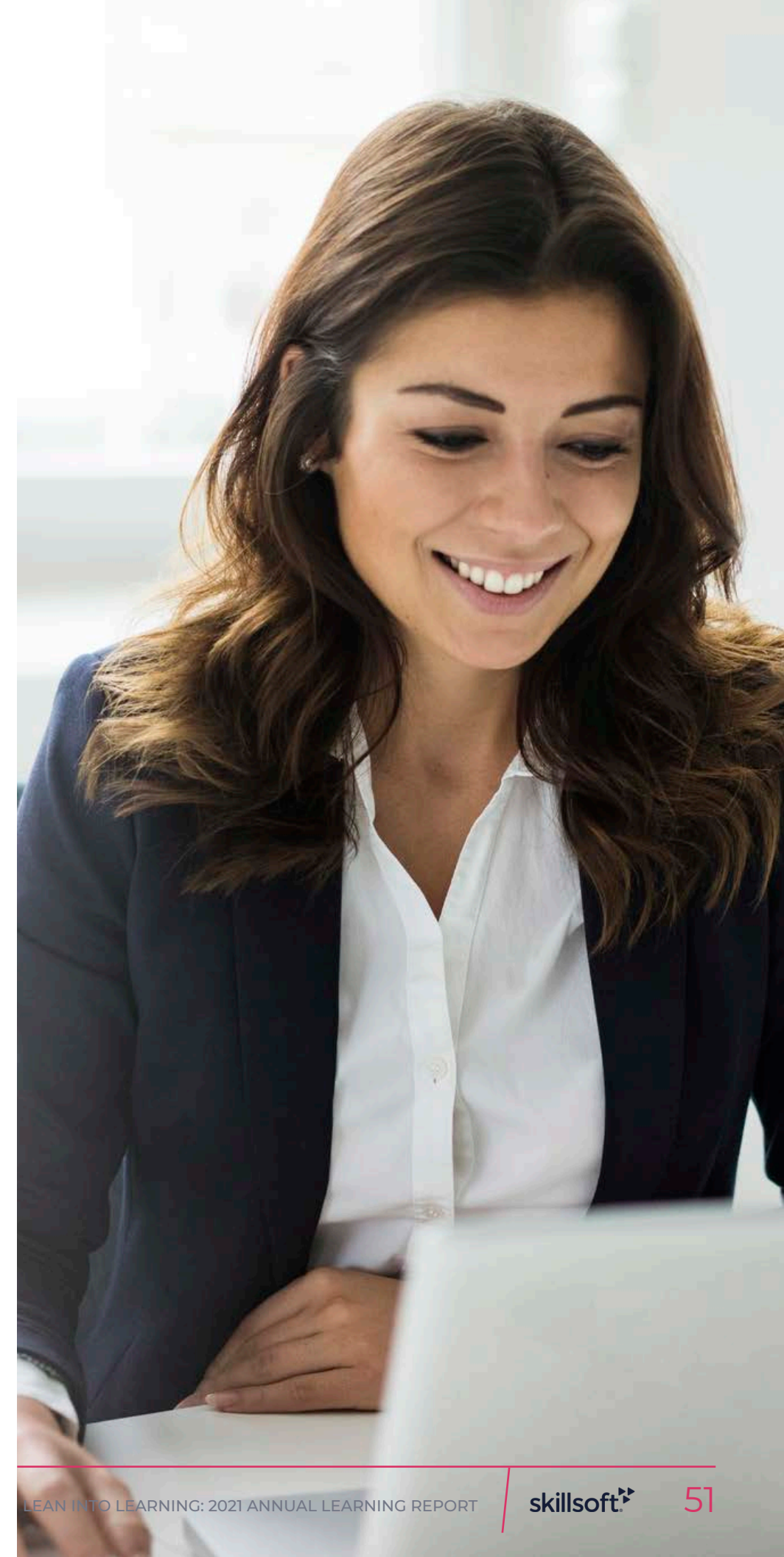
Find Leadercamps, led by DEI coaches, and a Skillsoft 360 Report, as well as books, videos, and other tools on this timely topic.

### SKILLSOFT BLOG

Share our team’s insights on everything from the latest learning industry research and trends to timely tips for success.

### INVESTOR RELATIONS

Find the latest news, financial results, stock data, and other resources for Skillsoft’s investor community.





# ABOUT SKILLSOFT

Skillsoft (NYSE: SKIL) is a global leader in corporate digital learning, focused on transforming today's workforce for tomorrow's economy. The Company provides enterprise learning solutions designed to prepare organizations for the future of work, overcome critical skill gaps, drive demonstrable behavior-change, and unlock the potential in their people. Skillsoft offers a comprehensive suite of premium, original, and authorized partner content, including one of the broadest and deepest libraries of leadership & business skills, technology & developer, and compliance curricula. With access to a broad spectrum of learning options (including video, audio, books, bootcamps, live events, and practice labs), organizations can meaningfully increase learner engagement and retention. Skillsoft's offerings are delivered through Percipio, its award-winning, AI-driven, immersive learning platform purpose built to make learning easier, more accessible, and more effective.

Learn more at [www.skillsoft.com](http://www.skillsoft.com).

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