

misco

TRAINING PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS REPORT



In collaboration with



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THE MALTA CHAMBER

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contributor

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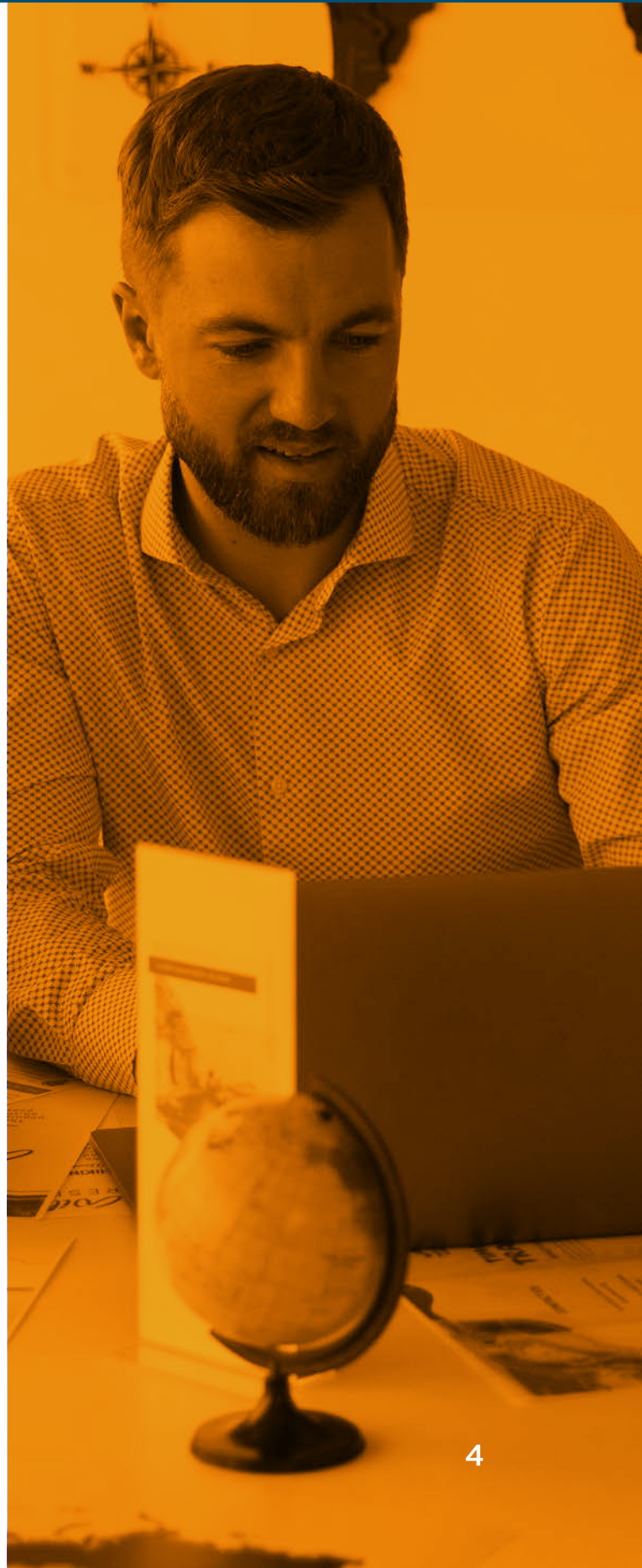
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> Introduction.

In a rapidly evolving labour market shaped by technological disruption, demographic shifts, and the changing nature of work, the importance of continuous upskilling and reskilling has never been greater.

Across Europe, training has been recognised as a key lever for enhancing workforce adaptability, productivity, and long-term employability. In this context, Malta presents a distinctive profile: while local enterprises demonstrate a growing commitment to training provision, several structural and attitudinal challenges persist.

According to Eurostat's latest statistics, Malta placed 6th from the bottom among EU member states, with only 45.1% of enterprises offering training. When analysing training intensity — defined by average hours of training per participant or per employee — Malta lags behind. Maltese enterprises tend to deliver fewer hours of training compared to their European counterparts, suggesting that while training is widespread in occurrence, it may be limited in depth or scope.



Furthermore, the data indicates a strong reliance on non-formal learning formats — short courses, workshops, and seminars — rather than formal qualifications.

This aligns with feedback from both employers and employees in Malta, who often prioritise job-specific or technical training that addresses immediate operational needs over accredited, long-term development pathways.

Barriers to training provision in Malta remain consistent with broader European trends. These include a lack of time, limited financial resources, and concerns about employee retention following investment in their development. Notably, in smaller enterprises — which form the backbone of Malta's economy — such challenges are amplified. In some cases, there is also a lack of internal expertise to organise structured training or perform formal training needs analyses.

Despite these hurdles, there is an increasing recognition of the strategic value of training, not only as a means to address skills shortages but also as a way to improve employee retention and engagement. With national policy direction focusing on digital and green transitions, and a greater emphasis on inclusion and lifelong learning, it is crucial for Maltese organisations to strengthen their training efforts. Doing so will not only support enterprise growth and resilience but also contribute to a more agile and future-ready national workforce.

SOURCE

<https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/NR-039-2025-All-Tables.xlsx>



> Key Takeaways.

01 **Internal training** remains the top method to tackle skills shortages for 54% of employers and 42% of employees, reflecting a shift toward investing in current staff rather than hiring new talent.

02 66% Of employers and 80% of employees believe **soft skills training** supports employee retention — a 15% increase in employee agreement since last year, even as employer belief declined by 16%.

03 **Resistance to change** is now seen as the top barrier to addressing skills shortages, reported by 27% of employers and 25% of employees — a sharp rise from previous years.

04 **Decision-making** is considered the most lacking skill in the workforce by 46% of employers and 34% of employees, followed closely by verbal communication and leadership skills.

05 **Leadership training** is wanted by 13% of employees, but only 10% report actually receiving it. Meanwhile, 15% of employers say they provide it — showing a persistent mismatch.

06 **Junior and middle management are prioritised** for training by 68% of employers, but only 50% and 47% of employees in those roles respectively say they receive it.

07 27% Of employees say they received **no training at all in the past year**, and another 25% report nothing is planned for the next six months.

08 46% Of employees prefer **technical training**, while only 34% prefer soft skills — opposite to employers, 59% of whom favour soft skills training over technical (34%).

09 53% Of employees now prefer **accredited programmes** — a 13% increase from last year — while 56% of employers still say accreditation doesn't make a difference.

10 Preference for **in-house training** increased to 36% among employees (up from 31%), while preference for open programmes dropped to 23%.

> Results.

3.1 TRAINING IN ORGANISATIONS

Primary Drivers Behind Training Decisions

When asked about the main reasons for investing in training, responses reveal a shift in organisational focus. While employers continue to prioritise training at the point of starting a new job (24%), this marks a 6% drop from last year, suggesting that onboarding may no longer be seen as the most critical window for skills development.

For employees, however, priorities have clearly evolved. In 2024, “starting a new job” was the top reason they recalled receiving training. In 2025, this was overtaken by implementing new systems or procedures, cited by 23% — a strong indicator that digital or structural transitions are now more likely to trigger training on the ground.

Interestingly, employers also recognise the importance of system-related training (22%), ranking it second. Regulatory requirements remain a consistent driver for both groups (20% for employers, 10% for employees), though the difference in perceived urgency may reflect the level of direct exposure or responsibility.

Other triggers such as taking on a more senior role, changes in legislation, or internal job changes score lower overall, pointing to a broader trend where training is increasingly tied to change management and operational shifts rather than career progression alone.

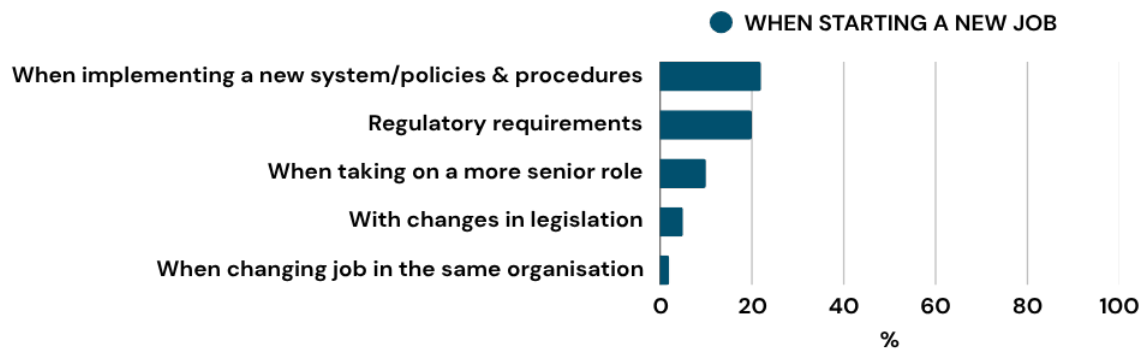


> Results.

What are the primary factors influencing your organisation's decisions when selecting training options for staff?

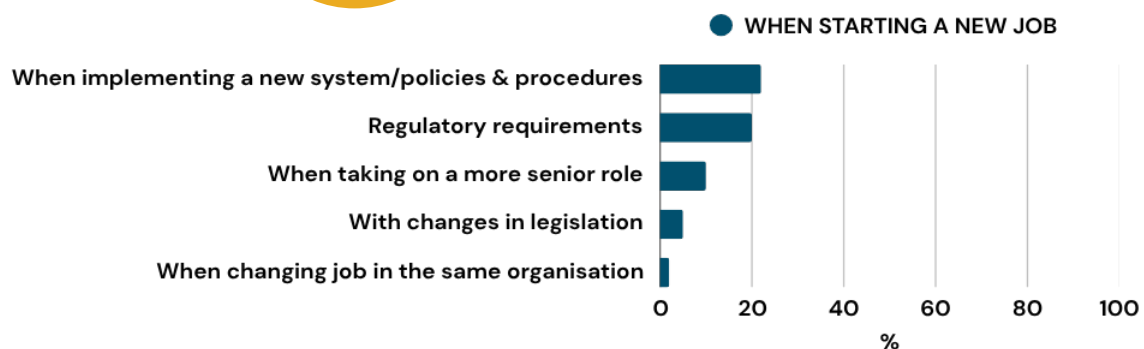
EMPLOYERS

24%



EMPLOYEES

23%



Training Priorities: Shifting Focus Between Compliance and Capability

The picture emerging from this year's results suggests a continued rebalancing of organisational priorities in training. Employers remain strongly focused on technical capability, with 46% citing technical skills as their top priority — a noticeable 6 percentage point increase from last year. This upward trend aligns with wider shifts in the labour market where digital transformation and industry-specific know-how are becoming ever more critical.

Interestingly, compliance and regulatory training has also gained ground among employers, climbing to 37%, up by 5 points.

Health and safety, too, has seen a modest rise, now at 29%, hinting at a broader organisational appetite for risk mitigation and operational assurance.

At the other end of the spectrum, leadership development saw the sharpest decline, dropping from 25% to 15%. This 10-point drop suggests that long-term succession planning may be taking a backseat to immediate operational demands.

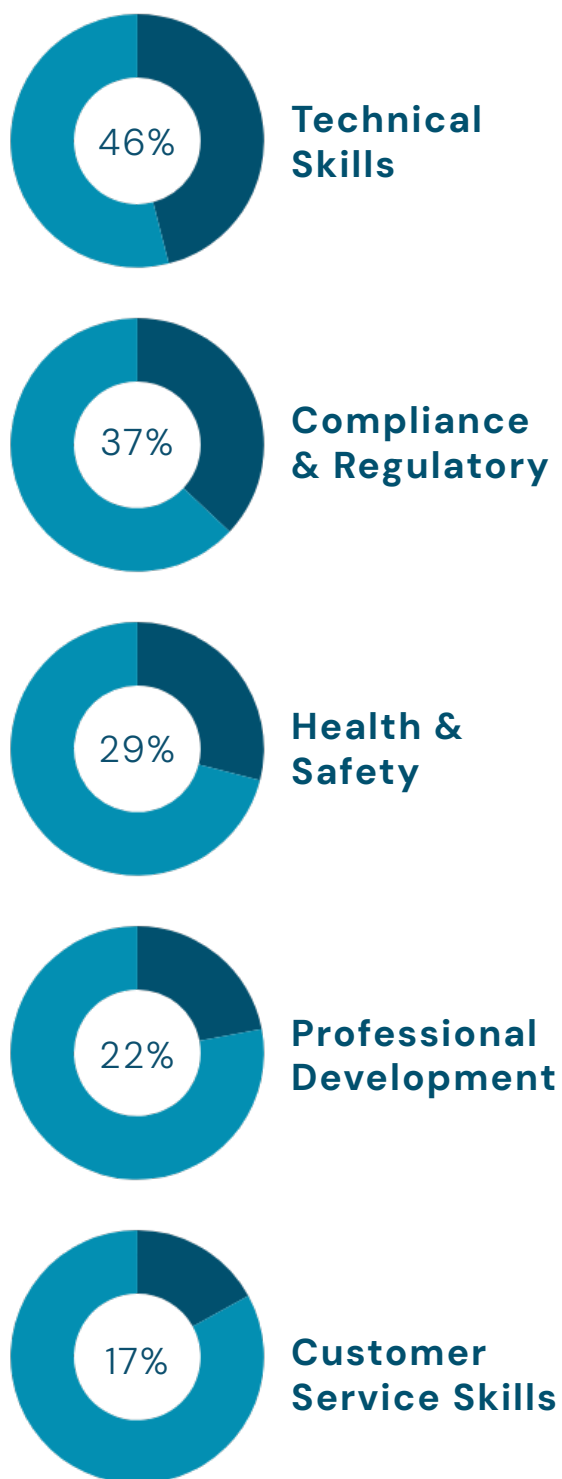
That said, customer service training saw a sharp increase — jumping to 17% — a reflection of increased emphasis on front-line performance, possibly linked to post-pandemic service expectations and brand reputation management.

From the employee perspective, however, the outlook tells a slightly different story. While technical skills still top their list at 35%, professional development climbed to 29%, up by 3 points. This suggests a growing appetite among employees for personal growth and career mobility, with many expecting more than just role-based skillsets. Leadership development, now at 25%, also saw a significant 8-point rise, reflecting employee interest in upward progression — even if organisational investment isn't currently matching that ambition.

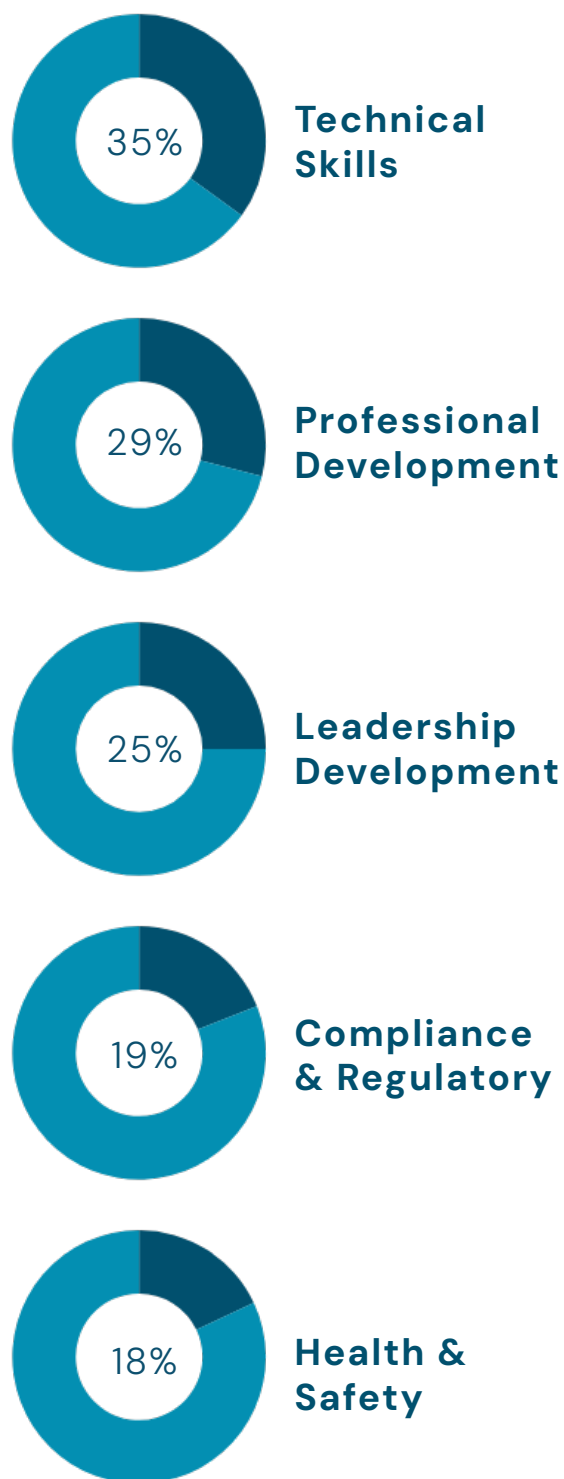
The divergence in priorities is notable. While employers are sharpening focus on operational compliance and technical output, employees are signalling a desire for progression and development. Bridging this gap may require rethinking how training is planned, communicated, and delivered — ensuring that both immediate business needs and longer-term staff expectations are addressed.

What areas of training are given most priority in your organisation?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



What Organisations and Employees see as Crucial Training Areas

When prompted to select the top three priorities for training, employers and employees offered a revealing look into what they believe matters most for workforce development.

For both groups, efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness continue to top the list — cited by 46% of employers and an even stronger 49% of employees. However, the story diverges sharply after that.

Employers placed greater emphasis this year on empowering staff (+5%) and building stronger workplace relationships, teamwork, and collaboration (+10%).

These findings hint at a shift in employer thinking — recognising that performance isn't just about individual output, but also about how people work together across teams and roles.

Meanwhile, employee priorities shifted more visibly. While they also selected efficiency as their top concern, their second- and third-ranked areas saw noticeable changes. The need to help new employees integrate into the organisation rose by 3%, and retention jumped by 12%, suggesting that employees are now more attuned to support, stability, and inclusion at work — possibly reflecting wider concerns about turnover and wellbeing.

Interestingly, empowerment appears to have lost momentum among employees, dropping by 15 percentage points to just 13%. Similarly, interest in long-term development strategies fell by 9%, suggesting that immediate, tangible support is being prioritised over longer-term planning.

The mismatch between the two groups is worth noting. While employers are investing in building cohesion and engagement, employees are clearly looking for practical support mechanisms — especially around onboarding, feeling valued, and staying engaged. These gaps, if left unaddressed, risk undermining training ROI and retention efforts.

Are there any specific training areas that your organisation identifies as crucial for employee development?



Readiness vs. Hesitation: Would They Still Apply?

The gap between employer expectations and employee behaviour remains clear when it comes to confidence in applying for roles — especially when the candidate doesn't meet all the required skills.

Two-thirds of employers (66%) believe that jobseekers should still go for a role even if they're not fully qualified, reflecting a mindset that values potential, attitude, and adaptability over perfection on paper. This figure represents an 8 percentage point increase over last year, indicating a growing appetite for teachable talent.

On the other hand, only 33% of employees say they would apply for a job they don't feel qualified for — a modest 5-point increase but still a significant mismatch. Even more telling is that 13% of employees reported being unsure, signalling hesitation, lack of confidence, or possibly uncertainty around employer expectations.

This divide points to a larger issue: while organisations are willing to train and grow talent, not enough of this message is reaching prospective candidates. Bridging this perception gap requires more than job postings — it calls for clear messaging, transparent criteria, and an internal culture that genuinely supports growth from within.

DO YOU BELIEVE JOB SEEKERS SHOULD STILL APPLY FOR A ROLE EVEN IF THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SKILLS FOR IT? / WOULD YOU APPLY FOR A ROLE EVEN THOUGH YOU DO NOT HAVE THE SKILLS FOR IT?

BASED ON 'YES' ANSWERS



What New Starters Expect from Day One

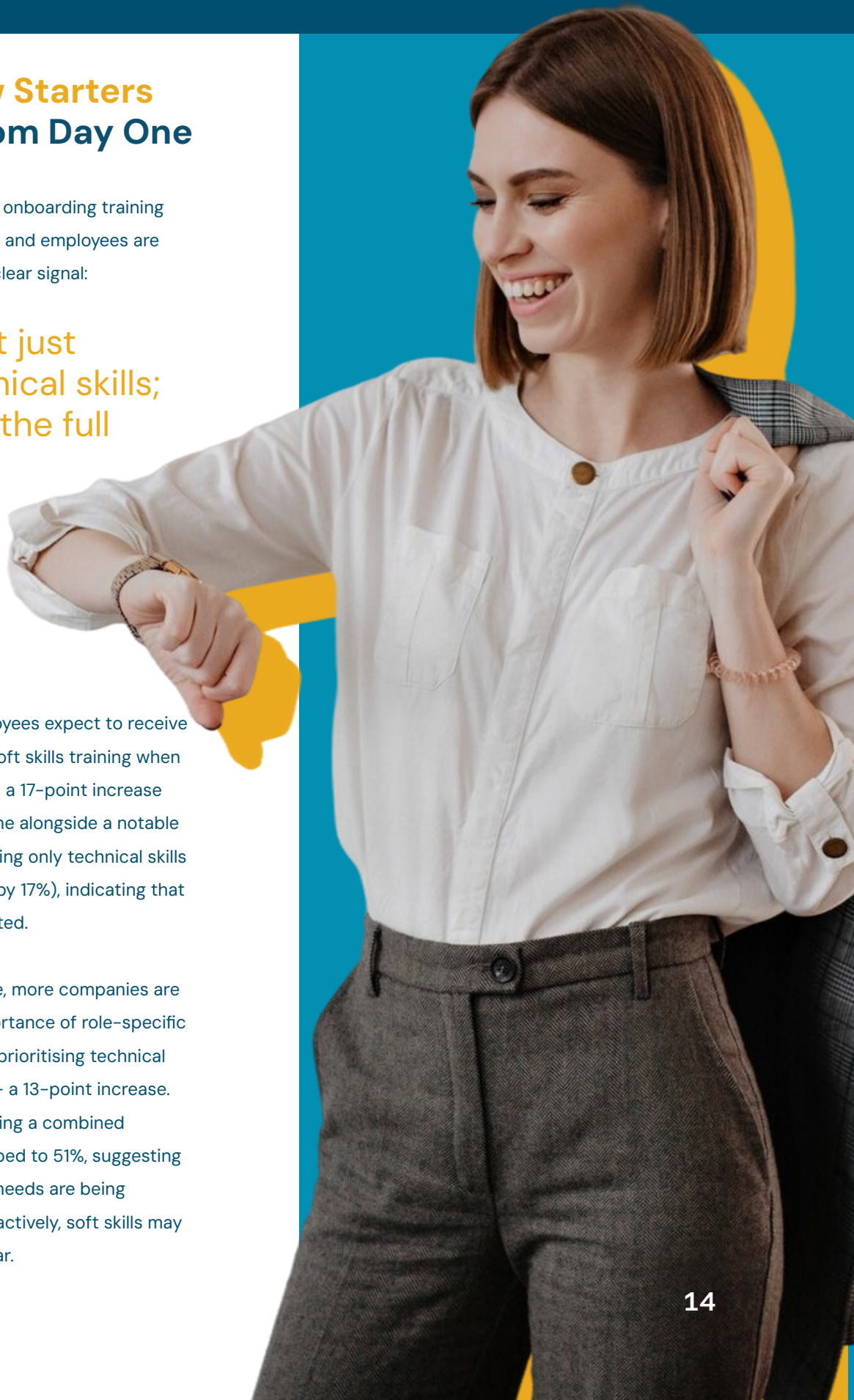
Expectations around onboarding training continue to evolve — and employees are now sending a very clear signal:

“they don’t just want technical skills; they want the full package.”



In fact, 66% of employees expect to receive both technical and soft skills training when starting a new role — a 17-point increase on last year. This came alongside a notable drop in those expecting only technical skills training (24%, down by 17%), indicating that the baseline has shifted.

On the employer side, more companies are recognising the importance of role-specific capability, with 32% prioritising technical skills training alone — a 13-point increase. However, those offering a combined approach have dropped to 51%, suggesting that while technical needs are being addressed more proactively, soft skills may be falling off the radar.



Only 2% of employees say they don't expect any training at all, compared to 7% of employers who admit that no training is offered. This difference, though small, signals an underlying misalignment between organisational readiness and employee expectations.

Put simply, employees are not asking for either/ or — they're asking for both. A blend of technical know-how and human skills is increasingly seen as essential, not optional. For employers, the challenge lies in ensuring that onboarding processes reflect this shift — especially in roles that require not just competence, but communication, collaboration, and customer focus from day one.

UPON STARTING A NEW JOB, WOULD YOU TRAIN EMPLOYEES TO ENHANCE THEIR SKILLS? / UPON STARTING A NEW JOB, WOULD YOU EXPECT TO BE TRAINED TO ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS?



EMPLOYERS



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What Training Is Actually Being Delivered? A Closer Look at Offerings

When asked about the topics most commonly covered by training in their organisation, employers and employees painted two very different pictures.

Employers reported a strong emphasis on technical skills, with 68% saying this was a top area of focus — a 10-point increase from the previous year. Health and safety followed closely at 63%, most likely influenced by legislative updates and a growing emphasis on workplace wellbeing. Leadership and management training sits at 51%, though this reflects a 9-point drop, suggesting some organisations may be scaling back investment in strategic talent development.

From the employee side, the signals are slightly different. Leadership and management training stands out as the top response (51%), representing an 11-point increase. While this aligns with employer responses in terms of ranking, employees reported lower access to technical training, down 7 percentage points. This gap may indicate either differing definitions of what counts as “technical” — or a communication breakdown in how training is labelled and delivered internally.

Also worth noting: customer care training appears significantly underreported by employees (13%) despite being identified by 46% of employers. Whether this reflects limited visibility, lower retention, or delivery focused only on specific roles is unclear, but the gap is hard to ignore.

Training on policies, procedures, and equipment continues to be reported by both groups, though not always equally. Meanwhile, GDPR training, personal development, and IT training remain lower on the list — often treated as modular or one-off topics rather than core components of training strategies.

The disconnect between what’s delivered and what’s remembered or recognised suggests room for improvement in both internal communication and relevance. If training is to have impact, employees need to understand not just what’s offered — but why it matters and how it fits into their role.

What was/were the topic/s of training?

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Who's Actually Receiving Training? A Mismatch in Perception

When it comes to who is being trained within organisations, employers and employees seem to be viewing two very different realities.

Employers reported high training coverage across all staff levels, particularly for middle management and junior management/supervisors, both at 68%. Senior management also scored relatively high (51%), suggesting that leadership development is still on the agenda, though not necessarily across the board.

There were also notable increases in training reported for semi-skilled/unskilled workers, technicians, and clerical staff, with each category climbing by more than 10 percentage points since last year. This indicates that more organisations are broadening their training reach — or at least claiming to.

But the employee perspective paints a much more restrained picture. Junior management tops the list at 50%, followed by middle management

(47%) and senior management (37%). Meanwhile, perceived access to training among clerical staff and semi-skilled/unskilled employees has dropped significantly, despite the reported increase from employers.

In fact, 27% of employees selected “Other,” a substantial jump from the employer-reported 12% — potentially pointing to inconsistency in how roles are labelled or a sense that formal training is bypassing the core layers of the workforce.

What we’re seeing here is not just a reporting gap — it’s a disconnect in visibility and inclusivity. Employers may believe they’re covering all bases, but if employees don’t feel included or don’t recognise the learning opportunities as structured training, the value is easily lost. This further underscores the need for clear communication and follow-through — because training is only effective if it’s seen, felt, and experienced.

WHO IS TRAINING USUALLY PROVIDED TO?

	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
Senior Management	96%	89%
Middle Management	89%	91%
Junior Management and Supervisors	59%	50%
Clerical Staff	50%	32%
Technicians	38%	34%
Semi-Skilled or Unskilled Employees	33%	34%
Other	25%	21%

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO SOFT SKILLS

What Are Soft Skills, Really? Perspectives Are Still Split

This year's results show a stabilisation in how soft skills are viewed — but also a growing divergence between how employers and employees frame their relevance.

Among employers, soft skills are increasingly seen as practical assets for workplace success, with 63% choosing this as their top definition — up by 8 percentage points. This overtakes last year's leading sentiment of soft skills as essential life skills, which dropped slightly but still remains strong at 61%. The shift suggests that employers are leaning into a more business-focused interpretation of soft skills, tying them directly to outcomes like productivity, teamwork, and leadership.

Employees, meanwhile, continue to hold a broader and more personal view. 61% still define soft skills as essential life skills, with a notable 11-point increase. This suggests that for employees, soft skills are not just tools for career advancement — they're part of how people relate, grow, and thrive in any context.

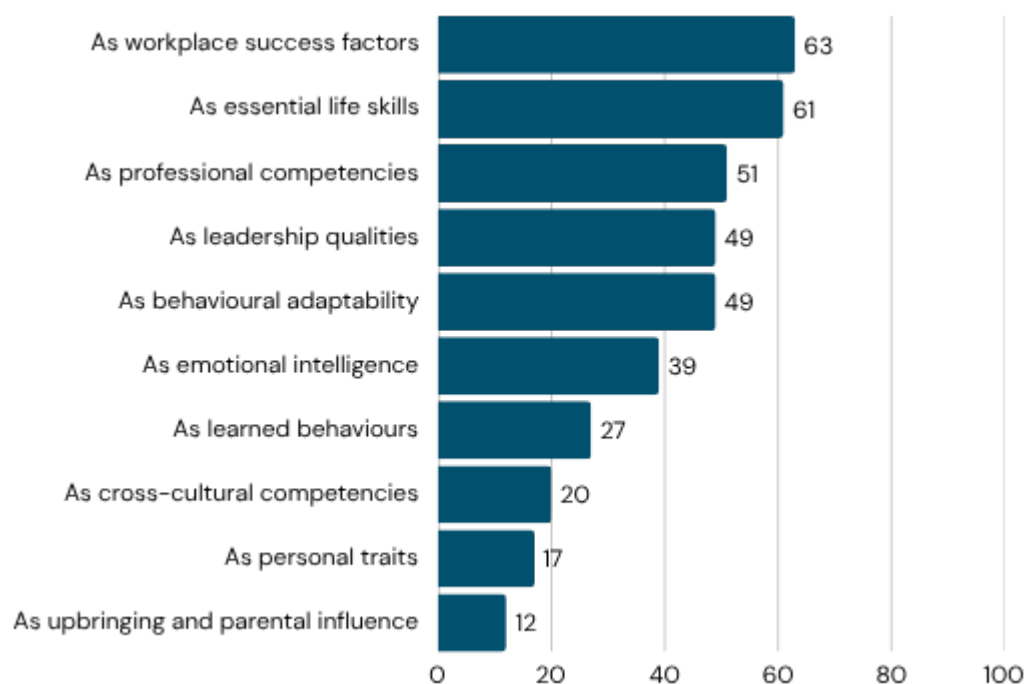


Other definitions — such as leadership qualities, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and professional competencies — remained relatively stable across both groups. Cross-cultural competencies, learned behaviours, and personal traits continue to rank lower, though they still form part of the broader narrative around human skills in the workplace.

The alignment on core values is reassuring. However, the subtle shift in emphasis from “life” to “work” among employers could have longer-term implications for how soft skills training is positioned and prioritised. For initiatives to truly resonate, they must balance both perspectives: treating soft skills not only as a business investment, but also as a meaningful part of the employee experience.

When we speak of soft skills, we are usually referring to an individual's personal skills that are not part of the technical skills that are needed for the job. How do you view soft skills?

EMPLOYERS



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What Skills Matter Most? Confidence in Communication and Clarity in Decision-Making

When it comes to the skills deemed most critical to performing well in a job role, both employers and employees continue to value the fundamentals — but with slightly different emphases.

For employers, verbal communication remains the clear front-runner (66%), followed by a notable rise in the importance of teamworking skills, which jumped by nearly 20 percentage points to 56%. This reflects a growing appreciation for collaboration and cohesion — essential ingredients in hybrid, cross-functional, and fast-paced work environments.

Decision-making holds steady at 46%, while self-organisation/time management has dropped by 9%, suggesting that employers may be placing more weight on interpersonal effectiveness and shared outcomes than on individual task control. Written communication rounds out the top five at 37%.

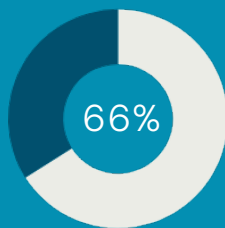
From the employee perspective, however, the order of priority has shifted. Decision-making skills rose by 3 points to become the top skill (68%), overtaking verbal communication, which dropped by 16 points but still holds strong at 52%. This suggests that employees want greater involvement in making choices and solving problems — especially in roles that require autonomy or navigating change.

Leadership skills and time management are tied at 45%, reinforcing a desire for structure and progression, while interpersonal skills (33%) complete the top five.

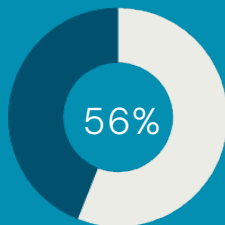
The overall pattern highlights that while both sides value communication and clarity, employees are placing increasing importance on empowerment and leadership potential, not just delivery. Employers, meanwhile, are looking for strong communicators who can contribute to teamwork and drive collaboration.

Aligning these perspectives may require targeted development in decision-making, delegation, and communication across teams — ensuring that both current needs and future ambitions are supported.

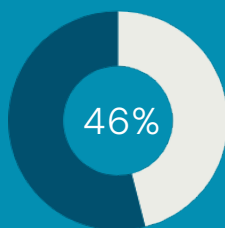
Which FIVE soft skills from the list below do you feel are most important to employees' roles? / Which FIVE soft skills from the list below do you feel are most important to your role?



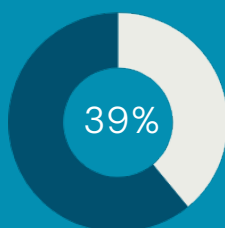
Technical Skills



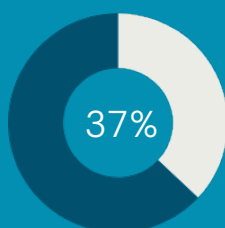
Teamworking Skills



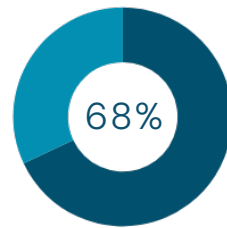
Decision Making



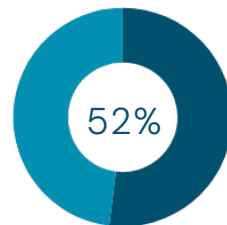
Self-Organisation/Time Management



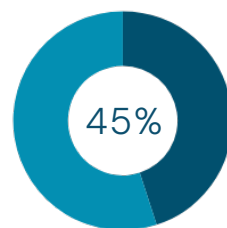
Written Communication



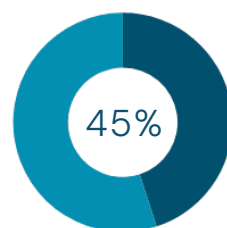
Decision Making



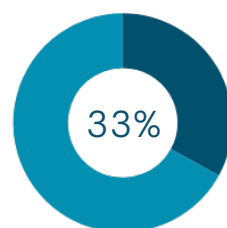
Verbal Communication



Self-Organisation/Time Management



Leadership Skills



Interpersonal Skills

What Can Be Developed? Confidence in Trainability Is on the Rise

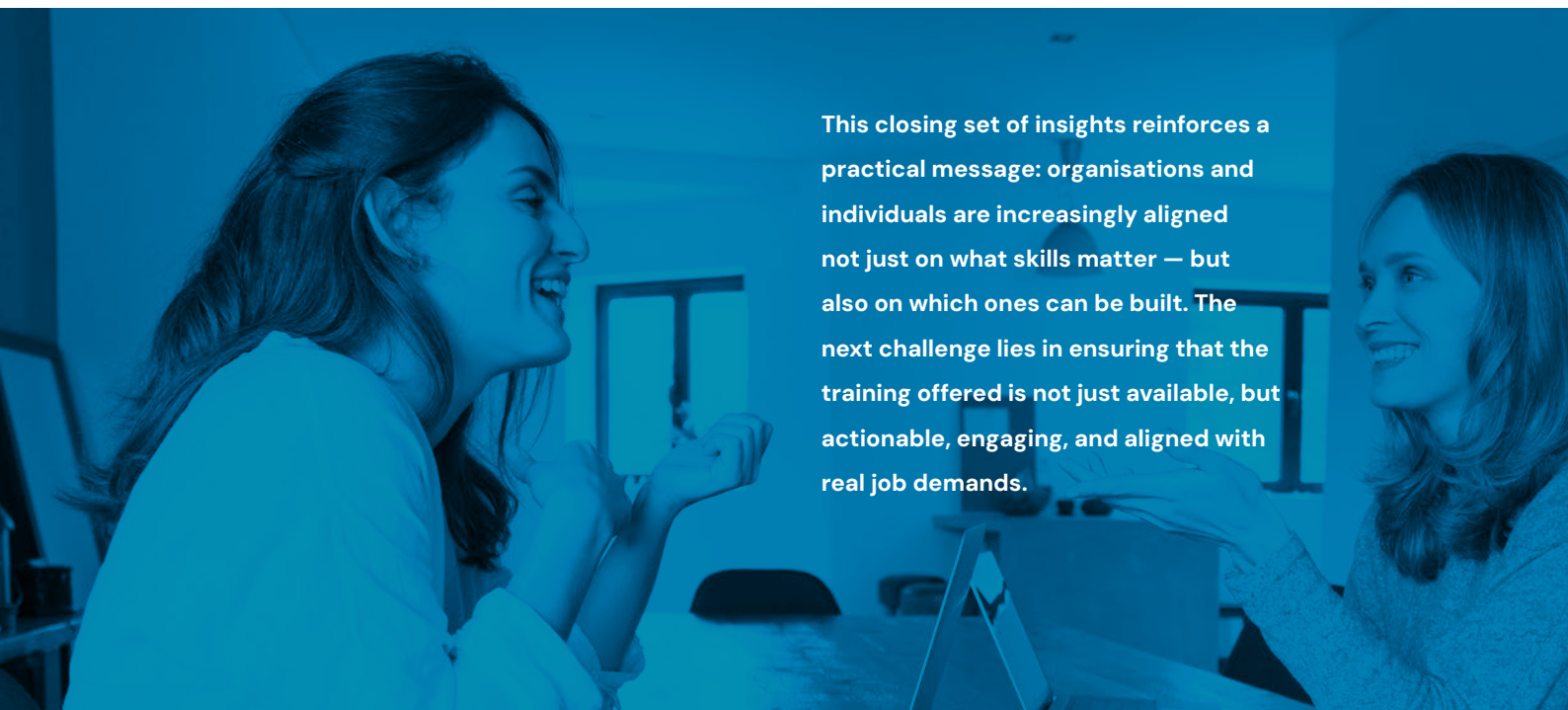
As organisations consider where to focus their learning investments, this year's data shows greater belief in the trainability of key people skills — particularly those that were previously seen as more innate or hard to teach.

For employers, there has been a significant shift in mindset. Verbal communication is now seen as the most trainable skill (46%), a sharp increase from previous years. This is followed closely by decision-making (44%) and self-organisation/time management (42%) — all of which align closely with the skills employers also identified as currently lacking in the workforce.

Meanwhile, leadership skills (32%) and written communication (27%) also remain on the radar, highlighting a continued interest in developing well-rounded communicators and future leaders. Employees largely agree with this direction.

Decision-making once again tops the list (36%), affirming that people not only value this skill — they believe it can be taught. Leadership (31%), managing change (27%), and innovation and creativity (27%) all make strong showings as well, suggesting that employees see value in developing more adaptive, forward-looking capabilities. Project management (24%), often overlooked, rounds out the top five — reinforcing the need for structure and delivery in increasingly complex roles.

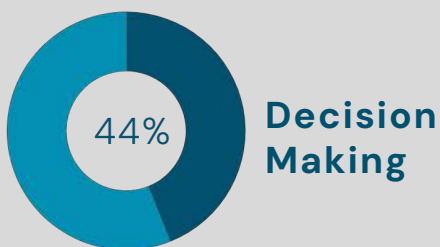
Interestingly, managing change, which no longer appeared on the "lacking" list, remains a training priority — possibly indicating that it's being addressed, but not yet fully embedded.



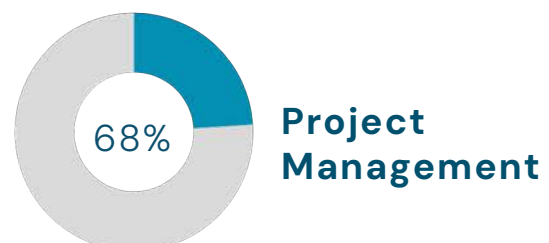
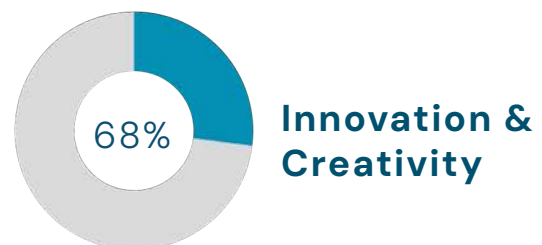
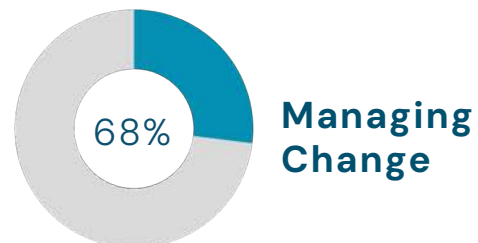
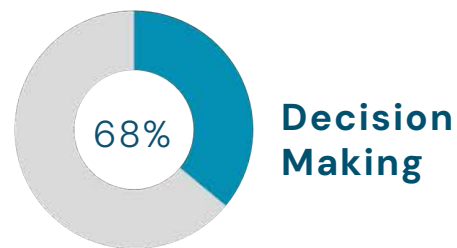
This closing set of insights reinforces a practical message: organisations and individuals are increasingly aligned not just on what skills matter — but also on which ones can be built. The next challenge lies in ensuring that the training offered is not just available, but actionable, engaging, and aligned with real job demands.

And finally, do you feel that your employees/you can be trained in any of these skills? Please choose up to FIVE.

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



3.3 SOFT SKILLS IMPORTANCE

Why Employees Stay: Pay Isn't the Only Thing That Matters

When asked what factors most influence retention, employers and employees show overlapping priorities — but not complete alignment. For employers, salary increase stands out as the clear top factor at 32%, up by 12 percentage points from last year. Career growth, which once held the top spot, has now dropped to 17%, indicating a shift in how organisations interpret what drives retention.

This employer perception largely mirrors the trend seen in employee responses in 2024 and again this year — but with a key distinction. While employees do place value on salary (18%), it's career growth opportunities that top their list (19%), edging salary out by a slim but meaningful margin. This suggests that employees are looking beyond immediate financial rewards and focusing on future prospects and long-term development.

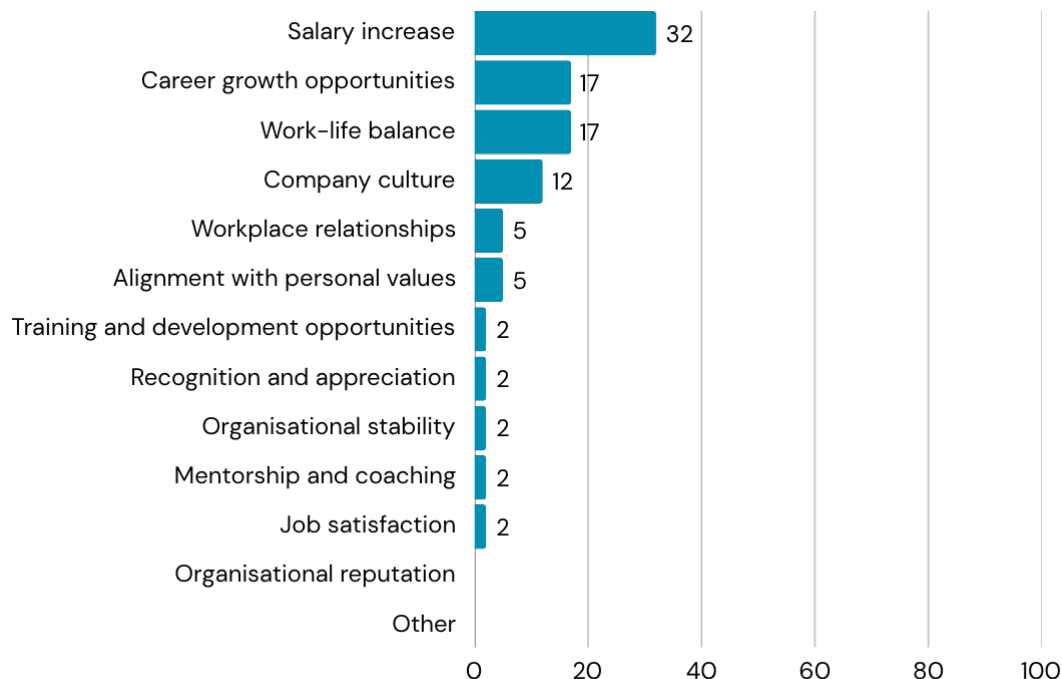
Work-life balance (13%) and company culture (13%) are also notable for employees, while employers appear to give these slightly less weight. Interestingly, factors like recognition, alignment with values, and training/development remain relatively low across both groups — perhaps not because they're unimportant, but because they're considered standard expectations rather than differentiators.

The consistently low ratings for job satisfaction, mentorship, and organisational stability suggest these are no longer seen as standalone motivators. Instead, employees want growth, balance, and a sense of purpose — not just a job that feels stable.

To remain competitive in retaining talent, organisations will need to go beyond compensation and start viewing retention as a multi-layered strategy — one that recognises career mobility, personal development, and cultural fit as core pillars of engagement.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FOR EMPLOYEES TO REMAIN WORKING FOR THE ORGANISATION? / WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FOR YOU STAY WITH THE ORGANISATION THAT YOU WORK FOR?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



Can Soft Skills Training Help People Stay? Employees Say Yes

The closing data point in this year's results sends a strong message: employees increasingly believe in the power of soft skills training to influence retention — but employers seem less convinced.

A significant 80% of employees believe that soft skills training has a positive impact on their decision to remain with an organisation. This marks a 15-point increase from last year and highlights a growing awareness among staff that development goes beyond technical knowledge — it's also about communication, resilience, confidence, and personal growth.

For employers, the trend has gone in the opposite direction. At 66%, support for soft skills training as a retention lever has dropped by 16 percentage points. This may reflect tighter budgets, a shift in training focus, or simply a belief that soft skills are less measurable or impactful than other forms of development.

This disconnect is important. While soft skills are increasingly seen as essential to navigating modern workplaces, they also serve a deeper function: helping employees feel seen, supported, and prepared to grow — all critical components of long-term engagement and loyalty.

If organisations are looking to address retention, it may be time to revisit how soft skills training is positioned — not as a “nice to have” but as a key part of building a strong, values-driven workplace that people want to stay in.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SOFT SKILLS TRAINING CAN HELP FURTHER IMPROVE ON ANY OF THESE TO INFLUENCE EMPLOYEES TO STAY WORKING FOR THE ORGANISATION? / DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SOFT SKILLS TRAINING CAN HELP FURTHER IMPROVE ON ANY OF THESE TO INFLUENCE YOU TO STAY WORKING FOR THE ORGANISATION?

BASED ON 'YES' ANSWERS



Strategic Talk vs Practical Action: Is Soft Skills Training Really Embedded?

At face value, both employers and employees appear aligned: the most commonly selected responses show similar distributions, suggesting shared sentiment around the perceived evolution of soft skills within organisational training strategies.

But a closer look reveals a deeper disconnect between intention and experience.

The top two responses —

“recognising the importance of soft skills” and “there has been no emphasis on soft skills training”

— are clearly contradictory. This suggests that while soft skills are increasingly discussed and acknowledged at a strategic level, they aren't consistently translated into visible, structured actions. For some, the training may exist but feels ad hoc or disconnected from actual workplace needs.

THIS GAP COULD STEM FROM SEVERAL CAUSES:

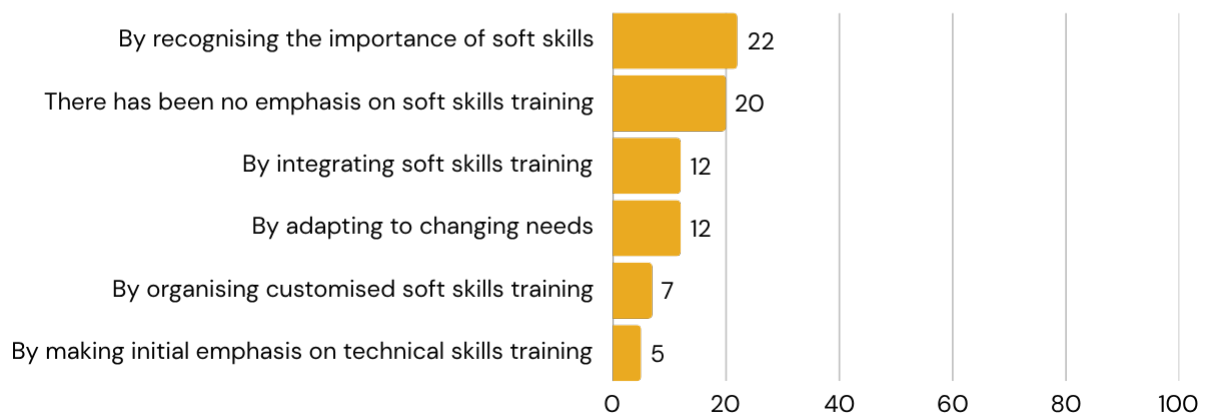
- 01 Soft skills initiatives may be more symbolic than strategic, added to tick boxes rather than embedded into performance culture.**
- 02 Timing lags may exist between planning and implementation.**
- 03 There may be a communication disconnect, where employers believe soft skills are being developed, but employees either aren't aware of it or don't feel the impact.**

Only 7% of respondents said soft skills are delivered via customised training, and just as few referenced adaptation to changing needs or integration into broader training strategies — all of which highlight a lack of tailoring and responsiveness.

While soft skills are now widely recognised in theory, there remains a significant perception that they are still not being prioritised in training practice. This highlights a gap between strategic statements and lived experience, and suggests that for many employees, soft skills still feel like a buzzword rather than a meaningful development focus.

How has the emphasis on soft skills evolved within your organisation's training strategies over the years? / How has the emphasis on soft skills evolved within your organisation's training strategies over the years?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



Does Soft Skills Training Make a Tangible Difference? It Depends Who You Ask

While communication and collaboration remain the most commonly cited outcomes of soft skills training for both employers and employees, overall confidence in its impact appears to be waning. Among employers, there has been a notable drop in sentiment — from 50% last year to 37% this year — suggesting either a reassessment of expected outcomes or perhaps a growing demand for more tangible, measurable returns. For employees, 34% also identified communication and collaboration as the main improvement, indicating consistency in how training is being perceived on the ground.

Beyond this, employers associated soft skills training with increased employee engagement and motivation (32%), enhanced performance results (29%), and improved leadership effectiveness and conflict resolution (both at 27%). These outcomes point to a recognition of soft skills as drivers of organisational dynamics and team functioning. Employees similarly acknowledged positive outcomes across leadership (23%), conflict resolution (24%), and engagement (22%).

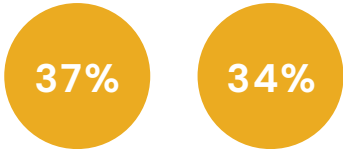
What stands out most in this data, however, is a significant perception gap around diversity, equity, and inclusion. While 17% of employees believe soft skills training has helped promote DEI, only 5%

of employers shared this view. This may reflect grassroots cultural shifts within teams that are not yet fully visible or acknowledged at leadership level. Additionally, nearly one in five employees (19%) and 15% of employers reported that soft skills training had no impact, raising important questions around content quality, delivery methods, and integration into wider organisational strategies.

In sum, while the benefits of soft skills training are still recognised, they are not universally felt.

Organisations may need to take a more structured and intentional approach to linking soft skills development with specific outcomes — especially in areas like leadership, collaboration, and inclusivity — if they want to realise its full potential across the business.

Can you provide examples of how soft skills training has positively impacted your organisation's performance or culture?



EMPLOYERS EMPLOYEES

Increased employee engagement and motivation	32%	22%
Improved overall performance results	29%	21%
Enhanced leadership effectiveness	27%	23%
Strengthened conflict resolution abilities	27%	24%
Enhanced customer service satisfaction	22%	16%
Cultivated emotional intelligence	17%	11%
No impact	15%	19%
Developed effective time management skills	7%	10%
Promoted DEI	5%	17%
Other	2%	0%



3.4 ADDRESSING SKILLS SHORTAGES

Tackling Skills Shortages

When exploring how organisations are addressing skills shortages, both employers and employees continue to place internal training programmes at the top of the list. For employers, 54% identified this as their primary strategy — unchanged from the previous year — while 42% of employees shared the same view, also maintaining last year's sentiment. This consistency suggests that internal development is firmly seen as the most sustainable solution to skills gaps.

However, some subtle but important shifts have emerged. Among employers, there has been a change in the order of priorities: employee retention strategies (37%) have overtaken recruitment of skilled workers (34%), indicating a stronger focus on retaining existing talent rather than replacing it. This shift reflects a broader move towards developing and engaging current employees, rather than relying solely on external hiring to address capability needs.

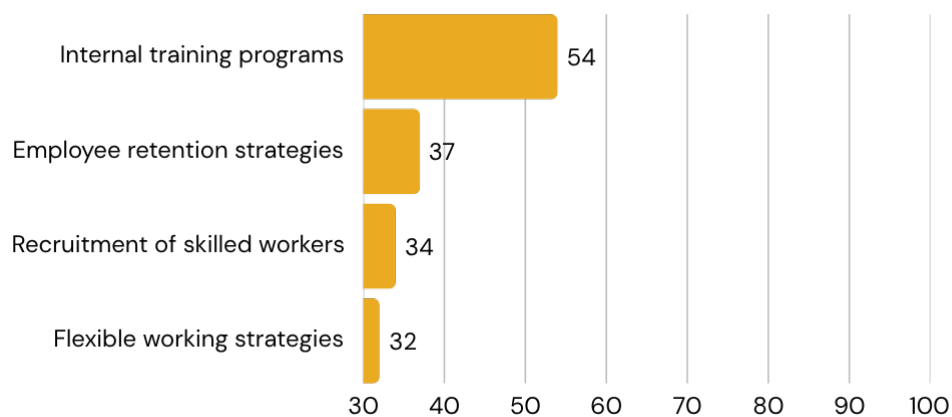
In addition, flexible working strategies are becoming more prominent, now selected by 32% of employers. This marks a significant increase and suggests that organisations are beginning to recognise the role of flexible work in enhancing retention, supporting work-life balance, and potentially attracting underrepresented or hard-to-reach talent pools.

From the employee side, the rankings remain consistent with last year's data. Following internal training, employees highlight recruitment (34%), external training partnerships (29%), and retention strategies (22%). The comparatively lower emphasis on retention by employees may indicate that many still experience a disconnect between retention talk and meaningful retention practices — or simply continue to see external recruitment as the organisation's more visible response to shortages.

Overall, this data suggests a positive shift towards a more people-centred approach, where internal capability-building and flexible arrangements are no longer treated as supplementary, but as core elements of workforce planning.

In what way does your organisation tackle skills shortages among its workforce?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



Impact of Staff Training to Align Employer and Employee

When examining how staff training contributes to bridging the gap between organisational goals and individual performance, the data reveals a growing awareness — but not yet full alignment — between employer and employee perspectives.

Employers continue to place the greatest emphasis on training as a way to improve job performance (22%), followed closely by aligning with organisational goals and addressing specific skill needs (both at 20%). Employees, however, appear less convinced of training's role in performance improvement, with only 15% selecting it as a key outcome. Instead, they highlight adaptability and flexibility (16%) as a more prominent result of training, which suggests a shift in how staff perceive value from development initiatives — more about adjusting to change than hitting targets.

This distinction is important. While employers seem to approach training from a performance and goal-setting perspective, employees may be more focused on its practical utility — how it helps them remain agile, manage evolving demands, and adapt to shifting workplace realities. In fact, employee ratings across all categories were slightly lower, pointing to a potential disconnect in how training is experienced versus how it is intended.

Still, the differences are less stark than in past years. The fact that alignment with organisational goals is acknowledged by both groups — 20% of employers and 19% of employees — shows progress. While we cannot yet speak of full alignment between training strategy and employee expectations, the direction is clear: workforce priorities are shifting, and companies are beginning to respond.

If organisations want to maximise the return on investment from training initiatives, they may need to intentionally bridge the perception gap, ensuring that development efforts feel relevant, timely, and clearly tied to individual as well as organisational outcomes.

How does staff training contribute to bridging the gap between employer expectations and employee skills?



	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
Improvement of job performance	22%	15%
Alignmnet with organisation goals	20%	19%
Skills development targeting specific needs	20%	13%
Enhanced adaptability and flexibility	10%	16%
Enhancement of collaboration	10%	8%



Challenges to Addressing Skills Shortages

A key takeaway from this year’s data is the sharp rise in resistance to change as a core challenge — now identified by 27% of employers and 25% of employees. This marks a significant increase and highlights why communication and strategy alignment, as discussed in earlier slides, are becoming more critical than ever.

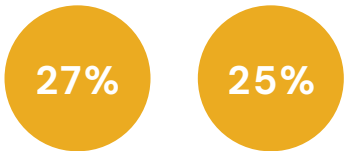
If organisations are to address skills shortages effectively, they must first address this resistance. This means not only delivering training, but also clearly communicating why it matters, how it supports business goals, and how it benefits individual roles. People need to understand the ‘why’ to engage with the ‘how’.

For employers, other challenges have also shifted. The competitive talent market, once a leading concern, is no longer seen as the primary issue — decreasing in perceived threat from 15% to 10%. Instead, lack of internal expertise is now more prominent, rising from 5% to 15%. Similarly, high employee turnover, once lower on the radar, has increased and now poses a more notable risk. For employees, turnover tops the list at 15%, reflecting growing anxiety around workplace stability. Measurement challenges and skill retention also persist, suggesting that the value and durability of training efforts are still being questioned by staff.

Ultimately, these findings suggest that if training is to be truly effective, it must be accompanied by a culture of openness, a willingness to evolve, and clear leadership that explains how training links to strategic change.



ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OR OBSTACLES YOUR ORGANISATION FACES IN ADDRESSING SKILLS SHORTAGES THROUGH TRAINING?



RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
Lack of internal expertise	15%	11%
High employee turnover	10%	15%
Competitive talent market	10%	8%
Other	10%	7%
Resistance from management	7%	7%
Measuring training effectiveness	7%	8%
Skill retention and transferability	5%	7%
Cultural barriers	5%	2%
No challenges encountered	2%	8%

3.5 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Identifying Training Needs

Performance appraisals and reviews continue to be the leading method for identifying training needs, cited by 27% of employers. This aligns closely with previous years. However, what’s noteworthy is the 4% increase in the use of formal training needs analysis, now adopted by 17% of respondents. This suggests a small but promising shift towards more structured and data-driven approaches to workforce development.

Feedback from management (12%) and yearly training plans linked to organisational objectives (10%) also remain consistent in their usage.

Less common practices — such as employee development plans, surveys, and job rotation

— continue to be underutilised, despite their potential to uncover needs that might otherwise be missed.

From the employee side, the results show agreement with these findings, indicating general alignment on how training needs are being identified — even if not yet fully optimised.

The data reinforces the importance of moving from informal or ad hoc methods towards more systematic and inclusive approaches. As skills demands continue to evolve, a clear and structured process will be key to addressing gaps effectively.

WHAT METHODOLOGIES OR TOOLS DOES YOUR ORGANISATION USE TO IDENTIFY GAPS IN EMPLOYEE SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE?

ACCORDING TO EMPLOYERS

Performance appraisals and reviews	27%
Forman training needs analysis	17%
Feedback from management	12%
Standard yearly training plan reflecting on organisational objectives	10%
Job rotation and cross-training opportunities	7%
Skills gap analysis by conducting skills assessments	5%
Employees’ requests	5%
Management requests	5%
No methodology	5%
Employee development plans	2%
Employee surveys and feedback	2%
Don’t know	2%

Changes in Training Needs Over the Past Year

When asked about how training needs have shifted, the results show that nearly half of employers (49%) believe that the training needs of their workforce have not changed over the past year. In contrast, a smaller percentage of employees (41%) feel the same — indicating a potential mismatch in perception.

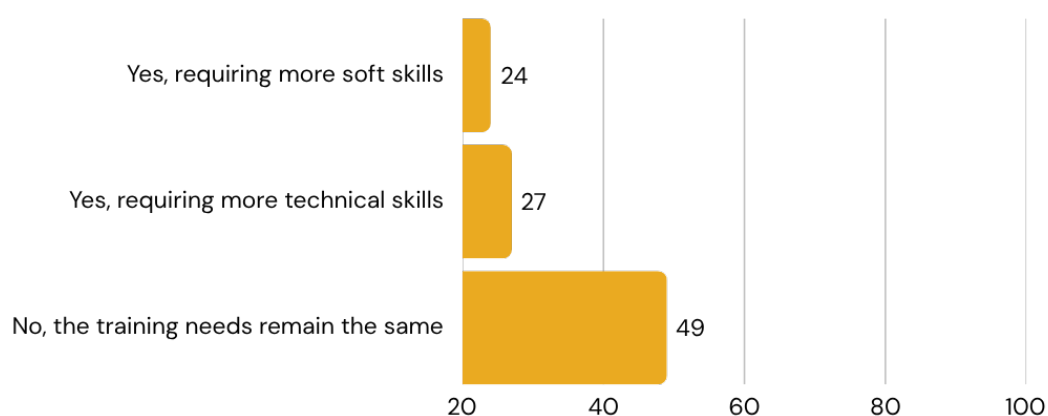
Meanwhile, both groups acknowledge a growing need for technical skills (27% employers vs 31% employees) and soft skills (24% employers vs 28% employees). The difference may be small, but it's meaningful — especially when employees are more inclined to recognise a need for both categories.

This data suggests that while some employers feel their development priorities have stabilised, employees may be experiencing evolving job demands and expect more targeted upskilling in both technical and interpersonal areas.

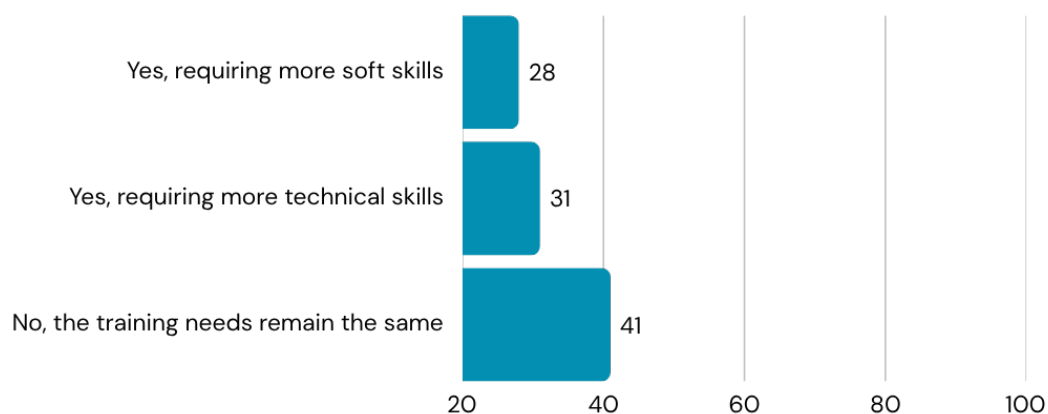
The takeaway: it's essential for organisations to keep the dialogue open and continuously revisit training priorities. As roles adapt to technological shifts, cross-functional collaboration, and performance expectations, organisations should be responsive to emerging skills needs — even if they appear subtle at first.

Over the past year, has there been any shifts or changes in the training needs of your organisation's employees?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



3.6 TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

Training continues to evolve with a strong preference for blended learning. The most common approach remains a mix of online and face-to-face training, reported by 37% of employers and 30% of employees, affirming alignment in perceptions of effective delivery.

Face-to-face learning saw a noticeable increase among employers, jumping 14% compared to previous figures, now sitting at 27%. Meanwhile, on-the-job training, while still prominent, dropped slightly for employers (17%) but saw a significant 18% increase among employees, now rated at 25%.

These top three methods — blended learning, face-to-face, and on-the-job training — clearly dominate, with much lower uptake in methods like webinars, job shadowing, and one-way online sessions.

This reflects a clear preference for interactive, personalised, and practical training formats across both groups.

The data highlights a shift back to more interpersonal learning environments while maintaining flexibility through hybrid formats — a likely response to post-pandemic adjustments and growing demands for contextualised, job-relevant learning.

What training methodologies does your organisation typically employ?



A MIX OF ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE

	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
Face-to-face	27%	11%
On the job	17%	15%
Online interactive sessions	5%	8%
Coaching and mentoring	5%	7%
Other	5%	7%
One-way pre-recorded webinars	2%	8%
Job Shadowing	2%	7%

Effectiveness of Training Methods

Perceptions of training effectiveness have improved, especially among employees. While employers remain confident, with 59% rating training as very effective, employees' confidence has grown, now at 49%, up from last year when satisfaction levels were notably lower.

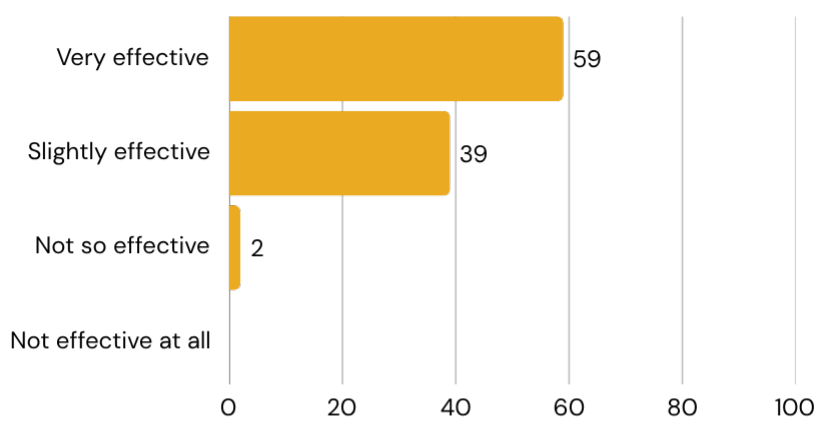
Both groups reported 39% rating training as slightly effective, suggesting that although most see training as beneficial, there's room to further enhance its impact. Only 2% of employers and 11% of employees felt training was "not so effective," while a minimal 1% of employees found it "not effective at all."

This year's data points to better alignment and improved satisfaction, likely reflecting refinements in delivery methods and content.

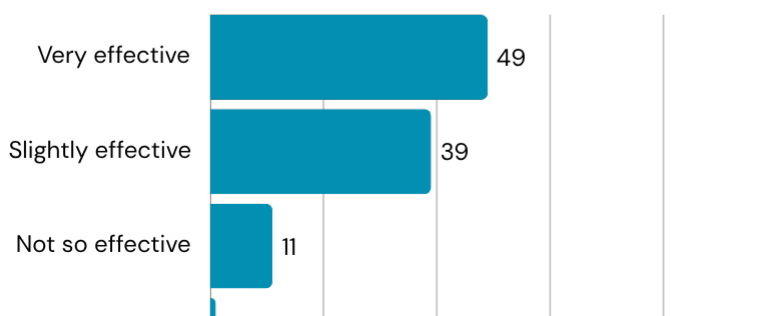
The upward shift in employee sentiment also signals that recent adaptations to methodology and strategy are resonating more effectively with staff.

How effective do you find each of these training methods in meeting the needs of your organisation?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



Preferred Training Methods

Employees continue to favour face-to-face training, though its preference dropped by 8%, now standing at 29%. This shift is largely explained by a 12% increase in preference for on-the-job training, now the third most preferred method at 21%.

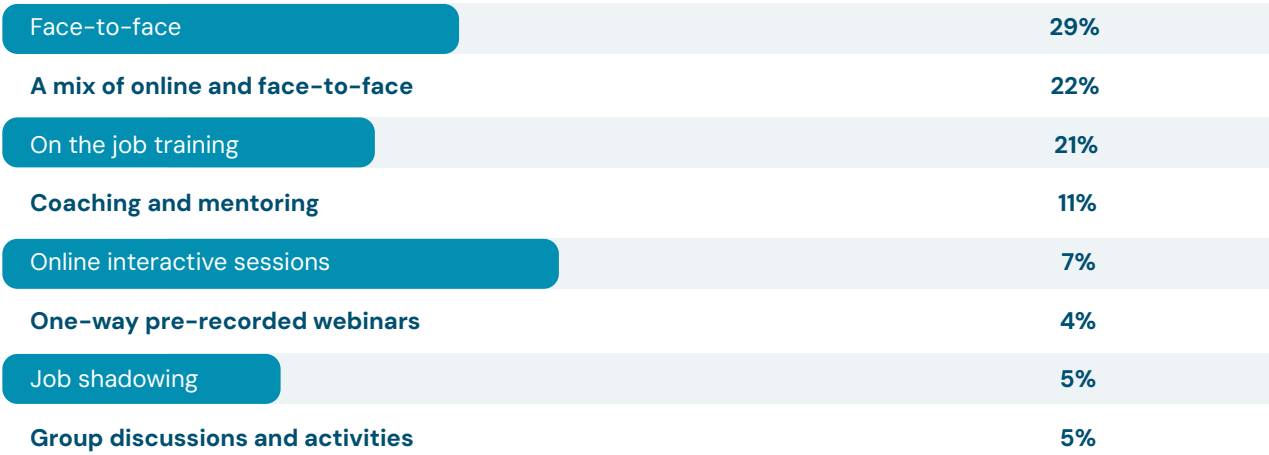
The second most popular choice remains a mix of online and face-to-face delivery (22%), reflecting a continued interest in blended learning formats. Other methods such as coaching and mentoring (11%) and online interactive sessions (7%) received

moderate interest, while formats like webinars, job shadowing, and group discussions remain less popular, each below 5%.

When asked about emerging or innovative training methods, no new trends were mentioned, despite growing conversations around AI. The only specific tool cited was the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS)—suggesting that while preferences are evolving, innovation in delivery remains modest and grounded in familiar systems.

And what method of training do you prefer the most?

ASKED ONLY TO EMPLOYEES



Challenges to Implementing Training

Employers continue to report similar challenges to previous years, with 'not enough time' remaining the top issue (42%). However, lack of interest has become a growing concern, increasing by 10% and now tied for third place.

For employees, there's a notable shift: for the first time, 'not enough time' has dropped to third place (18%), overtaken by a significant 11% increase

in lack of interest (now also at 22%). Budget constraints remain consistent for both groups.

This shift suggests that while structural barriers like time and funding remain, motivation and engagement with training are emerging as increasingly pressing concerns—particularly from the employees' point of view.

What, if any, are the challenges that your organisation faces when training employees?

Not enough time

Budget/Training funds

Lack of interest

Programs offered not suitable

Training methods not appropriate

EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYEES

42%

18%

27%

25%

22%

22%

5%

6%

2%

10%

Preference for Accredited or Unaccredited Programs

Employers showed a stronger preference for accredited programs this year, with a 11% increase in those opting for officially accredited training. At the same time, preference for unaccredited training dropped by 8%.

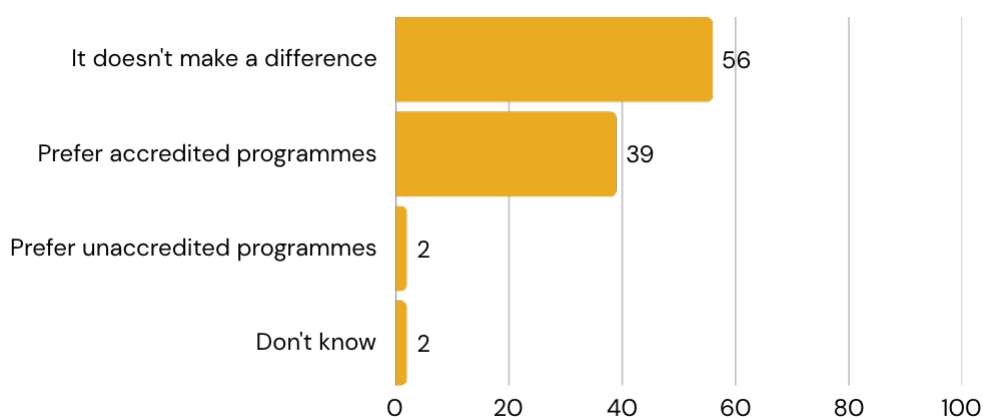
Employees, on the other hand, showed a decrease in their preference for accredited training,

with a slight rise in support for unaccredited programmes. However, the most notable shift for both groups is the increase in those who say 'it doesn't make a difference' — suggesting that accreditation may be losing its impact as a differentiator, or that other factors (like relevance, delivery, or timing) are now taking priority in training choices.

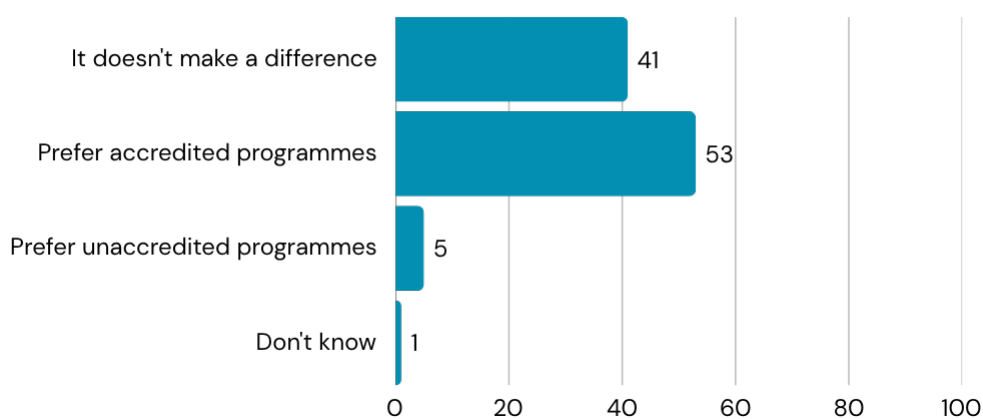


Do you prefer to offer training in officially accredited programs or unaccredited programs?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



Preference for Open or In-House Programs

Employers show no change in sentiment compared to previous results — the majority (49%) still prefer in-house programmes, with nearly half valuing the tailored nature of internal delivery. Only 7% prefer open programmes, while 44% say it doesn't make a difference.

Employees, however, show a clear shift: preference for in-house training has increased, now at 36%, while preference for open programmes dropped to 23%. This may reflect a growing appreciation for more contextualised, organisation-specific learning experiences. At the same time, 40% of employees still indicate it makes no difference, suggesting flexibility or other factors may still influence their preferences.

DO YOU PREFER IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAMS WHERE THE ONLY EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR ORGANISATION ARE PRESENT, OR DO YOU PREFER TO SEND EMPLOYEES TO OPEN PROGRAMS WHERE THERE WOULD BE PARTICIPANTS FROM A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT COMPANIES?



	EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES
It doesn't make a difference	27%	11%
Prefer in-house programmes	17%	15%
Prefer open programmes	5%	8%
Don't know	5%	7%

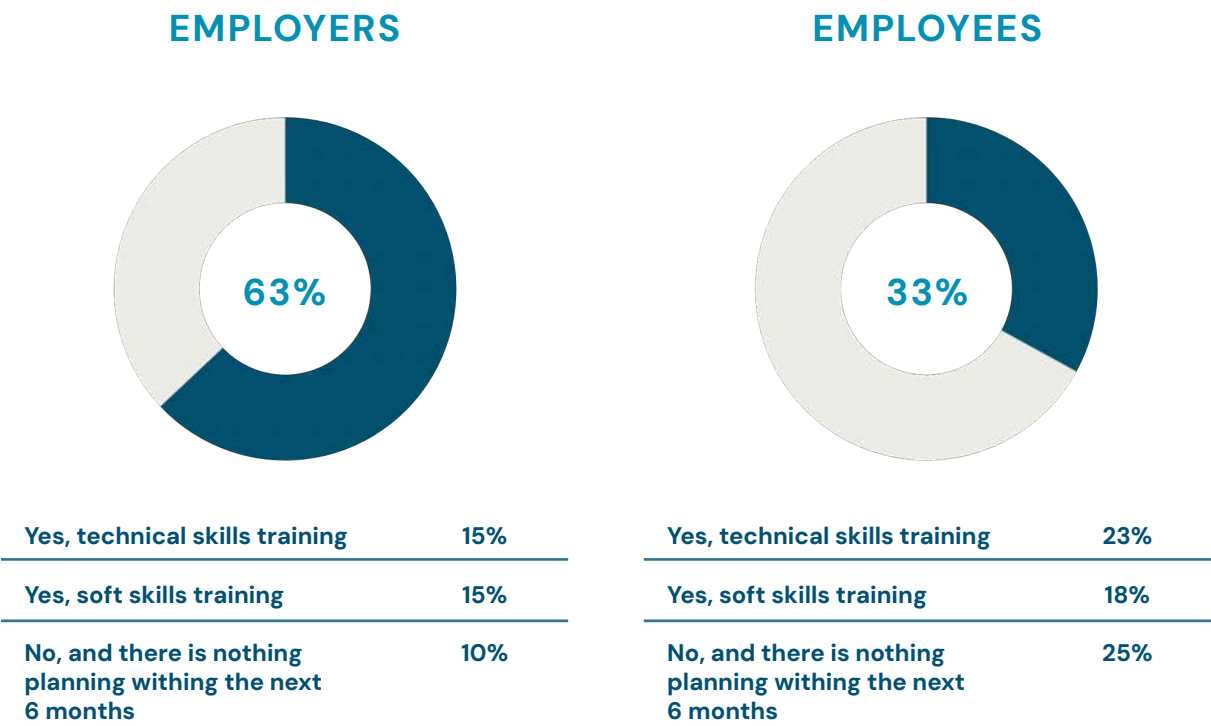
3.7 GENERAL SECTION

Training Organised in the Past Year

Employers reported that 63% of training organised included a mix of both technical and soft skills, reflecting a balanced approach to workforce development. This marks a clear prioritisation of blended skill-building. Only 15% focused exclusively on technical skills and just 7% on soft skills. 10% of employers stated that no training was held and nothing is planned in the

next 6 months. Employees, however, show a different picture – only 33% confirmed receiving both types of training, and a significant 25% say they haven’t received training and don’t expect any within the next 6 months. This points to a disconnect between employer intentions and employee experiences, and possibly a visibility or communication gap regarding training initiatives.

Has your organisation organised training in the past year? / Have you attended any training in the past year?



Preference of Training Provided or Received

There is a clear mismatch between employer and employee preferences when it comes to training focus.

Employers overwhelmingly prioritise soft skills training (59%) over technical training (34%), suggesting an emphasis on interpersonal competencies and behavioural development. Only 7% believe no training is required.

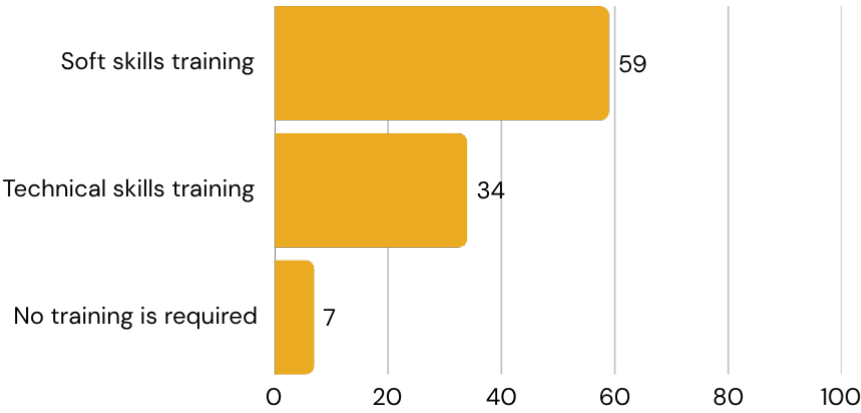
Employees, on the other hand, show a stronger preference for technical skills training (46%), with only 34% favouring soft skills. Notably, 21% state that no training is needed, a figure that's three times higher than employer sentiment.

This divide may indicate a gap in perceived relevance: while employers may view soft skills as essential for workplace effectiveness, employees may prioritise technical proficiency for career progression or job performance.

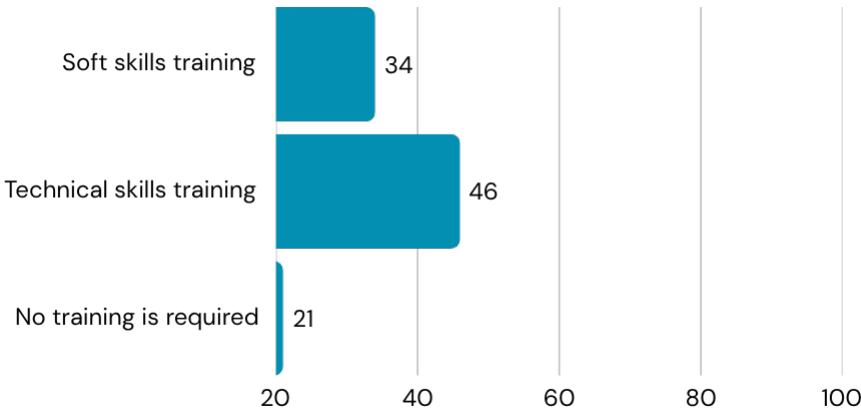


GIVEN THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU PREFER TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING OR SOFT SKILLS TRAINING? / GIVEN THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING OR SOFT SKILLS TRAINING?

EMPLOYERS



EMPLOYEES



HR ADVISORY

Organisation Assessment & Restructuring
Remuneration & Compensation Surveys
Employee Salary Policies & Practices
Performance Management Systems
HR Audit & Assessment
HR Business Partner

Employee Handbook – Practices & Policies
Company–Employee Communications
Succession Planning
Workplace Conflict Resolution
Job Evaluation

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

Candidate Search & Selection
Executive Recruitment
Interviewing Consultancy
Interviewing & Onboarding Processes
Recruitment Campaign Management
Employer Branding

Assessment Centres
Psychometric & Skill Assessments
Recruitment Process Outsourcing
Employment License Administration
Temping

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Short Professional Development Programmes
CIM, ILM & MISCO Accredited Qualifications
(MQF Level 3 – MQF Level 6)
Customised Training Programmes
Management & Leadership Training
Marketing Training

Executive One-to-One Coaching
Training Needs Analysis & Skills Audit
Development of Training Material
Evaluation of Training Programmes
Workshops

BUSINESS ADVISORY

Organisation Assessment & Restructuring
Family Business Planning & Relationship Management
Marketing Audit
Marketing Strategy
Corporate Governance

Change Management
Quality Management & ISO Consultancy
EU Funding Consultancy
Business Plan Writing & Forecasting
Business & Project Risk Appraisal

MARKETING & OPINION RESEARCH

Customer Research
Business-to-Business Research
Brand Awareness, Usage & Perception
Customer Experience & Satisfaction (Mystery Shopping)
Products / Services Usage & Attributes
Employee Engagement

Ad / Concept Testing
Customer Profiling
Market Share (Retail Audit)
Social Research
Opinion Polls
Data Analysis

TRAINING PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS REPORT