

State of the Workforce Survey 2023 Results

State of the Workforce 2023 from People 1st international examines the changing skills and labour market across the visitor economy sector. The third in a [series of themed reports](#), this edition focuses on training and development and examines the approaches being implemented by employers to enhance the skills of their teams.

3: Training and development

Training and development is imperative to upskill the workforce in response to the constantly evolving demands of the industry and to enhance productivity and performance, yet only 37% of employers feel the training they offer fully meets the skills needs of employees.

63%

of employers do not believe the training and development opportunities they offer fully meet the skills needs of employees



Challenges

Insufficient time and staffing challenges are the biggest training challenge for organisations, with backfilling the time needed to train staff raised as a cost and time issue. A number of businesses also point to a lack of funding and a lack of knowledge of the available training and education pathways.

The top five challenges businesses are experiencing in relation to training and development are:



The problem we have is that training and development opportunities are ad-hoc, can be low scale and there is a lack of transparency.”- Visitor economy employer

Coupled with these challenges, only 31% feel there are clear career progression routes in their organisation. Without strong career pathways in place that demonstrate the required skills and competencies to reach various roles, and the available training and professional development to enhance skills, employees and their managers are unable to make informed decisions about their growth.

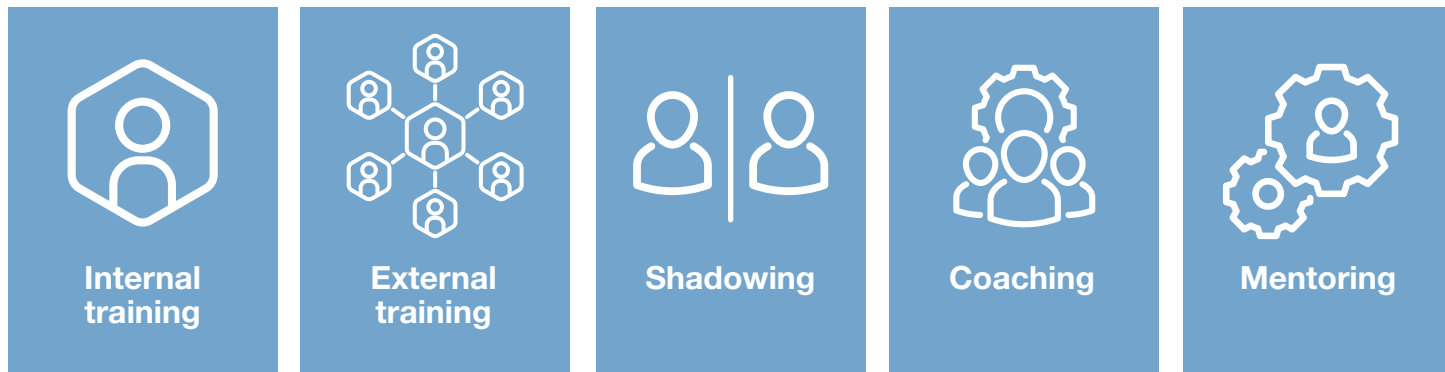
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Measuring impact

Effectiveness of training and development methods

Methods employers are finding most effective:

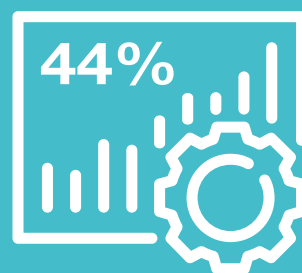


Methods employers would like to use more:



Only 44% of employers regularly measure the impact of training, meaning that whilst some may be investing significant resources in employee learning and development, without a system to measure training effectiveness, businesses may find themselves unsure of whether their investments are generating their desired results.

Only **44%** of employers regularly measure the impact of training



Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a popular solution to creating and retaining a pipeline of diverse talent, trained in the specific skills needed for business challenges.

58%
of employers signpost to career
pathways and progression
opportunities through
apprenticeships



Whilst apprenticeships offer wide ranging benefits to business, levy-paying employers are increasingly wanting more flexibility in their use of levy funds to help balance short term immediate skills gaps and longer term productivity-focused training.

64%
of employees would like more
flexibility in the use of the
apprenticeship levy.



"Broadening the use of the apprenticeship levy funds should be considered to pay for other training not just apprenticeships, to a certain percentage for example." - Visitor economy employer

Just under a quarter of employers have experienced a challenge with embedding apprenticeships. The most common reasons cited are resistance or lack of support from managers, the frameworks or standards not being aligned with skills needs, a lack of demand from employees and prospective employees and being unable to identify local providers to partner with.



"I would like to see more apprenticeships available that support the needs of the visitor attraction operations side of the sector that focus on creating a world-class visitor experience, managing the visitor journey and responsible tourism etc." - Visitor economy employer

People 1st International response

As technology continues to advance and global trade expands, the competition amongst businesses continues to rise. In this highly competitive environment, it is imperative for companies to have a well-trained workforce equipped with the necessary skills to operate efficiently and effectively. Neglecting training and development can result in employees feeling undervalued, leading to decreased workplace productivity, loyalty, and engagement and a potentially high turnover rate. Employers that showcase themselves as committed to the growth and success of their workforce are more likely to foster company loyalty and boost staff morale.

Transitioning towards flexible learning pathways that connect different levels of learning is becoming increasingly important to bridge the gap between skills and capabilities. Incorporating various forms of learning that are more interactive and more manageable in modular format can play an important role, particularly if delivered in a timely fashion when an employee needs them. Embracing a learning culture where a business dedicates the time and resources necessary to support continuing skills development and career advancement will help to encourage lifelong learning, fostering engaged, agile, loyal talent with relevant skills and the flexibility to adapt.

There are pockets of best practice being highlighted that demonstrate the benefit of effective partnerships between employers and further and higher education which, if expanded can provide the sector with sustainable solutions to recruitment and the development of employee skills. Working with local colleges/training providers is also a good way for businesses to understand more about the [range of government programmes](#) that are available for employers to upskill existing staff and hire new employees, some of which offer financial incentives. Linking with new [Local Visitor Economy Partnerships](#) which aim to support and grow the visitor economy can also help employers to access targeted business support

To help to unlock the full potential of learning and development, measuring the effectiveness of training programmes is a critical factor for the sector and will ensure future investment is based on informed decisions that deliver impact.



Viewpoints from employers on approaches and solutions include:



There's a need for better linking up the system with industry inserting itself into college planning to make the case for targeted courses and direct promotion to students about career opportunities.



Bespoke, modular courses should be on offer that fill skills shortages and meet the workforce needs of the industry.



The learning and development offer should be refocused around digital skills development via on-the-job learning through role-based scenarios. This will encourage peer mentoring to target apparent skills gaps.



It's imperative to focus on digital, green and social skills to take advantage of innovation and spur productivity growth.



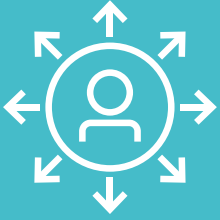
Short pre-employment programmes focused on industry orientation and core / soft skills aimed at youth, adults, and marginalised groups will help provide industry with a pipeline of talent armed with the skills industry needs.



The learning and development offer is largely digital, or sometimes hybrid – the medium doesn't always reflect skills need. In a people-centric industry, face-to-face learning helps nurture social skills and behaviours and critical thinking.



The benefits of an apprenticeship need to be better promoted. There are fantastic success stories which can help improve the appeal of the apprenticeships as a route into the sector.



Apprenticeships are an effective option and help build confidence in both digital and interpersonal skills, but Maths and English requirements still stand out as a significant barrier to many, opening this up would support more people and improve social mobility.



The tendency to pay apprentices the minimum wage can present further issues. Paying apprentices properly would encourage participation in schemes and see apprentices recognised as valued colleagues.

Find out more





Access further reports in our State of the Workforce 2023 series where we delve into the challenges and opportunities facing employers in terms of recruitment and retention and skills gaps. [View more here.](#)

To discuss any of the challenges, approaches and potential solutions, contact info@people1st.co.uk.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support in disseminating the skills survey and encouraging their employer networks to take part:

ABTA, ABTA Lifeline, Aviation Industry Skills Board, British Independent Retailers Association, Business Travel Association, HATS Network, Hospitality Action, Institute of Hospitality, Retail Trust, The University Caterers Organisation as well as regional tourism associations and People 1st International accredited colleges.

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