

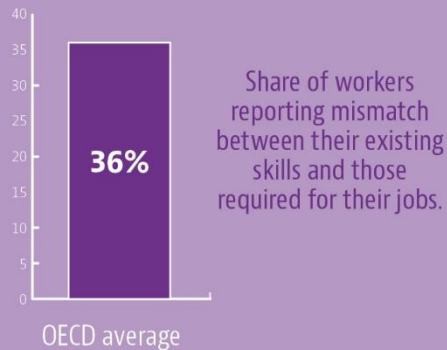
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Maintaining and developing skills of a multigenerational workforce

No other factor influences business performance and competitiveness more than its workers' skills and qualifications. However, persistent inequalities in training offers and take-up by age mean that many older workers are left without right skills to flourish in and prolong their careers. This is disadvantageous for firms: it risks lower productivity from declining performance when not investing in all employees, and the loss of experience as older workers' skills become obsolete and they exit the workforce. A key challenge for organisations is to put the development of employees from all age groups at the forefront of lifelong learning and combines it with a life-phase orientation. This chapter reviews the benefits of and some of the barriers to lifelong learning as well as firm strategies to maximise the diverse skills in the workforce.

Infographic 5.1. Key facts: Skills and training

Skills mismatch is costly for firms and workers



Training needs a boost



Despite the multifaceted organisational benefits, few adults participate in job-related training.

Never too old to train

Participation in training tends to decline with age and over careers, with the risk of workers' skills becoming obsolete.



Career reviews



Mid-life career reviews are useful tools at relatively low cost to help workers take stock of skill gaps and training needs.

Employees of all ages find value in mentoring



Share of workers who say mentorship or being a mentor has been extremely or very important to their career.

Investing in training tools for skills, knowledge and experience transfer



The return of investment in action learning – a training tool for managers – is estimated between 5 and 25 times the actual cost.

Introduction

Economies across the world are facing significant change which is highlighting the importance of opportunities for training to upskill and reskill the labour force. Technical progress, ageing populations, and globalisation are shaping changes in how and where we work (OECD and ILO, 2018^[1]). While overall employment has risen gradually across all OECD countries over recent decades and become more inclusive (e.g. rising employment of women and people aged 50+), there has also been a rise in a number of labour market inequalities (OECD, 2019^[2]). This is not just in the rewards to working but also in opportunities to prosper in a changing world of work by having the set of skills that matches labour market demands.

Considerable changes in skill demands are being driven by a combination of globalisation and technological change. Globalisation through international trade is making the world ever more connected, drawing together emerging and developing economies and leading, in some cases, to the relocation of some industries to labour markets with lower labour costs. These changes have consequences for changing the skills requirements of regional labour markets and influence creation of specific types of job. Partly driven by greater international competition, the fourth industrial revolution is also bringing radical change with a sharp focus on interconnectivity, automation, machine learning, and real-time data. With the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation becoming commonplace in a broad range of sectors and occupations.

These trends are transforming labour markets, and the content and tasks aligned to occupations. New jobs have been created, whilst at the same time others have been transformed, or become defunct. These changes necessarily have an impact on skills requirements (Sparreboom and Tarvid, 2016^[3]). Matching skill demand with supply, is crucial both for enterprises and societies, given that skills are at the heart of productivity levels (Adalet McGowan and Andrews, 2015^[4]). This, in tandem with ageing societies, indicates that employers must invest in skills to build resilience. They can no longer rely as heavily on the skills pipeline from initial education in the face of shrinking numbers of younger people joining the workforce and will need to rely more on keeping the skills of experienced workers up to date in the face of longer working lives and mounting skills obsolescence.

Why investing in skills makes sense

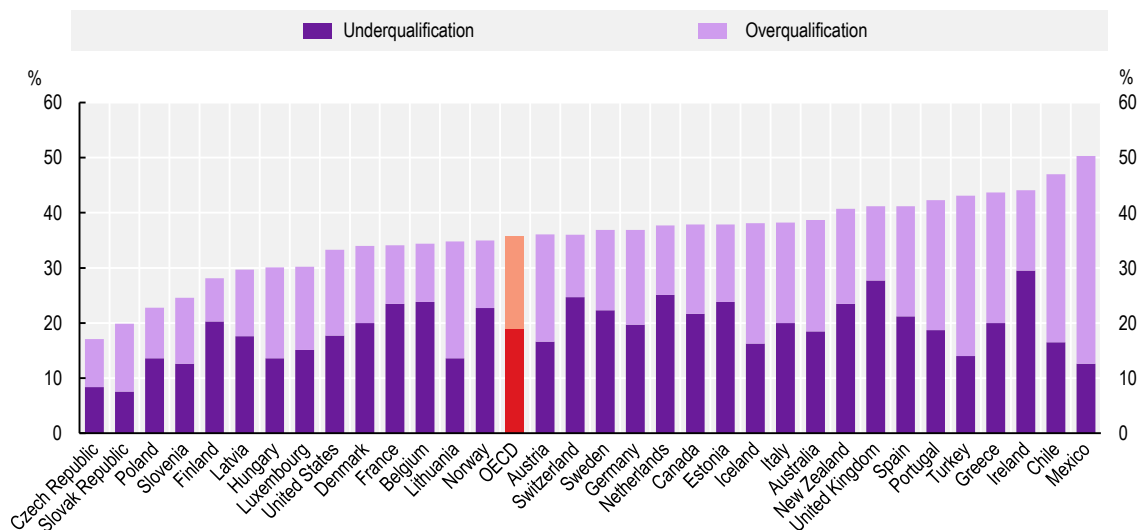
While technologies are automating some jobs and replacing some tasks within other jobs, aspects of work focused on social-interaction skills are becoming increasingly important (OECD, 2019^[2]). However, these changes in skill demands have not been fully reflected in the supply of skills in the workforce and consequently many employers – prior to COVID-19 – were facing skill shortages, particularly in respect of cognitive skills but surpluses of routine and physical ability skills. According to the OECD Skills for Jobs database 2018, more than five out of 10 jobs that are hard-to-fill (i.e. in shortage) are found in high-skilled occupations. These jobs range from managerial positions to highly skilled professionals in the health care, teaching or ICT sectors.

Skills shortage refers to hard-to-fill vacancies, where employers struggle to secure the skills they need amongst applicants whereas skills gaps focus on the skills already inside the business, where changes to job requirements change the skills mix needed. For firms, skills gaps reduce productivity and increase staff turnover, whereas skills shortages increase recruitment/hiring costs and delay or stall the adoption new technologies, which again has implications for productivity (OECD, 2017^[5]). In contrast, skills mismatch focuses on the individual and denotes where workers possess a level of qualification that is higher or lower than those required by their job. According to a multi-country analysis, on average, the total skills mismatch across the OECD amounts to 35.7%, with slightly more workers reporting they are under-skilled (18.9%) than over-skilled (16.8%). Some countries face greater skills mismatch than others

(Figure 5.1). Both under-skilling and over-skilling result in high costs to firms and society (Adalet McGowan and Andrews, 2015^[4]). Similarly, the World Bank's Enterprise Survey (Almeida, Behrman and Robalino, 2012^[6]) shows firm performance is affected when workers do not have the right skills.

Figure 5.1. Human capital is underutilised in many OECD countries

Percentage of workers with skills mismatch, by qualification level, 2016



Note: Mismatch by qualification level is calculated by comparing individuals' qualification level to that most commonly observed in their occupation. Qualification mismatch arises when workers have an educational attainment that is higher or lower than that required by their job. If their education level is higher than that required by their job, workers are classified as over-qualified; if the opposite is true, they are classified as underqualified. OECD is an unweighted average of the countries shown.

Source: OECD Skills for Jobs Database, <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=77595#>.

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Combine these factors with demographic changes and it is clear that a sole reliance on recruiting in skills may not always be a feasible strategy. Population ageing is also leading to a wider range of ages and life-stages in the workforce. And while this diversity of experience, generations and skills can add value, it also has implications for skills. Younger generations, sometimes called “digital natives” have grown up with information technology as a part of everyday life but because they have less workplace experience, their social-interaction skills can be less well developed; in contrast, older generations may face a steep learning curve to adapt to the changing skills requirements but also hold valuable expertise and experience. Lifelong learning opportunities within the workplace can build skills across the talent pool and facilitate a more innovative and productive economic environment for organisations. Training can also support skills and experience transfer between workers of different ages and life-stages, again building resilience for businesses. Alongside harnessing the capabilities of a more diverse talent pool, it is therefore imperative that employers ensure their employees are equipped for the changing nature of work.

Advantages of an all-age training policy

The evidence shows there are advantages to upskilling and reskilling employees for employers; specifically, that workforce training is a key element of success. Huselid and Becker (2011^[7]) argue that focusing on a skilled talent pool of employees is the optimal way for organisations to maintain sustainability. Kraiger (2003^[8]) and Noe (2010^[9]) demonstrate that the most successful organisations spend more on developing their employees. Four key domains have been identified through which lifelong learning and training improve overall organisational performance (Almeida, Behrman and Robalino, 2012^[6]; European Commission, 2018^[10]; Salas et al., 2012^[11]).

- **Skilled workforce** – said to be the crux of organisational performance as it is imperative for organisations to have access to generalised and job-specific skills. Evidence also shows that a skilled workforce is better able to adapt to changing work environments.
- **Productivity and efficiency:** employee training leads to more efficient work practices and higher productivity levels. Reducing costs by eliminating inefficient work practices leads to competitive advantage. Developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enhance employee performance leads to higher productivity.
- **Innovation:** a gap in crucial/essential skills can lead to a delay in the development of new products and/or services. Training leads both to a better allocation and performance of tasks, which in turn affects innovation performance, and increases the likelihood of organisations performing well in highly competitive economic environments.
- **Motivation:** offering training and development opportunities makes organisations attractive (“employers of choice”) and improves the organisational culture. High levels of employee engagement and commitment to organisations lead to lower staff turnover costs.

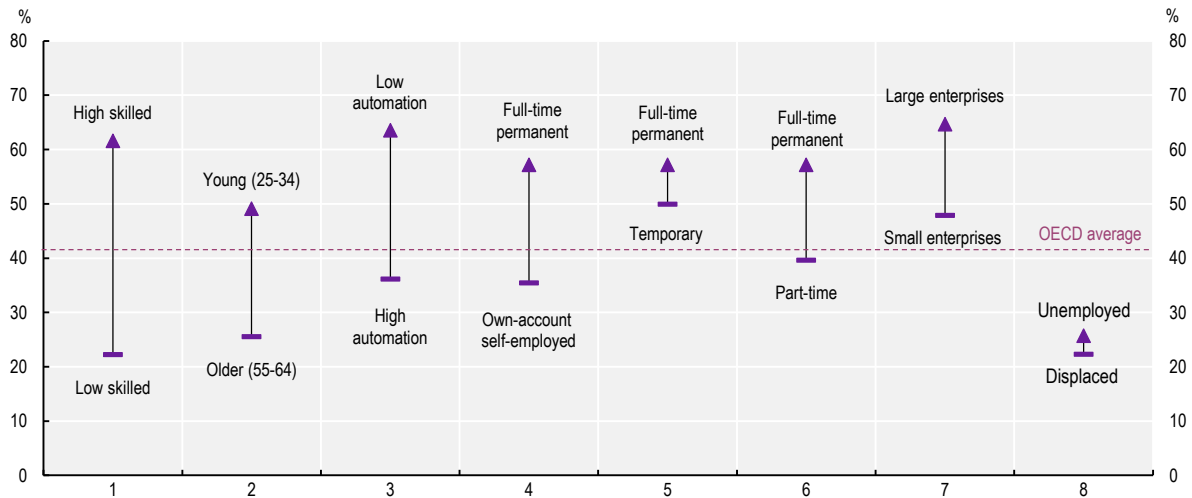
Despite the range of organisational benefits can bring, participation in job-related training is low

According to the OECD’s International Assessment of Adult Competencies skills survey (PIAAC), only around 40% of adults participate in job-related training in any given year, on average, although there are large country differences. Importantly for the multi-generation and life-stage workforce, there are disparities in access to training by different demographic and work contract factors (Figure 5.2):

- Individuals with lower skills level receive less training from employers, compared to individuals with higher skills levels.
- A higher share of younger individuals (25-34) participate in job-related training compared to their older counterparts (55-64).
- A higher share of full-time employees report job-related training, compared to those working part-time and those on temporary contracts (as well as self-employed individuals).
- Employees in larger organisations (+250) are more likely to participate in training at work than those in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Figure 5.2. Participation in job-related training by group, OECD average

Share of adults (16-65) in each group that participate in training, 2012/2015



Note: Share of adults who participated in formal or non-formal job-related training over the previous 12 months. Data refer to 2012 for most countries, except for Chile, Greece, Israel, Lithuania, New Zealand, Slovenia and Turkey where they refer to 2015. Low (high) skilled refers to adults who score at level 1 or below (levels 4 or 5) on the PIAAC literacy scale. High (low) automation refers to adults at high (low) risk of automation. Own-account workers are the self-employed without employees. Temporary refers to workers on fixed term or temporary work agency contracts. Part-time refers to adults who work less than 30 hours per week. Full-time permanent are adults in full-time jobs with an indefinite work contract. Unemployed refers to all unemployed who have not been dismissed for economic reasons in their last job; displaced refers to unemployed adults who have been dismissed for economic reasons in the last job. Large enterprises have 250 and over employees. Small enterprises have less than 250 employees. The OECD average (41%) refers to the unweighted average participation in job-related training among all adults among OECD countries participating in the Survey for Adult Skills (PIAAC).

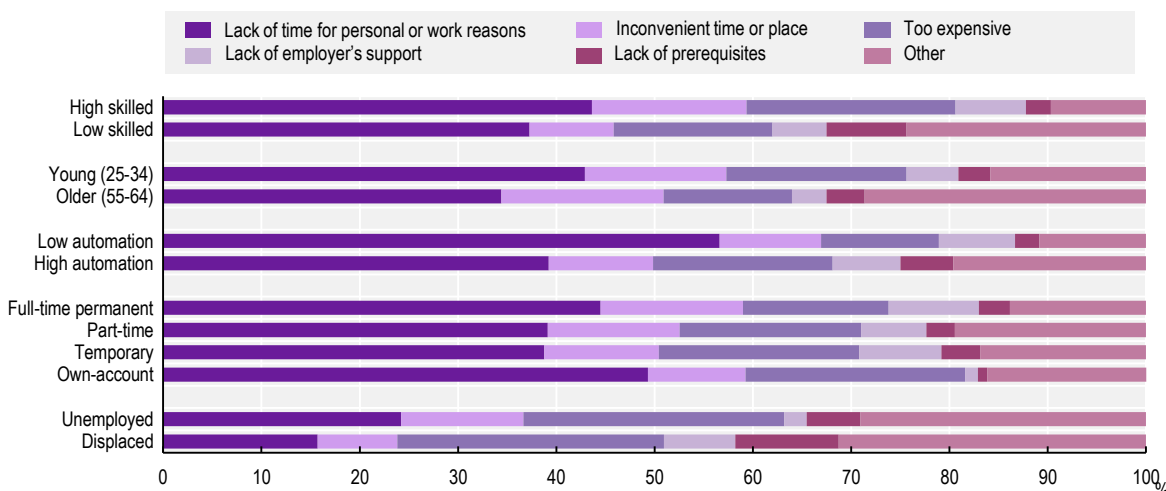
Source: Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, <https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/>.

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One explanatory factor is the varying national contexts and systems including policies for initial and continuing vocational education. It does not simply reflect a lack of interest in training as there are many workers in all countries who wish to pursue training or education, but who do not do so. Reasons for this range from lack of time due to work, to lack of financial resources, and a lack of support from the employer (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3. Reasons for not training, by group, OECD average

Reasons for not training among adults who did not train but would have liked to, by group, 2012, 2015



Note: Share of adults who participate in formal or non-formal job-related training over the previous 12 months. Data refer to 2012 for most countries, except for Chile, Greece, Israel, Lithuania, New Zealand, Slovenia and Turkey where they refer to 2015. Low (high) skilled refers to adults who score at level 1 or below (levels 4 or 5) on the PIAAC literacy scale. High (low) automation refers to adults at high (low) risk of automation. Own-account workers are the self-employed without employees. Temporary refers to workers on fixed term or temporary work agency contracts. Part-time refers to adults who work less than 30 hours per week. Full-time permanent are adults in full-time jobs with an indefinite work contract. Unemployed refers to all unemployed who have not been dismissed for economic reasons in their last job; displaced refers to unemployed adults who have been dismissed for economic reasons in the last job. Lack of time for personal or work reasons refers to lack of time due to "being too busy at work" or due to "childcare or family responsibilities".

Source: OECD (2019^[2]), *OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The Future of Work*, Figure 6.7, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ee00155-en>.

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This is a challenge for workplace learning initiatives. On the one hand, those less likely to be trained are also the most at risk for global trends such as automation, as shown in the study of (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018^[12]). On the other hand, those who are already well equipped receive the most training and thereby their resilience within the organisation is further increased.

The risks for the multigenerational, multi-life-stage workforce are that employees are developed only when they are young and their skills are allowed to depreciate over time, meaning that as they age, employees and particularly lower skilled employees do not receive the training that enable organisations to adapt. Moreover, commentators agree that without further development many skills have a shelf-life, a critical amount of time before they become obsolete. In this context, it is important to continuously develop skills of workers, regardless of the life-phase. It also provides a further argument that the trend to offer less training opportunities to older workers needs to be countered. Working lives are being extended all across Europe; even when an individual is in the final stage of their career, they will still be in work for those years when their skills are most at risk of becoming obsolete. They too, as well as organisations, still benefit from training opportunities (McGill and Beaty, 1992/2013^[13]; Newton et al., 2005^[14]; Rosenberg, Heimler and Morote, 2012^[15]). Additionally, there is high quality evidence that captures the impacts that training older workers can have. Berg et al. (2015^[16]) examine the relationship between training, wages and inclination to retire by gender. They find that training has a direct impact on the retention of women in work, and particularly in supporting the advancement of those in lower wage jobs. The effect for men is somewhat different and a causal relationship was not established. In contrast, Boockmann, Fries and Göbel (2012^[17]) find that being part of a mixed age team can support the retention of older employees in work, but that training alone is not sufficient to achieve this.

By not having an all-age training policy the needs of some workers are overlooked, with risks to the company. In determining who needs training, the evidence suggests that the needs of lower skilled workers, older workers and those on part-time or temporary contracts require key consideration. For older workers, the greater elapsed time since leaving full-time education can be an informative factor in making decisions on training needs.

In terms of taking generational differences into account in the design of training programmes, the evidence is mixed. Reeves (2007^[18]) based on a review of educational research finds “virtually no research-based findings or evidence drawn from robust learning theory that supports the differential effectiveness of different instructional designs or strategies across the generations. Nor is there a compelling case for the development of a new instructional design model to accommodate generational differences”. In contrast, Sibaran et al. (2015^[19]) find an influence of generation on informal self-directed and team learning and believe that “understanding generational differences will enable individuals to learn informally and create a conducive team climate that will lead to effective informal team learning”. This perhaps emphasises the importance of a learning culture within organisations that appreciates the different contexts and circumstances of individuals. For workers of all ages, it is important that training builds on existing skills and has a direct link with enhancing career prospects; it is also important that it is tailored to the learning needs of each person. For some, especially more experienced workers, “hands-on” training or workplace-based training may be more effective than classroom or more theoretical training.

Workplace training policies and practices for optimising the benefits of a multigenerational workforce

Companies deploy a wide range of approaches to training the workforce, which reflect the need for more tailored approaches to training that take account of the different learning needs and styles of a diverse workforce (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Table on firm-level training strategies

Job enrichment	Successor-/assistance positions
Job enlargement	Project work
Working team	Quality circle
Job rotation	Presentation
Brainstorming	Role play
Planned instruction/initial training	Overtaking proxy tasks (substituting colleagues)
Introduction of new staff members	Team building
Internship	Team training
Training courses	Semi-autonomous team
Case study	Trainee programme
Group counselling interview	Practice firms
Group dynamic approaches	Behaviour training
Conference, workshop/symposium, trade fair	Workshop
Career planning	Audio-visual training
Teaching conversation	Simulation (virtual reality, computer-assisted instruction, programmed instruction, business games)
Learning workshop	
Mentoring, coaching	e-learning
Appraisal interview	Action/active learning

Source: Cedefop (2015^[20]), “Work-based learning in continuing vocational education and training: policies and practices in Europe”, <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/publications-and-resources/publications/5549>.

The rest of the chapter provides an overview of selected training practices¹ and their effectiveness in optimising the benefits of a multigenerational workforce. Few, if any studies, have tracked the impact of training on the bottom line in terms of firm profitability or competitiveness given the difficulties of teasing out the impact of training from the many other factors that play a role. Instead, evaluations and assessments of effectiveness tend to focus on what may be considered intermediate measures of employee engagement and individual productivity. While there may not be evidence of causal links between these intermediate outcomes and the organisational success, this is what commonly employers measure which indicates their importance from employers' perspectives. Finally, it is important to understand that practices aimed at enhancing employees' competences should not be one-off, but rather form a continuous part of organisational practice. As such, the literature recommends that training practices are embedded in a "training framework" (Salas et al., 2012_[11]) (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. The training framework consists of three components:

- **Prior to training:** an analysis of the organisation's and individual's needs in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudinal competences. A careful balance between these two perspectives is important: research demonstrates that where employees are able to influence the decision-making process for a training intervention, they are more positively disposed and receptive to it (Baldwin, Magjuka and Loher, 1991_[21]).
- **Training intervention:** besides using the appropriate training strategy, it is important to ensure employees are "bought in" to the advantages of training; the evidence suggests that employees need to have the "right mindset" and to achieve this, employers need to build trainees' self-efficacy, promote a learning orientation, and bolster motivation to learn.
- **Evaluation of training:** on completion of training, best practice suggests a need to analyse whether the learning objectives have been met and if this has had an impact on work performance. This enables modifications to training practices to ensure their effectiveness.

Source: Salas et al. (2012_[11]), "The Science of Training and Development in Organizations", <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1529100612436661>.

The starting point to an all-age training policy: identifying organisational and individual training needs

To encourage training across the life-course, tools that enable organisations to understand employees' current competence, capability and aspirations are important. These can take various forms, depending on the type of firm and characteristics of their workers, and focus on both individual and organisational level development needs and approaches. From the life-course perspective, regularly reviewing skills and work tasks, as well as capability for current and future roles, enables the organisation to motivate and maximise the deployment of staff in different contexts. Below section sets out some of the tools organisations can use for these purposes.

Identifying training needs helps to focus employers' investment and ensure money is well spent

Conducting a training needs analysis (TNA) can underpin effective implementation of an organisation's training strategy. The TNA identifies who needs to be trained, in which skills, and the best approach to meeting this need (Salas et al., 2012_[11]). Three strands of analyses feed into a TNA: job-task,

organisational, and person analysis. These analyses should happen in parallel, to ensure interaction between the components.

- The job-task element maps employees' skills to those required by their job, with a clear distinction drawn between what an employee "needs to know", as opposed to what they "need to access". Since individuals do not have unlimited capacity to retain information, training strategies should focus on the skills, competences and knowledge necessary to perform the job well, and separately on the resources available to them to support them in their work. Additionally, cognitive task analysis – an examination of how people think, organize and structure information, and how they learn – can be beneficial for knowledge-based jobs. The job-tasks analysis can assess the skills needed at team level exploring how job-tasks are taken forward within a team, and the shape of effective team in this context (Salas et al., 2012^[11]).
- The organisational needs analysis identifies the skills, jobs, and/or functions that are most critical to the organisation's success. Training needs are prioritised based upon the core-business of the organisation. This part of the TNA explores the "*organisational environment*", i.e. the limiting and enabling factors for rolling out an effective training strategy. Research has shown that this can be beneficial to employees' positive perception of, and commitment to and engagement in training interventions (Salas et al., 2012^[11]).
- The person analysis seeks to ensure that employees are prioritised for training based on their skills needs as assessed by the job-task assessment ensuring those with skills gaps receive training so they are fully competent and productive. This assessment can take account of the preferred learning styles of prospective trainees, to help maximise training effectiveness. This part of the TNA therefore encourages a strong alignment between training content and methods, and the individual (Salas et al., 2012^[11]).

A training needs analysis is useful, especially when training can be associated with high costs in respect of workers' time. The TNA helps to focus employers' investment and ensure is money well spent. This helps to ensure that training and learning opportunities that are offered have a positive impact on organisation performance, as well as employee engagement, and staff retention (Thales Group, 2020^[22]). It is also relevant for small and medium-sized enterprises where some form of TNA occurs even if informally and where advice could be useful in making this process more explicit.

Mid-life career reviews

For mid-career and older workers, the mid-life career review (MCR) can play an important role in extending working lives. An MCR aims to assess to which extent the job still matches the worker and identify any actions needed to bridge the gap. Various aspects of working life are taken into account via a holistic approach, ranging from individual characteristics and the physical and psychological ability to perform a particular job, to the financial situation of the worker and adjustment strategies. The ultimate objective of MCRs is to increase the workers' employability. They are viewed as an important tool to extend working lives, especially in light of rapid population ageing. A pre-requisite is that an MCR takes place before the physical and psychological deterioration of a worker, when a professional reorientation is still viable. The literature indicates that conducting an MCR around the age of 40 to 50 is the ideal moment. The anticipatory nature of mid-life career reviews enables employers and employees to act in a timely and flexible manner on careers from a life-cycle perspective (Center for Ageing Better, 2018^[23]; Eurofound, 2016^[24]).

Although MCRs are regarded as a useful tool, not many countries have rolled out a national MCR programme although some pilots have been undertaken. Additionally, the format and content of MCRs can vary by country approaches in terms of funding, targets, outcomes, and ownership making their effects difficult to compare (Eurofound, 2016^[24]). Because of this, the evidence finds costs associated with a mid-life career review to be variable. In the United Kingdom example, it was estimated that mid-life career

reviews cost between GBP 50-350 per client, and have a positive impact on both “clients” (i.e. employees) and employers. These impacts included an increase in motivation and confidence levels in the individual, as well as increased take-up of training and learning opportunities. Employers gained a more motivated workforce, resulting in higher productivity.

While an MCR looks into the changes an employee needs to remain optimally effective in work, the results of MCRs spurred some employers on to apply an organisational perspective to their skills deficit (Eurofound, 2016^[24]; NIACE, 2015^[25]), (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Career Planning & Training of Older Workers in Solystic (France)

Solystic is a French company which specialises in the design, manufacturing, marketing and installation of automatic postal sorting and distribution equipment. Workers at Solystic are employed in manufacturing, installation, trade, design studies, engineering, marketing, programme management and support services such as human resources (HR), finance and information technology. Of the 450 staff employed, 58% are aged over 45 and 37% have more than 20 years of experience in the company. Market forces which reduced the demand for postal equipment, as well as demographic changes within the company, have meant that Solystic needs to retain its older employees.

Career management & training for older workers

Solystic introduced a number of practices aimed at increasing career longevity and to maintain the employability of workers as they aged. This was both to retain experience and knowledge within the company, and also to enable older workers to end their careers in good health.

- All workers reaching the ages of 45, 50, 55 and 60, and all workers over the age of 57 who request it, can meet with HR for career discussions (*entretien de deuxième partie de carrière*) which are separate from their annual appraisal. Here, they can discuss their current working conditions and review their career prospects. Standardised procedures agreed with social partners mandate discussion of working conditions, workload, physical capacities and restraints, commuting time, issues related to workstations, and their career prospects and desire for change. The meetings have concrete outcomes, such as work-time arrangements, adaptations of workstations, training and career development.
- All requests from employees over the age of 55 to move from full-time to part-time work are carefully considered, with an agreement that at least 50% of these requests will be accepted. For older workers changing to part-time work, the company covers the wage gap up to 80%, guaranteeing that pension entitlements will not be lost for these employees.
- Vocational training, mentoring and the transition between employment and retirement are all considered by Solystic to be important issues for the well-being of older workers. A minimum of 30% of workers over 50 are offered technical skills training to ensure continued employability. All employees over 55 who wish to retire progressively and continue working part-time are permitted to do this.
- In the space of four years the proportion of older workers requesting a career discussion increased from 20% to almost 80%, and all requests for part-time working have been approved, as have many other requests for other forms of flexible working.

Self-identifying training needs

Personal and professional development plans (PDPs) encourage the individual to take control of their training needs. These are plans made by and for employees, usually working with their line managers, which set out a course-of-action to develop the individual in line with their goals and aspirations, alongside the requirements of their job. These plans may identify helpful training programmes but development may result from other approaches including on-the-job learning, interim appointments and job shadowing. In theory, PDPs can go beyond the needs for the current job, and can involve wider needs for the individual (Tamkin, Barber and Hirsh, 1995^[26]). PDPs should be carried out regularly, steering development, but should also be guided after appraisals (Beausaert, Segers and Gijsselaers, 2011^[27]). PDPs can have various purposes, such as professional development, reflective learning, encourage confidence levels etc. (Beausaert, Segers and Grohnert, 2014^[28]). The literature is inconclusive about the effectiveness of PDPs: some researchers have found a positive impact on performance and learning opportunities, whilst others found it made no difference (Beausaert, Segers and Gijsselaers, 2011^[27]; Beausaert et al., 2013^[29]). However, there are indications that the PDPs success stands or falls with the context wherein the PDP is implemented. Both organisational, as well as individual conditions come into play here. It is crucial that line managers, but also other colleagues as well as HR personnel are supportive of personal development planning. Both feedback on the PDP and future outlook, in a timely and constructive manner, are paramount to its success. A PDP ought to have clear goals, be well-structured, and have useful guidelines. Lastly, a PDP embedded in an organisational learning environment makes it not another check-box exercise, but rather a practical tool (Beausaert, Segers and Grohnert, 2014^[28]). These contextual factors spur motivation, perceived feasibility, and a reflective stand towards PDPs amongst workers.

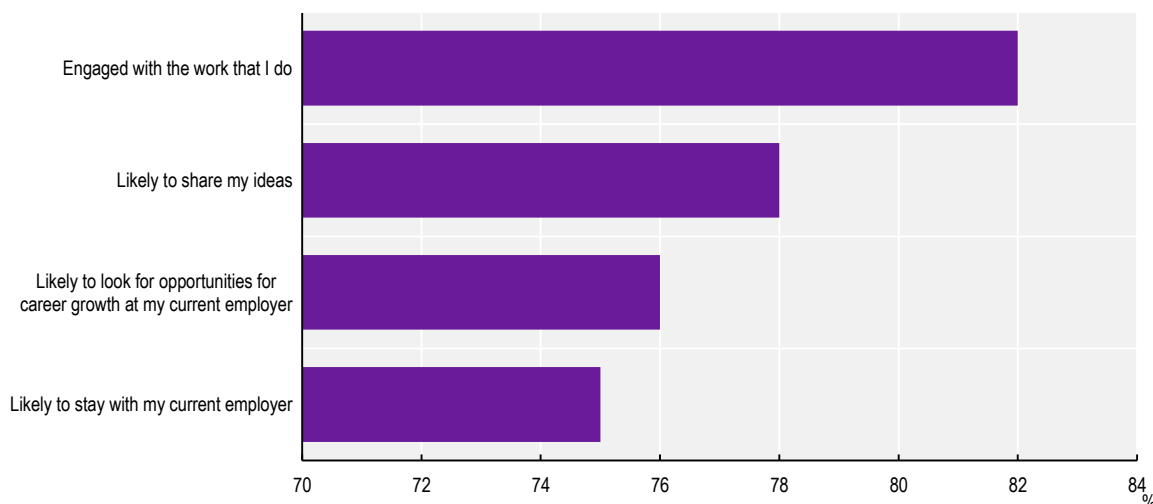
Career conversations

Career conversations (CC) are similar to PDPs in respect of their aims. They are a means to steer an individual to work opportunities that help them build towards their goals, whilst at the same time the organisation benefits by helping career development, which in turn is a motivating action (Evans, 2016^[30]; Kidd, Hirsh and Jackson, 2003^[31]). The aim is for mutual benefits to emerge, given that the personal development path of the employee can be aligned with the organisation's corporate goals, and vice versa (Borgen, Butterfield and Lalande, 2013^[32]; Evans, 2016^[30]).


There is no single definition or set of attributes to career conversations accepted by theorists and practitioners. However some characteristics that consistently appear throughout the literature are discussion of: (i) career management, (ii) skills and performance, (iii) potential trajectories within the organisation, (iv) training possibilities, (v) mentoring possibilities, (vi) and setting up an action plan (Borgen, Butterfield and Lalande, 2013^[32]). It is clear that career conversations as such do not lead to personal development. Rather, through the conversation, actions plan and other ways to grow in competences and abilities are devised. The evidence suggests that organisations gain substantially from investing in career conversations – this practice can lead to opportunities for employees to grow in their role, gaining skills valuable skills that are an asset to the organisation. The underlying theory is that a better alignment between the job and the skills means a better allocation of human capital within an organisation (CIPD, 2005^[33]). It can also lead to greater employee engagement and motivation (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4. Career development talks lead to higher work engagement

If career conversations were more regular I would be more...



Source: Right Management, (2016^[34]), *Talk The Talk: How Ongoing Career Conversations Drive Business Success: Increase Employee Engagement And Performance By Embedding Ongoing Career Conversations Into Your Organizational Culture*.

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The corporate approach to skills and talent development at Rolls Royce illustrates that active engagement of senior leadership, HR, line managers and individuals can help the firm nurture and retain vital knowledge of older workers and ensure they have the chance to enhance their skills and work in teams where knowledge transfer is encouraged (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Rolls-Royce: Development Cells and Skill Owners

Rolls-Royce plc operates in four global markets: civil aerospace, defence aerospace, marine and energy. Career development is seen as being central to both skill deployment and employee development. Career paths take place in three dimensions: market-facing businesses, functions and geographical locations. Line managers have a responsibility to be proactive in the skill and career development of their staff. Managers work with each other on this agenda through a process called “Development Cells”. At a Development Cell meeting, leaders and their teams collectively review the potential and capability of their people against business needs. The top-level development cell, led by the CEO, focuses on the corporate succession process and is linked with high-level business reviews.

Development Cells at all levels examine skill needs and identify people who need a job move or some particular development. What is unusual is that they drill this proactive development approach right down through the whole managerial and professional population, not just young, high-potential talent. The aim is to establish a strongly developmental environment that is both business-focused and interested in each individual regardless of background or age. There is a strong emphasis on training and development, encompassing leadership and business skills as well as technical expertise and product-specific know-how, which often resides in its longer service and older employees.

Skill and career development within functions is strengthened by the activities of Company Skill Owners. In the engineering function, where Skill Owners are well established, 21 Skill Groups have been identified, each with a Skill Owner. These are the leading authority in their skill for the company globally.

They are charged with being “a driving force in the development of professionals” and are deeply involved in both skill development and career development from graduate recruitment up to the highest levels of older and more experienced employees.

Skill Owners are linked into relevant development cells, where they work jointly with line managers. Alongside these management-led review processes, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for managing their own careers. They are supported by the line, and by self-help career planning tools and an open internal job market. HR offers direct support to both employees and line managers. There is an obvious need to link the Development Cell discussions to the individual employees they cover. Managers have this responsibility. Some employees are proactive in this by, for example, booking discussions with their manager when they know a Cell meeting is coming up, and asking for feedback afterwards.

As the company generates as much profit from servicing existing products as manufacturing new ones, the know-how and experience of its older workers is a major business asset. This corporate approach to skill and talent development helps to “curate”, nurture and retain this vital knowledge and experience and ensures that older workers have the chance to enhance their skills and work in teams where knowledge transfer is encouraged.

Systematic approaches to learning about other jobs and roles

These training practices aim to improve workers’ understanding of tasks performed across the organisation through delivering experiential learning opportunities. This leads to increased understanding of the contribution of various roles to the end product or service. On top of that, these practices transmit knowledge from younger generations to older generations, and vice versa. Bottom-line, this supports intergenerational cooperation (Veingerl Čič and Šarotar Žižek, 2017^[35]). Flinchbaugh, Valenzuela and Li (2016^[36]) add that these practices are “*an intentional managerial focus on the unique skills and preferences of the distinct generations can create a complementary patchwork of overlapping, interconnected skills that can facilitate improved knowledge sharing across employees of any age*”.

Job rotation programmes can enable the transfer of knowledge between more experienced and early career employees

Job rotation entails the movement of workers between jobs or projects, i.e. the lateral transfer of workers between workstations and tasks, where workers are obliged to use different skills and responsibilities. The theory is that on transfer, the worker learns a new set of skills thereby extending their skills and knowledge of processes across the organisation, which in turns builds individual and organisational resilience (Azizi, Zolfaghari and Liang, 2010^[37]).

Job rotation is perceived as a practice to build a multi-skilled workforce or to ensure functional flexibility (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes and Van Hootegeem, 2013^[38]; Kalleberg et al., 2006^[39]).² A key characteristic of job rotation is that employees rotate through a series of roles on a temporarily basis; and not return immediately to their former role – rather the rotation continues (Casad, 2012^[40]). This is in contrast to cross-training, where employees temporarily take on a different job to balance high demand and lack of resources/capacity.³ Job rotation has been implemented across a wide range of sectors, from manufacturing enterprise to health care settings and in engineering businesses; as such it is a well-tested practice (Campion, Cheraskin and Stevens, 1994^[41]; Richardson et al., 2003^[42]; Eriksson and Ortega, 2006^[43]; Ollo-Lopez, Bayo-Moriones and Larraza-Kintana, 2010^[44]).

As a training practice, job rotation integrates work and learning and can be formal or informal, and structured as well as unstructured. It is seen as an effective approach to enhance employees' abilities and has been implemented across a wide variety of organisations with different skills needs and purposes. For instance, it is used in manufacturing industries to develop competences amongst workers on an assembly line with aims to achieve greater agility within employees for task flexibility. Similarly, it has been used in office-jobs, where it is a learning tool to develop a broad understanding of all aspects of the business. It diffuses various facets of an enterprise's organisational culture between workers, is viewed as particularly useful as a career development practice (Eriksson and Ortega, 2006^[43]) and enables the transfer of knowledge between more experienced and early career employees. The evidence suggests that job rotation is relatively inexpensive and leads to "flexibility in workforce planning, potential for increasing innovation and culture building, and providing crucial information about individual's strongest attributes for succession planning" (Casad, 2012^[40]).

Through job rotation, employees familiarise themselves with various job tasks gaining technical and practical work skills applicable throughout the organisation and thus the versatility and competence to handle multiple functions. Job rotation is a prime example of on-the-job training, with immediate applicability given that it addresses challenges related to the immediate workplace (Sekerin et al., 2018^[45]). Through these positive individual outcomes, impacts are achieved for the business in terms of better organisational performance and productivity (Oparanma and Nwaeke, 2015^[46]). It also protects organisations from shortages in organisational capacity due to absenteeism or turnover (Kalleberg et al., 2006^[39]).

However, job rotation has limitations that include employee perceptions of lost knowledge. Negative views can emerge of additional workload which can lead to dissatisfaction and decreased productivity (Campion, Cheraskin and Stevens, 1994^[41]). There are also risks that job rotation can also lead to loss of knowledge by removing an employee with crucial knowledge and connections to other departments (Casad, 2012^[40]). Lastly, a good person-job fit is paramount – if employee motivation is lacking, the benefits of job rotation will not materialise. These factors all suggest the need for carefully considered implementation and clear sight lines on skills and skills transfer across the organisation. Where implementation is strong, links are found between job rotation (functional flexibility) and organisational innovativeness and productivity in various national contexts, industries, and firm-size. In respect of the multigenerational workforce, this multiskilling builds resilience and should enable organisations to support flexible working practices that enable the retention their skilled workforce across different stages of the life-course.

Job shadowing

Job shadowing is a training measure that is also viewed as easily implemented and relatively low cost. Again, it focuses on skills and knowledge transfer between employees. It involves on-the-job training i.e. in the real world work environment. The concept is defined as "a trainee closely observing someone perform a specific job in the natural job environment for the purpose of witnessing first-hand the detail of the job." (Martin, Kolomitro and Lam, 2013^[47]). This training measure is ideal for both junior employees, as well as those more senior. The programme adds value most where an existing workers is being trained up for a new role in the company, or where the organisation is seeking a low-risk mechanism to test the capabilities of an existing employee for a new role. Since job shadowing is short-term and the experienced employee continues to perform the role, it removes risks and costs of failure that can be associated with job rotation.

Nevertheless, HR practitioners have argued that it is particularly useful when an employee will move on to another job internally. To be successful in its implementation, job shadowing should consist of more than just watching alongside the side lines. The "shadowee" should be expected to take on the role of coach/mentor, and guide the "shadower", provide feedback and evaluate the latter's performance (Jaworski et al., 2018^[48]). These authors find job shadowing to be a cost-effective training mechanism – individuals prefer the one-on-one approach and as this is delivered via the existing worker leading their

existing job, costs are relatively low. Notably, employees expressed increased satisfaction with this training mode, which in turn led to their increased commitment to the job and organisation.

Leveraging relationships between employees to deliver development

These approaches set up one-to-one relationships between workers of different levels of seniority or of different ages, in order that experience and knowledge from one can be used to help the development of the other. It should not be assumed that these focus solely on experienced-to-inexperienced or older-to-younger knowledge transfer; some companies are using these approaches to maximise skills and knowledge across generations, appreciating that each brings different and valuable skill sets.

Mentoring and coaching programmes can help bridge generational divides

Mentoring and coaching as devices to develop skills and competences in the workforce are amongst the most widespread tools in talent management. An estimate from 2009 indicated that 70% of the Fortune 500 companies in the United States have a mentoring programme, (Bridgeford, 2007^[49]; Sekerin et al., 2018^[45]). It has been argued that coaching and mentoring are valuable in a context of increasing uncertainty and insecurity, especially in a context of an economic or health crisis, where employee morale is low and stress levels surge. Communicating the mentoring and/or coaching offer adequately and effectively is extremely important in order to build positive employee engagement with this offer, as the evidence indicates these mechanisms result in employees feeling supported and valued (Trenner, 2013^[50]).

There are no single definitions of coaching and mentoring across disciplines. Nonetheless, researchers have tried to disentangle the two concepts which are often used interchangeably. Although there are strong similarities, there are also differences. For example, mentoring is less formal and longer-term than coaching. It is often more concerned with career development and progression, hence has a stronger focus on the needs of the individual. In contrast, coaching focuses more on specific skills and job performance. In other words, coaching is not only about the personal growth of the individual but also about the needs of the enterprise (Passmore, 2007^[51]). Nevertheless, they are similar in that both involve an intense interpersonal relationship. Mentors/coaches may be drawn from within the organisation (internal), or from outside (external). A benefit of both mentoring and coaching is that both the mentor/coach and mentee/coachee have agency to shape the relationship that takes forward learning objectives agreed by the organisation.

As with job rotation and job shadowing, setting up mentoring and coaching programmes can relatively low in cost, making it an apt tool for businesses in highly competitive business environments (CIPD, 2014^[52]). As such, various evidence shows the wide uptake of these mechanisms: across various industries, such as health care, telecom, financial services, and education in the United States (Ellinger et al., 2010^[53]). In the United Kingdom, the CIPD suggests that 86% of companies across sectors used coaching in 2011, with larger companies being more likely to have a coaching programme (89%) (CIPD, 2011^[54]). Specifically, these practices have been deployed by companies including:

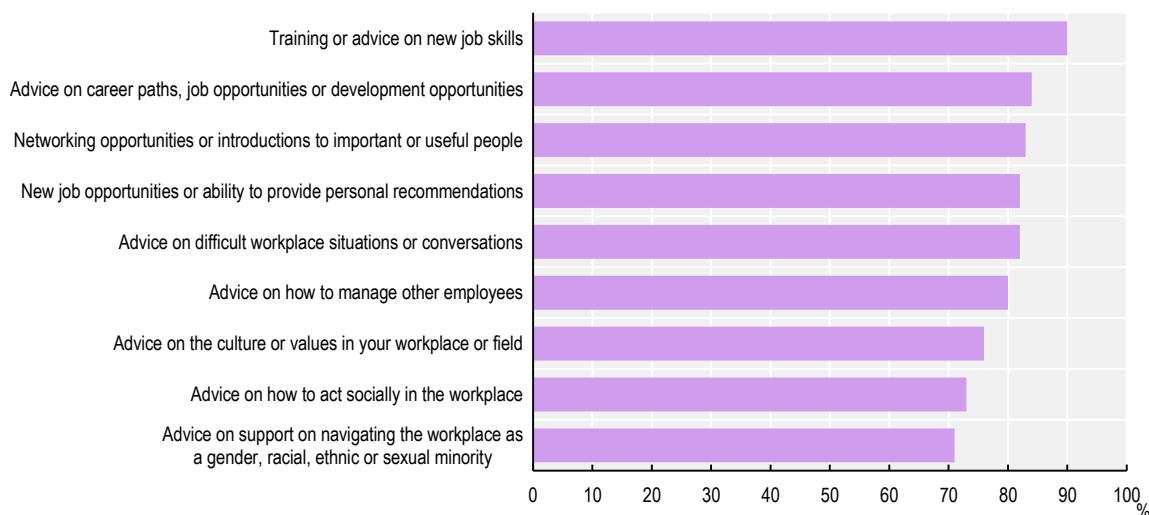
- **Sodexo** which used mentoring as a means to deliver opportunities for employees to develop their skill sets and advance their careers. A web-based platform enabled employees to identify mentoring partners and to be part a virtual community to facilitate peer learning.
- **Hartford** used mentoring programme to connect the senior leadership with early career entrants with technical skills to share.
- **Bon Secours Virginia Health System** uses formal and informal mentoring programmes across its workforce of 14 000 employees, ranging in age from 18 to 93. From this, each year it identifies

75 “high potential” employees who are 35 or younger and pairs them with senior executives in order to advance their development (Hymowitz, 2018^[55]).

Research has shown that there are outcomes from coaching and mentoring at both the individual and organisation level, and that these outcomes are interconnected and reciprocal Figure 5.5. For the employee, coaching and mentoring nurture: a better balancing of work and personal life (Gegner, 1997^[56]); improved psychological and social competences (Wales, 2002^[57]); improved and enhanced career development; improved self-awareness and assertiveness (Bozer, Sarros and Santora, 2014^[58]; Gatling, Castelli and Cole, 2013^[59]; Wales, 2002^[57]); increased self-confidence (Wales, 2002^[57]); better developed relationships/networks/interpersonal skills (Wales, 2002^[57]); improvements to setting and achieving goals (Smither et al., 2003^[60]); increased role clarity (Kim et al., 2013^[61]; Sonesh et al., 2015^[62]); and changing behaviours (Blackman, Moscardo and Gray, 2016^[63]; Grant, 2005^[64]; Wasylyshyn, 2003^[65]).

Figure 5.5. Aspects of mentorship most valued among mentees

Percentage saying “extremely” or “very” valuable to job or career



Source: Anderson (2019^[66]), *Mentorship and the Value of a Multigenerational Workforce*, <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00270.001>.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/wmztrj>

At the organisational level, mentoring and coaching programs are found to increase productivity (Olivero, Bane and Kopelman, 1997^[67]); build a gateway for supporting other training programs (Wales, 2002^[57]); improve communication (Graham, Wedman and Garvin-Kester, 2008^[68]), and improve the effectiveness of organisations or teams (Blackman, Moscardo and Gray, 2016^[63]; Hagen and Gavrilova Aguilar, 2012^[69]).

Typically, mentoring and coaching nurture uniquely human skills often referred to as “soft skills”. Nevertheless, they are also seen as important as the practical and technical skills employees need to perform well.

As with any training measures, there are enabling and limiting factors around coaching and mentoring. Blackman, Moscardo and Gray (2016^[63]) note that it is paramount that there is an alignment between the goals of the individual and the organisation, and that the organisation supports employee engagement in the coaching/mentoring programme through ensuring senior managers are committed to it and provide an appreciative environment (Baron and Morin, 2010^[70]; Blackman, 2010^[71]; Gray, Ekinici and Goregaokar, 2011^[72]; Kim et al., 2013^[61]; Kombarakaran et al., 2008^[73]; Maritz, 2013^[74]; McGurk, 2011^[75]; Peterson,

1996^[76]; Schnell, 2005^[77]; Smither et al., 2003^[80]; (Wasylyshyn, Gronsky and Haas, 2006^[78]; Winum, 2005^[79]).

As with other training practices, while mentoring and coaching are widespread, there is a limited focus on organisation out-turns from these programmes. Instead, evaluations have focused on the engagement and motivation of employees as the key metric.

Reverse mentoring help provide workers a forum for mutual learning but should go beyond just learning about technology

Reverse mentoring, is inherently related to coaching and mentoring, and is of growing in prominence. Where mentoring and coaching open up learning opportunities for junior employees, reverse mentoring revolves around the transfer of knowledge and competences from junior employees to more senior ones (Flinchbaugh, Valenzuela and Li, 2016^[36]). In the United States, a range of large organisations have implemented reverse mentoring including, e.g. General Motors, Unilever, Deloitte & Touche, Procter & Gamble, and IBM (Chaudhuri and Ghosh, 2011^[80]).

Various stakeholders have discussed the advantages of this practice within the context of multigenerational teams. Reverse mentoring contributes to knowledge transmission between junior and senior employees, resulting in intergenerational learning. The many examples of this practice across a wide range of enterprises shows that companies recognise the importance and effectiveness of this approach (Flinchbaugh, Valenzuela and Li, 2016^[36]). The CIPD in the United Kingdom also draws attention to the inclusive nature of reverse mentoring at the workplace (CIPD, 2020^[81]). According to the OECD's PIAAC data on adult skills, younger individuals score higher on average than older individuals on technological dexterity. In this context, reverse mentoring is a means for skills transfer between generations or different experiences (Flinchbaugh, Valenzuela and Li, 2016^[36]). However, academics argue that the use of reverse mentoring can, and should, go beyond learning about technology; reverse mentoring can also be a means to learn about current issues related to diversity, and breakdown age-stereotypes (Chaudhuri and Ghosh, 2011^[80]; Flinchbaugh, Valenzuela and Li, 2016^[36]). Higher levels of understanding, and better coordination of work processes all lead to higher commitment levels amongst employees, which benefits organisations (Chaudhuri and Ghosh, 2011^[80]; Harvey et al., 2009^[82]).

The practicalities of the “common” mentoring and coaching approaches also apply to reverse mentoring (Chen, 2013^[83]).

Simulation-based training

Although there are clear generational differences in “tech-savviness”, simulation-based training, and in particular the use of virtual reality (VR) and other recently developed technologies, are not an obstacle in the learning processes of older employees. The experiential learning process behind simulation-based training makes it an appropriate training mechanism for age diverse workplaces as it is exposure, rather than age, that impacts the effectiveness of VR simulation based training (Learning Solutions, 2020^[84]). This form of training can be offered at large-scale and ensure consistency of training input and practice

Because work settings are becoming increasingly complex, learning in a synthetic environment which simulates the work environment and/or work processes can be a practical training practice (Cedefop, 2009^[85]). Simulation refers to “the imitation or enactment of a defined real-world process” (Robinson, Miller and Rukin, 2017^[86]). An advantage of simulation-based training is that it links instruction with practice (Bell, Kanar and Kozlowski, 2008^[87]). With the introduction of technology, simulation-based practices are not limit to re-enacting work situations in the real, non-virtual, world. Well-known examples of technology-based simulation training practices include flight simulations in the aviation sector and PC games. A study estimated that in the '90s, 75% of large organisations (more than 1 000 employees) in the United States used business simulations (Faria and Nulsen, 1966^[88]).

The advancement of information technologies, for example, virtual reality (VR), has opened up the possibilities for simulation-based training practices, with VR based training best known in the medical sector (Robinson, Miller and Rukin, 2017^[86]). However, researchers believe that training using VR simulation can help a wide variety of workers and industries. Besides enabling the acquisition of complex and technical skills, this form of training can help develop other competencies, such as attitudes (Marlow et al., 2017^[89]). There are examples of VR simulation training in the arts sector, where it has been used to enhance performance (Aufegger et al., 2016^[90]); and, in the mining industry, to teach workers how to function in hazardous working environments (Grabowski and Jankowski, 2015^[91]). VR simulation training practices however can be very costly, thereby their use is largely limited to large employers (Marlow et al., 2017^[89]).

Key features Bell, Kanar and Kozlowski (2008^[87]) differentiate in simulation-based training are what makes this training practice beneficial: information richness, immersion, interactivity, and communication. Despite the benefits, there are also limitations to introduce this training practice:

- High costs: simulation-based training, and in particular technology based, is regarded as having high costs. It is also argued that it is cost-effective by reducing the incidence of costly mistakes (Ker, Hogg and Maran, 2010^[92]). It is expected that the costs of technology-SBT will reduce in the future elaborate further on this
- Leveraging learning control: simulation-based training models are increasingly being delivered without the support from an instructor. This can potentially put a lot of pressure on the learner, by making the individual responsible for monitoring and evaluating their own progress.
- Solitary learning experience versus learning in a social environment: some researchers argue that the learning experience in a social context (e.g. classroom environment) is more beneficial not only through the feedback by the teacher, but also by peers. This is lost when simulation-based training is done in a solitary manner.

Training and developing groups of employees

This final cluster of practices focus on ways to bring the multigenerational workforce together within training opportunities, providing mechanisms for the transmission of knowledge and skills across generations, increasing understanding as well as skills levels.

Team-training

Teamworking has a central role in many organisations, and it is often argued that teams are more than the product of the individual members (Aragon, Jiménez and Valle, 2014^[93]; Cedefop, 2009^[85]). Team development encompasses team building as well as team training. Team building may initially focus on the interpersonal relationships and the social interactions of a team, whereas team training can involve the setting of goals, interpersonal relationship management, role clarification, and problem-solving as learning objectives (Shuffler, DiazGranados and Salas, 2011^[94]). There is evidence that training at the team-level is more effective in terms of team performance than individually focused training (Hollenbeck, DeRue and Guzzo, 2004^[95]).

The increase of teamwork within organisations means this type of training intervention is worth considering. Teamwork brings beneficial outcomes: enhanced efficiencies, quality and safety improvements, creativity, adaption (Salas et al., 2008^[96]). Team-based training is particularly beneficial in high-risk working environments where tasks across the team minimise risks, e.g. health care (Gillespie, Chaboyer and Murray, 2010^[97]). Team-training can target behavioural competences, such as attitudes, but also specific skills and knowledge competences and as such, the modes of delivery can vary and encompass a range of practices noted in this chapter. For example, it is also entirely possible to involve a whole team in a VR

simulation-based training (Salas et al., 2008^[96]). However, more common team development practices and aims cover:

- Cross-training which is closely related to job-rotation, and involves the switches between team members in terms of work performance and tasks. This allows team members to understand each other's roles and gain an overview of the team's tasks as a whole.
- Team coordination and adaptive training focuses on the coordination strategy by targeting communication within teams.
- Guided team self-correction training aims to enhance the team's ability to diagnose team-related problems and develop team-appropriate solutions.
- Leadership training focuses on attitudes, behaviours and competences related to effectively managing a team through decision making, communication, delegation and resource coordination.

The effectiveness of team-based training has been studied in various industry settings (Arthur et al., 2003^[98]; Hughes et al., 2016^[99]; Salas et al., 2008^[96]). A meta-analysis conducted by Delise et al. (2010^[100]) found that team-training is positively associated with the improvement of specific task-oriented skills, teamworking skills, and attitudes which results in better team performance. As with each training strategy, there are factors which can benefit or limit the effectiveness of this specific training intervention. Organisations should be mindful to the content of the team-based training intervention and avoid mixed-content training interventions (Salas et al., 2008^[96]). It seems that team-training works better with teams who have been working with each other previously and thus have a shared history showed better training outcomes than artificially composed teams (Salas et al., 2008^[96]).

Action learning

Action learning is a training approach that originated as a development approach for managers and leaders – although its use has spread to other staff within organisations. Through processes of experiential learning, supported by reflection and action planning it aims to improve work processes within organisations (McGill and Beaty, 1992/2013^[13]). It is identified as a useful training strategy for organisations experiencing significant change and reorganisation processes, as it can give a new spin to internal dynamics (Garratt, 2016^[101]). It is widely used across the world and in large enterprises including the BBC (U.K.), Deutsche Bank (Germany), Nokia (Finland), US Federal Government, Johnson and Johnson (U.S.), Samsung, and Hyundai (Korea) amongst many others (Anderson and Coleman, 2014^[102]; Cho and Bong, 2010^[103]; Marquardt, 2011^[104]; Marquardt and Yeo, 2012^[105]).

The crux of action learning is learning through experience in a group setting (Anderson and Coleman, 2014^[102]; Marsick and O'Neil, 1999^[106]). Through feedback, constructive criticism and reflection among action learning set members, employees are enabled to reach solutions that take into account the subjective insights of peers. In turn, this leads to a higher commitment and autonomy for the employee, as they “own” the problem that they are seeking to solve. These factors are important antecedents for more engaged and motivated workers, leading to better performing employees and higher productivity (Garratt, 2016^[101]; McGill and Beaty, 1992/2013^[13]; Saragih, S, 2011^[107]). The reflective component is a useful tool for personal development and self-identifying needs (Anderson and Coleman, 2014^[102]). Beyond this, through the action learning set considering a work goal for each member, action learning leads to increased understanding of work and helps groups function effectively (Marquardt, Ng Choon Seng and Goodson, 2010^[108]). These authors identify eight characteristics supported by the action learning process: (i) setting clear and meaningful goals, (ii) stating explicit group norms, (iii) focus on interpersonal and communication skills, (iv) committing to solving problems and tasks, (v) enabling trust, openness and group cohesiveness, (vi) managing conflict, (vii) shared leadership and accountability, and (viii) continuous learning and development (Marquardt, Ng Choon Seng and Goodson, 2010^[108]).

There are various approaches to action learning: coached action learning, self-managed action learning, virtual action learning etc. (Anderson and Coleman, 2014^[102]). This shows how action learning is a flexible training strategy that can be adapted to the particular needs of an organisation, as well as the individuals involved. In light of the multigenerational workforce, this is particularly important as it increases opportunities for skills, knowledge and experience transfer and building understanding of differing perspectives. A few studies have looked at the return of investment of action learning, estimating this to be between five and 25 times the actual cost of the training (Brenneman, Keys and Fulmer, 1998^[109]; Fulmer and Vicere, 1996^[110]; Raelin, 2008^[111]). However, differences in costs may be due to implementation, particularly whether an external facilitator is brought on board. However, some factors influence the effectiveness and how much an organisation benefits from the action learning's implementation. It is important that, as with any training strategy, there is a supportive organisational environment, as well as setting clear objectives before the implementation (Leonard and Marquardt, 2010^[112]).

Key takeaways

- In terms of maximising the benefits of a multigenerational workforce, employers need a fresh approach. All skills have a limited shelf-life if not further developed. In this context, employers need to ensure that the skills of older workers do not become obsolete while at the same time ensuring that the skills of younger generations of workers are continually developed.
- There are a range of practices that promote continuous development while at work, as well as maximise the benefits of a multigenerational workforce. However, they must be underpinned by a clear process for identifying and updating the profile of the skills of the workforce matched to the company's skills requirements. Approaches can include training needs analyses, mid-life career check-ups or assessments, careers conversation and personal/professional development plans.
- Job rotation and job shadowing are effective ways for organisations to build resilience through increasing knowledge and skills required across their teams.
- Mentoring and coaching approaches are amongst the most widespread tools in talent management. Both involve an intense interpersonal relationship, with personal development at the centre, and aims to transfer knowledge from a senior employee to a novice worker.
- Reverse mentoring allows for the transfer of knowledge and understanding from a career or job entrant to a more experienced worker, and is most often found between younger and older employees. Beyond the transmission of skills and knowledge, this approach can help to breakdown age-stereotypes, and to show the benefits of diverse workplaces.
- Group learning and team training have become increasingly important, particularly hazardous working environments where it is important to have good coordination and communication between team members. Training the whole team builds common understanding of work tasks and their performance.
- The effectiveness of these training interventions is evidence-based. However, in order to reap the benefits, it is paramount that implementation has clear support from management. Additionally, evaluating the outcomes of training is crucial for success.

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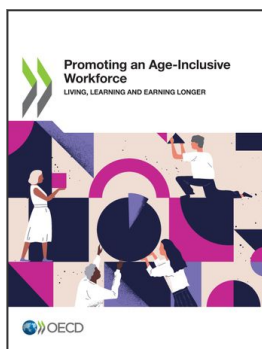
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Notes

¹ In selecting training measures for this chapter, various factors were taken into account. These were i) applicability of training measures across a wide range of sectors and occupations; ii) from widely known measures to more specific/'niche' ones; iii) variety in methods iv) variety in type of skills targeted; v) appropriateness for early career versus mid/late-career workers and vi) evidence of effectiveness.

² There are two key forms: In job-to-job (J2J) rotation, individuals are rotated between different jobs in the same organisation, to perform activities with distinct natures. In project-to-project (P2P) rotation, individuals are moved between projects of similar nature (e.g. two software development projects), often keeping the same technical role (Azizi, Zolfaghari and Liang, 2010^[37]).

³ Casad also draws a distinction between cross-functional and inter-functional job rotation. The first entails rotation between different departments with different tasks, the latter refers to job rotation within the same department but with a different primary duty.



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