

EY improves employee retention and promotion readiness with future-ready skills on Coursera



Industry
Professional Services



Location
Global



Size
Nearly 400,000 employees



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By integrating Coursera into EY Badges, we have created a scalable model that directly links learning to verified skills and business outcomes.



Tamsin Drennen

Global Content Curation Leader

Overview

As client expectations evolved across AI, sustainability, cybersecurity, analytics, and digital transformation, traditional learning models became less effective. EY recognized the need for a scalable approach to prepare its global workforce for the future. The organization needed a learning strategy that could rapidly build critical capabilities while giving employees meaningful recognition for developing and applying new skills.

To address this challenge, EY developed its global EY Badges program, combining industry-leading learning content from leading providers, including Coursera, with a rigorous skills validation model. Rather than measuring success through the number of course completions, the program connects learning to applied experience, digital credentials, career progression, and business impact.

Snapshot

83%

greater likelihood of promotion among professionals earning multiple EY Badges

79%

greater likelihood of achieving high-performance ratings for badge earners

9%

improvement in retention among top talent participating in the program

The challenge

To prepare nearly 400,000 professionals for rapidly changing client needs, EY needed to do more than just expand access to learning.

EY needed a framework that could continuously identify emerging skill requirements and rapidly curate relevant learning experiences. It also needed to validate that employees could apply those capabilities in real client and business contexts. At the same time, the organization wanted to strengthen its employer value proposition by giving employees globally recognized credentials that reflected both learning and demonstrated expertise.

The challenge was creating a learning ecosystem that linked capability development directly to workforce readiness, talent retention, innovation, and career advancement.

The solution

Rather than treating learning as a standalone activity, EY developed EY Badges as the foundation of its global capability-building strategy. The program combines industry-leading learning content from providers including Coursera with a structured skills validation framework, creating a consistent approach to capability building across regions, business units, and emerging areas of expertise. It helps employees develop in-demand skills while helping ensure learning is closely aligned with the capabilities the business needs most.

Employees pursued curated learning pathways that spanned AI, analytics, cybersecurity, sustainability, strategy, leadership, innovation, and more than 250 future-focused skill areas. Learning content from Coursera, alongside other leading providers, is integrated into structured badge journeys that combine digital learning with practical workplace application and formal experience validation. Each learning pathway was designed to support both skill development and real-world application. It gave employees a clear path from learning new concepts to demonstrating proficiency in their day-to-day work.

Instead of awarding credentials based solely on course completion, EY required learners to demonstrate newly acquired capabilities. Learners demonstrated those capabilities through client engagements, internal innovation, leadership initiatives, or business transformation projects. Those experiences were reviewed through a rigorous multi-layer approval process before badges were awarded.

The program also connected directly to EY Degrees, enabling employees to apply badge achievements toward master's-level qualifications developed jointly with Hult International Business School.

The results

EY transformed learning into a global capability-building engine that supports both individual career growth and organizational performance.

Since launching EY Badges, the organization has awarded more than **780,000 digital credentials**, with **38% of employees** voluntarily earning at least one badge. More importantly, those credentials represent validated capability rather than simple participation because each badge combines structured learning with demonstrated application in real business environments.

The initiative has also strengthened talent outcomes. Internal analysis found that professionals earning multiple EY Badges are **83% more likely to be promoted** and **79% more likely to achieve high-performance ratings**. Badge earners also contributed to a **9% increase in retention** among top talent. The program has become an important differentiator in attracting future employees as well. In a survey of nearly **5,000 new joiners**, **74%** reported that EY Badges significantly influenced their decision to join the organization.

Beyond talent metrics, employees continuously apply Badges-enabled learning to client engagements, innovation initiatives, sustainability projects, AI implementations, and internal transformation efforts.

Programs such as EY Ripples and the EY Degrees capstone experiences help ensure learning is translated into practical solutions that create measurable value for clients, communities, and the business.

Today, EY Badges continues to evolve as a strategic capability-building ecosystem that connects globally recognized learning, practical experience, career development, and business performance. Through its ecosystem of industry-leading learning partners, including Coursera, EY is preparing its workforce with the skills needed to meet rapidly changing client expectations while strengthening its position as a leader in professional services learning and development.

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The organization benefits from faster capability building in priority skill areas, while the program strengthens our employer brand by combining EY credentials with content from Coursera’s globally recognized partners.



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Global Content Curation Leader



coursera for business

Turn learning into career growth

Build future-ready skills with verified credentials.

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