

# Crowdsourced revolution: Drive growth with employee upskilling

How to collaborate, innovate and  
future-proof your organization



**ProEdge**

A PwC Product



Constant change is the norm. Businesses have adjusted as best they can, but when it comes to employees, many need new ways to adapt quickly and build resilience. The missing link? Creating a collaborative learning environment where your workforce can develop the skills they need to succeed today—and the skills that will drive innovation and growth for your business in the future.

Organizations do recognize that upskilling is essential. By 2025, employers expect to offer reskilling and upskilling to over 70% of their employees, according to the **Future of Jobs Report 2020** from the World Economic Forum. However, while companies understand the importance of providing people the tools and solutions to learn, many make some common missteps that derail the value of implementing upskilling programs. Among them:

- Bringing in new technologies and platforms without creating an environment that encourages ongoing learning (how, when and why to use new tools)

- Executing learning strategies that aren't aligned to their business needs
- Requiring employees to take courses that aren't relevant to their roles or interests

Only **42% of employees** engage in employer-supported reskilling and upskilling opportunities. It's easy to see why. These kinds of mistakes can make it difficult to successfully educate employees in meaningful, relevant and sustainable ways.

Investing in digital upskilling is important, but it's just the start of what matters most. Encourage collaboration and create an environment that celebrates learning. Incorporate education and innovation opportunities into existing workflows, so people learn skills that are relevant to the work they do every day—or the roles they want to hold in the future. An upskilling solution that can adapt to different needs, skill levels and learning preferences can help you do that.

The following three key steps to implementing a successful upskilling strategy will help you discover what it takes to develop a culture of learning and engagement.





# 1. Encourage a collaborative learning environment

If you want to achieve collaboration, start with collaborative learning. It's about more than working together. It means sharing skills by using newfound abilities in real-world practice environments. It goes beyond helping individuals learn new skills or knowledge. You're creating a movement that everyone is a part of. When you build a supportive community, it gets people more excited to learn.

To get there, you can establish a crowd-sourcing environment where people can share their skills with each other. Doing so can also encourage employees to solve real problems in ways that can be repeated and scaled across the organization. After all, they're sharing with others and that tends to inspire more directly useful solutions. That means your employees can see the benefits of new skills right away—and so can your business.

Establish a crowd-sourcing environment where people can share their skills with each other.

Here's how it works: leaders set the direction and goals, and provide the training, tools and resources for people to learn and apply their skills. People then use the in-depth knowledge they have of the work they do every day to find ways to optimize tasks.

For example, an employee in your marketing department decides to learn how to automate data sorting and normalizing while importing external lead lists into marketing solutions—without creating duplicates or overwriting existing data. This employee would be building



relevant skills tailored to the tasks they want to get done. Once they've learned how to automate these processes, they'd be able to create more sophisticated bots to streamline other tasks around data related to their role.

By sharing the results of new skills, employees can reinforce their newly acquired capabilities and experiment with them. People in other departments might have use for the automations as well. When these tools are shared on a platform where others can access them and put them to use, it increases productivity across the organization. But you don't have to stop there. You can also encourage other employees to submit requests for bots, tools and automated solutions they need. Newly upskilled employees can take on these solution-building tasks to practice what they've learned and, if it makes sense, show their colleague how to do it, too. In this kind of collaborative learning environment, everyone wins.

At PwC, we call this **citizen-led innovation**: The ability of employees to choose the activities to automate that will make a difference to them and their work. Employees are encouraged to experiment with their own ideas to innovate and to find entirely new ways of working.

Citizen-led innovation is part of PwC's goal to upskill our entire global network and develop and share technologies to support clients. We've seen firsthand that our unique, people-led approach works, and we believe that without it, it's difficult to deliver the innovation, productivity and change at scale today's businesses need. To date, PwC staff have built over 6,400 automations, visualizations and bots, downloaded these staff-built digital assets over five million times and automated over seven million hours of work.

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In this approach, leadership doesn't dictate the exact details of how upskilling happens. Instead, people have the power of choice—to decide what learning methods work best for them, and how much they want to take part. Employees are free to take the lead on innovating, building, sharing and test-driving solutions.



## 2. Develop a culture where learning is celebrated



A culture of learning is a reward that keeps on giving. A recent PwC CEO survey found that **93% of CEOs** who introduce upskilling programs see increased productivity, improvement in talent acquisition and retention and a more resilient workforce.

To get employees excited about a digital learning journey, it's important to find new ways to motivate people to continually learn and grow. The crowdsourced approach to learning is one way to do jumpstart engagement: People are eager to share solutions, and that enthusiasm gets other people invested. This kind of energy can truly be transformative. You can encourage a working environment that celebrates learning and upskilling in meaningful ways by:

- **Awarding credentials for learning achievements**  
By providing people with the chance to earn certifications or credentials for their newly developed skills, you can help make sure they feel confident and motivated to begin applying their new digital toolkits and working smarter. When an employee gains credentials they can leverage throughout their career, they have even more reason to appreciate—and take advantage of—learning opportunities.
- **Making learning an engaging, social experience**  
Social features can help your teams collaborate more effectively and learn more efficiently. People who are learning the same skills should be able to connect and work together—or even engage in friendly competition. Leaderboards, badges, points and milestones can give employees the incentive they need to keep going, and shared interactions can reinforce what they've learned.



- **Demonstrating the real-world benefits of upskilling**

Learning how to build automations and bots to streamline work does more than boost productivity. Once employees acquire these skills, they can also reduce the amount of time spent on repetitive, unrewarding tasks. Then, they can free up more time to focus on creative or strategic work or spend more time with clients.

Improving quality of life at work—and beyond. Along with providing education on digital skills, when you teach “soft” skills and related concepts through workshops or scenario-based learning modules, you give people abilities that can help them be happier people as well as better employees. Learning change management skills can help employees build flexibility, and topics like empathy, ethics and inclusion can create a healthier work environment. Providing leaders with stronger team management skills can create a better, more productive workplace as well.

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of CEOs who introduce upskilling programs see increased productivity, improvement in talent acquisition and retention and a more resilient workforce.

To reinforce this culture, managers should continually incentivize and motivate their teams by showing that they value learning and support a citizen-led approach. How? Let employees take ownership of their own educational journey and encourage them to take courses that interest them. Of course, that only works if you align learning with your business goals upfront. With the right learning solution, it's possible to do both.





### 3. Select the right learning platform for your organization

Employees should take courses that will help them do their jobs more efficiently—now and in the future. Give people individual upskilling plans, personalized to their current skills. Provide them with a clear understanding of where they need to go next. Learning pathways should also tie to business objectives, so your organization expands capabilities in the areas with the highest return.

That can be challenging in today's dynamic workplace. New technologies and digital capabilities are accelerating quickly. There's a risk that most of the current workforce is not prepared to help your organization achieve its goals. Predicting which skills will be essential and how current job roles will evolve can be especially difficult—but is necessary for success.

One lesson of the global pandemic is how critical it can be to adapt quickly and operate flexibly.

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of CEOs believe the shift to embrace automation initiatives will endure beyond the pandemic.

Take the rise of automation, for example—76% of CEOs believe the shift to embrace automation initiatives will endure beyond the pandemic, according to a recent PwC panel survey. In fact, the survey revealed two objectives CEOs hope to achieve:

- Increase their company's digital and virtual capabilities
- Develop a more flexible and employee-oriented workforce

The right learning platform, based in a collaborative environment where learning is celebrated, can achieve both of these goals. How can you tell if your learning solution will meet the needs of your organization?

Here are a few of the essential questions to ask:

Does it provide role-based or function-based learning?	Can it deliver learning content in a variety of formats and styles?	Will it deliver results, and do it quickly?
<p>You need the ability to personalize pathways based on roles and customize the learning journey based on people’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as their current skill levels. Leverage a solution backed by industry expertise—one that can identify the skills that will be important in the future, as well as how current roles could evolve.</p> <p>About two-thirds of employers expect to get ROI for upskilling and reskilling within one year.</p>	<p>Everyone learns differently. Some people prefer watching short videos or listening to podcasts, while others learn best by taking a deep dive into a lengthy book or hands-on course. You need a solution that will provide a variety of options to meet your employees’ different learning styles. Personalized learning pathways with curated content, coursework and projects delivered in multiple formats will keep people coming back for more.</p>	<p>About two-thirds, <b>66%, of employers</b> expect to get ROI for upskilling and reskilling within one year. But the window of opportunity to reskill and upskill workers has become shorter. The share of core skills that will change in the next five years is 40%, and 50% of all employees will need reskilling. To get the most value from a learning solution as quickly as possible, make sure it’s easy to integrate with the systems you already use. It should also provide collaborative sharing environments that make it simple to scale people’s new skills and knowledge across your workforce.</p>

Once you’ve found a platform that meets your organization’s needs—and you’ve laid the groundwork for a productive environment that encourages ongoing learning—you’ll have what it takes to future-proof your business. In a time of constant change and transformation, the most valuable skill people can learn is how to learn.



# Invest in tomorrow

Stay ahead of the curve with PwC ProEdge, the revolutionary way to upskill your people and prepare your organization for tomorrow. This unique platform allows you to pinpoint critical skill gaps and effectively help close them with automatically generated personalized learning pathways. Leading curated content, coursework and hands-on learning empower your workforce to make an immediate impact through citizen-led innovation. Access to digital tools enables solution-building that scales across teams. This is how ProEdge helps your people to perform at their highest level—giving them the power to help transform your entire organization.

Learn more at [\*\*ProEdge.PwC.com\*\*](https://ProEdge.PwC.com)

For additional information on upskilling:

- Find out how to [unlock your employees' true potential](#) with upskilling.
- Discover the [benefits of curated content and credentials](#).



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