



Upskilling can drive progress
on diversity and inclusion efforts



ProEdge

A PwC Product

A diverse workforce is good for business, and inclusive teams add different perspectives that can lead to more creative thinking and collaboration. Developing inclusive upskilling opportunities can help business leaders build a culture of belonging, drive development and career progressions—all while closing their skill gaps.

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Education and skills acquisition are great equalizers on the journey to a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. Opening up digital skills training to people of all experience and background levels enhances equality and also builds confidence by teaching all workers to approach business challenges more strategically and innovatively.





Committing to progress—and transparency

Investors, regulators and consumers are demonstrating a growing interest in company disclosures around environmental, sustainability and governance (ESG) issues, including diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts.

Telling a clear D&I and ESG story about your company can help build trust and show how your business works to not only benefit itself but society at large. And it can translate to improved talent attraction and retention rates, with a recent PwC survey finding that 75% of workers want to work for an organization that will make a positive contribution to society.

Employees are seeking employers that look out for their communities and genuinely care about—and invest in—their staff. In fact, 86% of employees prefer to work for companies that care about the same issues they do. This includes upskilling investments in their people.

PwC's upskilling initiative plays an important role in our D&I efforts.

We continue to focus and build upon our commitment to our D&I strategies across our workforce of 55,000 people who come from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. We each have a significant role influencing our inclusive culture and leadership, and we use our talent and resources to be an intentional voice for change.

The firm is also helping others build more inclusive organizations by examining the employee experience through an intersectional lens. We're asking better questions of historically marginalized employees, customers, clients, community members and other stakeholders in pursuit of impactful and lasting change.

Challenges to inclusive upskilling

Employees want opportunities to develop new skills that can make them stronger candidates for promotions and roles with greater responsibility.

PwC's Hopes and Fears global survey of 32,500 workers revealed that 77% of respondents are eager to learn new skills or completely retrain, but 39% worry their jobs will be obsolete within five years.

Workers also face challenges in developing new skills because of age, gender and race, among other factors. The pandemic introduced additional hurdles that may have temporarily reduced upskilling opportunities, such as balancing remote work with demands on the homefront.

The survey found that:

- People newer to the workforce are twice as likely to get opportunities to improve their skills.
- People in larger cities are 1.5 times more likely to get upskilling opportunities as people in smaller towns.

- Discrimination may be holding people back from upskilling opportunities:
 - 50% say discrimination at work thwarted career advancements and training opportunities
 - 13% report missing out on opportunities as a result of ethnicity
 - 13% experienced discrimination because of social class or background

Disparities in access to training are a major obstacle to achieving equity in upskilling programs, the survey concluded. People who need to learn new digital skills the most are the least likely to get them, and if this trend continues, we risk allowing the digital divide to widen.

Executives and managers need to be purposeful in creating more inclusive upskilling opportunities for workers at all levels.





Think globally, upskill locally

Upskilling initiatives have an immediate impact on economic expansion, with the potential to help create 5.3 million net new jobs globally by 2030, according to a new study by PwC and the World Economic Forum.

In addition to the direct economic benefits, the report shows that upskilling gives people the tools and progressive mindset they need to more actively participate in the economy and advance their careers even if their current jobs disappear.

Upskilling with a purpose can help reduce inequality and lead to greater social stability. And it starts at the individual company level.

Choose an upskilling solution that offers opt-in personalized learning pathways for everyone regardless of their role, function, level of

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seniority or experience. There should also be opportunities to apply that learning with project-based, real-world business scenarios and credentials that can support career advancement.

Stretch learning opportunities, mentoring and peer-to-peer support—that allows employees to share insights and lean on each other—are also key to fostering collaboration.



The benefits of investing in purpose-led, inclusive upskilling

Most leaders already know where their organization's challenges lie. Upskilling the workforce with the right tools, resources, support and accountability can empower them to develop solutions to your pressing problems, while also aligning individual goals with your company's growth objectives.

When companies encourage their workers to build their own solutions, they can realize an extra 10-15% of benefit to their large-scale transformation initiatives.

Citizen-led digital transformation can also help reduce workloads on individual roles by up to 40%, as repetitive tasks are automated and people are freed up to spend more time on high-value work such as analysis and data-driven decision making. Overall workforce retention can be improved by more than 5%.

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Together, these benefits can produce greater output, opportunities to reduce existing costs and higher customer satisfaction, while also equitably empowering employees at all levels in all functions.

How PwC's ProEdge team infused D&I principles in our upskilling product

Digital skills gaps are widening rapidly, particularly within historically marginalized communities. When we set out to create a product with a mission to upskill people and equip them with the tools that can help drive organizational transformation, we knew it would be a huge undertaking.

We were especially aware that people need to feel represented and included in a learning environment so they feel welcomed and supported on their educational journey.

We want people to interact with our upskilling platform, **ProEdge**, regardless of where they're coming from. Nobody should ever feel held back by their previous professional, educational, cultural, societal, financial or other life experiences.

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While organizations seek to build a more representative workforce, many of them lack the resources to properly upskill and train every person in the enterprise.

ProEdge was created to be a workforce transformation platform built with, and for, all.

As an organization, we sought volunteers to form a task force dedicated to making sure ProEdge was inclusive.





This task force included D&I and accessibility champions who researched issues, including requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to strive to make an inclusive platform accessible to as many people as possible.

Some content is long-form, while some can be consumed in shorter chunks to support diverse learning preferences. ProEdge can be used on mobile devices to support busy lifestyles.

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We developed a product inclusion statement and a framework to advance efforts that push toward making our product, graphic designs, illustrations, voice overs, podcasts and other features more accessible and representative of everyone who will use them.

PwC's ProEdge team embraced this framework across all workstreams. We shared news around inclusion for products, education, business and workplace practices to improve our own efforts as the product took shape.

A force for enduring positive change

Just as PwC continues making clear commitments to make sure all of our people have a strong sense of belonging and trust, our ProEdge team continues to conduct workshops and attend outside courses—including those on inclusive design principles—to deepen our knowledge on these issues and share findings with the broader team.

We hold workshops to map out how we can stay on track and continue to push for better inclusion.

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Most importantly, ProEdge offers a citizen-led approach that has the potential to put the power of learning into the hands of every worker at every level across every department of the organization. It identifies their specific skills gaps, and then offers a customized learning pathway to close them.

Equal access to an upskilling platform where each person can feel represented and welcome creates a deeper sense of belonging and reinforces a culture of lifelong learning.



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



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