

# Upskilling & reskilling for the future

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**The workforce is set to change dramatically over the next two years. KPMG’s latest surveys show that if organizations want to become more resilient, they need to invest in Upskilling and Re-Skilling in the remote learning environment.**

Overall, upskilling and reskilling is globally ranked in this year’s KPMG HR survey as the most important factor in shaping future workforce composition (72% of respondents say that it is important), and on average, respondents believe that 35% of employees are expected to need reskilling in the next two years.

According to the KPMG CEO Outlook, this issue has been recognized also among C-level executives, who confirm

### Which of these skills do you consider to be missing among your employees?

choose top 3 options



Source: KPMG Future Skills Survey

that keeping their people feeling trained, engaged, and productive is critical to surviving the crisis. This includes training managers in how to lead remote teams, which was ranked as a priority for 38% of HR survey respondents, making it the second-biggest priority for the HR function overall after safeguarding employee wellbeing.

Lack of technology skills among non-IT staff is also a critical challenge. Only 19% of respondents to the KPMG 2020 CIO survey say that their organization is very effective or extremely effective at ensuring non-IT staff have the right technology skills. Though even before COVID-19, the KPMG 2019 CIO survey found that most advanced technology leaders were three times more likely to be upskilling non-IT people with IT skills as a way to better support cross-functional teams.

Such tech-focused upskilling programs are helping them build a more agile workforce and address critical skill shortages around artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cyber security. The 2019 CIO survey found these skills were among the hardest to find in the current talent pool.

Our local research shows that HR representatives of companies based in Slovakia are aware of the skill gap brought along with the digital age. 92% of respondents predicted robotic processes automation and data and analytics to be the major influencers on their businesses in the next five years, followed by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Alarmingly only 12% believed their staff is really well prepared for such technological progress.

If we want businesses in Slovakia to be successful, we really need to focus more on getting our resources ready for the future. Unfortunately, our survey shows that only up to 20% of training budgets are allocated to future skills and 40% of companies have not even started with the process of future proofing their workforce.

### Embracing digital learning solutions

Executives recognize that talent development is not going to be easy. Learning is critical for employees and employers alike — but it doesn’t come without its challenges. Skill development in the pandemic is difficult: managers and team members need to be retrained rapidly in how to work and lead effectively in a remote environment, but traditional face-to-face training formats are no longer an option. This is forcing HR leaders to embrace digital learning solutions.

They are offering live training events via online platforms such as Zoom or MS Teams, deploying platforms of digital content from e-learning providers, and adapting their own custom courses to create a virtual asynchronous or live learning environment.

Slovak HR representatives confirmed that prior to COVID-19, investment in online training was at a minimum despite the fact that online training was considered the future. 80% of respondents admitted to spending maximum 20% of their training budget on digital learning tools with many hesitating to consider investing more. This was even though over 90% of respondents believed that to some extent online training is an effective way how to train their staff.

However, the situation has changed rapidly over the past few months as a result of the pandemic’s impact on firms in Slovakia, and 75% of respondents now admit that they re-evaluated online education and will place more emphasis on this form in the future.

Investing in online training should be viewed as part of a systemic approach to the creation of more resilient and future-ready learning and development programs. Newly gained acceptance and experience with virtual learning represents something that can be built upon and incorporated into new strategies. In order to create sustainable and resilient L&D programs, companies need to take a step back and identify skills for future that their workforce really lacks. This is an integral aspect in creating an effective learning path for all levels in the company – from young graduates to C-suite.

### Addressing areas that will shape the future of companies

The COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly made people the number one priority in nearly every organization around the world. As a result, HR leaders are now at the forefront of reshaping the priorities and the way work gets done. This has created a new opportunity for the HR function to switch from firefighting immediate pressures to strategically engineering a successful future. True long-term value now lies in their ability to swiftly address the areas that will shape the future of companies.

We believe the winners will be those who make learning and development for their people top priority instead of just relegating it to so-called “non-essential” spend. Money invested into skill development will be looked upon as a critical and essential investment rather than just a perk used for employee retention purposes.