POWER

Soft Skills and Training for Today's Workforce

Learning & Development Annual Trends Survey 2022

Executive Summary

The year 2021 will be remembered for transformational change, as COVID-19 continued to influence the current and future workforce,[1] and millions of Americans quit their jobs in the Great Resignation.[2] As change continues to unfold in the world, successful leaders are striving to ensure their organizations, employees, and customers are positioned for success.

One way people are preparing for the future of work is through professional development. Amy Borsetti, former Senior Director at LinkedIn, noted "continuous learning has been cemented as a must-have first principle of our future workforce."[3]

To better understand learning priorities for this year and beyond, Duarte surveyed a worldwide audience (80% of whom identified as working in L&D). For detailed respondent information, see page 51.

Our research uncovered that power skills, formerly known as soft skills, are the human and behavioral skills that individuals, teams, and organizations believe they most need in order to thrive now and into the future. Not surprisingly, communication, one of the most challenging power skills to hone, surfaced as the top skill all employees need today.

As the nature of work further evolves, including a trend toward hybrid, it is no surprise to see many organizations increase their L&D budgets. Maximizing those investments is necessary for individuals, teams, and companies to navigate and lead through transformative times. This report provides insights and tips to aid in satisfying learner needs and fostering learning cultures that are purpose-built to withstand whatever comes next.

Key Insights

Communication is the #1 power skill employees need to have right now.

Power skills are important to help organizations achieve their goals.

The future of work and corporate training is projected to be hybrid.

L&D budgets for 2022 are projected to be the same or increased.

Skills to Power Today and Tomorrow

Skills to Power Today and Tomorrow

Power Skills: The skills we use to interact and connect with others

Turns out, they're really important! They're not just for developing relationships with others—they're also vital for success in the workplace. One power skill appears to be more important than others: **Communication.**

And its importance is rising...

How **important** are communication skills in helping your organization achieve its goals right now? (0-10)
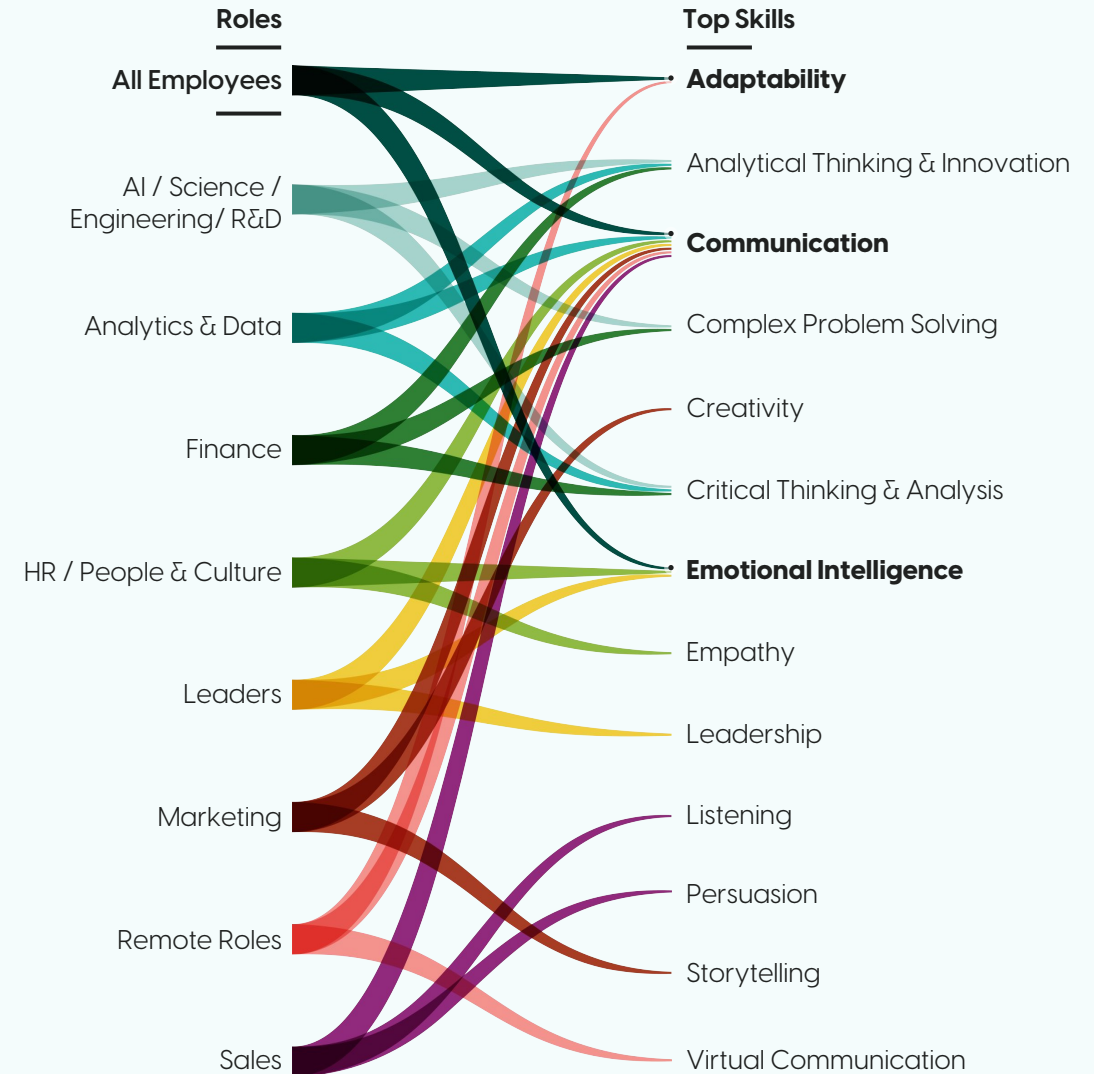
8.95	9.56
2020	2021

How **proficient** in communication skills are employees at your organization? (0-10)

6.75	6.48
2020	2021

... but employee communication skills aren't.

Top 3 Power Skills by Role

Roles
- All Employees
- AI / Science / Engineering/ R&D
- Analytics & Data
- Finance
- HR / People & Culture
- Leaders
- Marketing
- Remote Roles
- Sales

Top Skills
- **Adaptability**
- Analytical Thinking & Innovation
- **Communication**
- Complex Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking & Analysis
- **Emotional Intelligence**
- Empathy
- Leadership
- Listening
- Persuasion
- Storytelling
- Virtual Communication

The Hard Truth About Soft Skills

Chances are you've heard the term *soft skills*, a phrase that's commonly used to describe a range of interpersonal and behavioral abilities that people may exhibit. You've probably also heard communication referred to as a soft skill. But we don't think that term capture the difficulty or value of these essential capabilities.

The truth is, becoming an effective communicator is hard work, some of the hardest you'll ever do. It requires creative thinking as well as careful planning. An ability to understand and connect deeply with other people. A clear sense of your purpose and power as an individual...not to mention self-awareness and self-control. And, when done right, it exerts incredible influence on the world. That's quite a powerful outcome.

That's why lots of people are now referring to soft skills as "power skills."[4] We agree. While skills like communication, listening, storytelling, and creativity can be taught, they are difficult to master. These skills are NOT soft; they're HARD. They're by definition "complex and behavioral in nature, and they represent what are 'uniquely human skills' that cannot be done by machines."[5] Unlike technical skills which often apply to one job function, power skills are relevant, applicable, and transferrable across disciplines and roles. Most importantly, power skills allow workers, teams, and organizations to flex, adapt, and grow, making them essential capabilities for the future of work.

So, throughout this report, we'll be referring to communication and soft skills as power skills. And to those organizations who embrace them and invest in them, we say: **more power to you.**

The Role of Communication

Power Skills Are Essential for Daily Performance

The relationship between power skills and L&D might be a key to the Great Resignation—and the Great Rehiring that's to follow. The gap between the skilled and unskilled is growing,[6] and companies looking to contend for top talent or clients need to invest wisely.

Power skills, at their core, are often "people skills" and behaviors that drive success for an organization.[7] In particular, each of the four top-rated power skills in our survey were directly related to communication.

When it comes to the daily performance of your organization, how important are the following soft skills? (0-10)

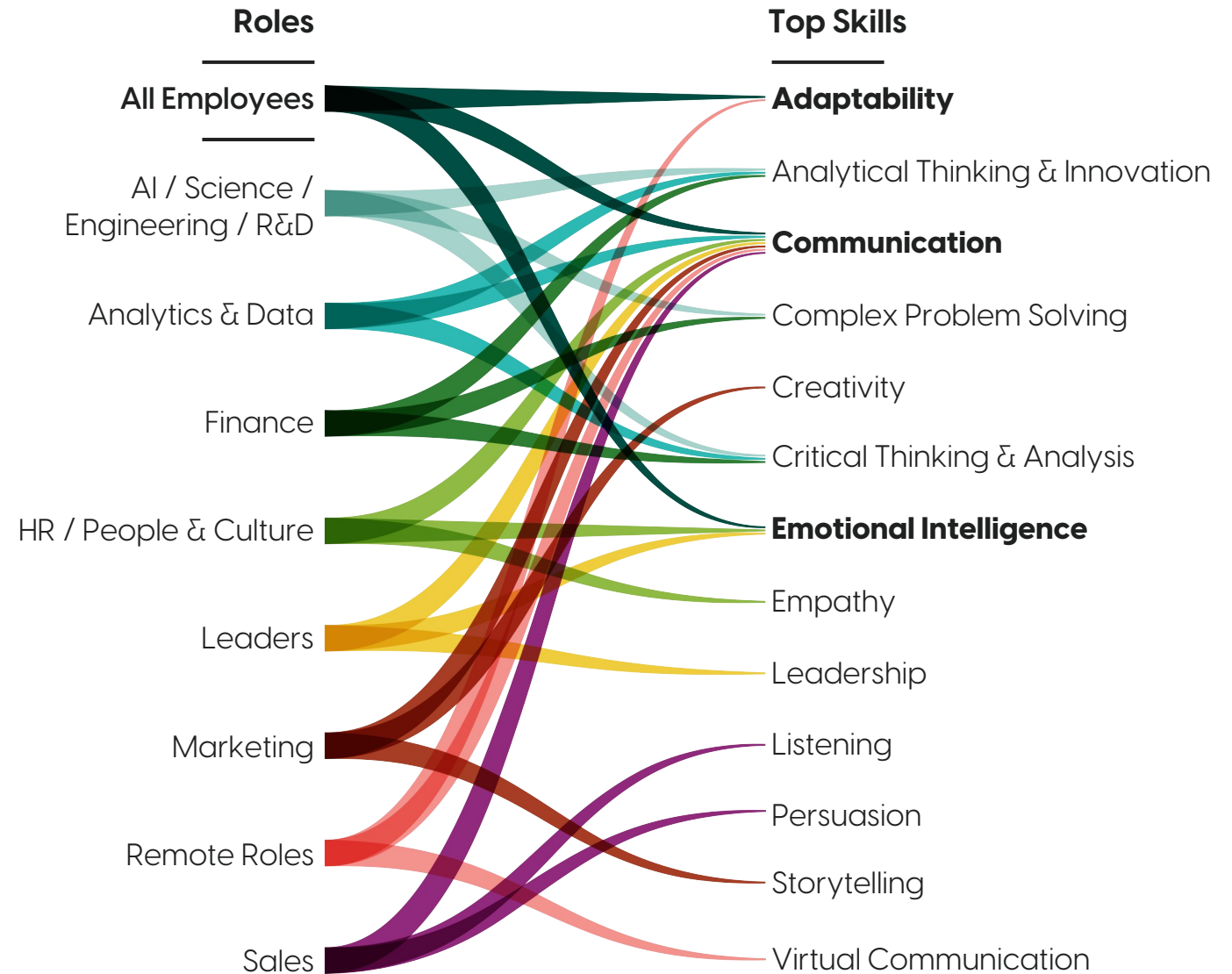| Skill	Score
Communicating well in virtual / remote / online settings	9.00
Simplifying and clarifying complex concepts	8.79
Listening and empathetic communication	8.77
Using various communication mediums effectively	8.67
Leadership	8.60
Critical thinking and analysis	8.57
Tailoring content to different audiences	8.54
Communicating to achieve alignment between stakeholders	8.45
Facilitating meetings / discussions	8.40
Handling difficult conversations	8.38
Motivating teams to achieve goals	8.37
Analytical thinking and innovation	8.36
Creating and delivering effective presentations / slides	8.35
Complex problem solving	8.34
Influencing others to change beliefs or behaviors	8.21
Telling compelling stories	8.20
Communicating in hybrid settings	8.02
Cascading messages across the organization	7.94
Finding and sharing data insights	7.86
Data literacy / digital intelligence	7.62
Executive Presence	7.59

7.0   8.0   9.0   10.0

The #1 Power Skill: Communication

Our survey revealed the most coveted power skills in the workplace, as well as the specific skills that are deemed necessary for particular roles within an organization.

While prioritization of skills varies by function, the consensus is that communication is the top power skill for anyone in the workplace, followed by adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

Top 3 Power Skills by Role

Roles

All Employees

AI / Science / Engineering / R&D

Analytics & Data

Finance

HR / People & Culture

Leaders

Marketing

Remote Roles

Sales

Top Skills

Adaptability

Analytical Thinking & Innovation

Communication

Complex Problem Solving

Creativity

Critical Thinking & Analysis

Emotional Intelligence

Empathy

Leadership

Listening

Persuasion

Storytelling

Virtual Communication

The Importance of Communication Is Rising

In each of Duarte's last two surveys, we asked respondents how COVID-19 changed the value they placed on communication skills. Most view communication skills as growing in importance since the pandemic began, with a big jump in 2021 to 84%. It is noteworthy that while some said there was no change in importance...

Not one respondent said, "communication skills are less important."

How has the COVID-19 crisis changed the importance you place on communication skills?

"

More Important

100%

0%

68%

84%

2020   2021

© 2022 Duarte, Inc.
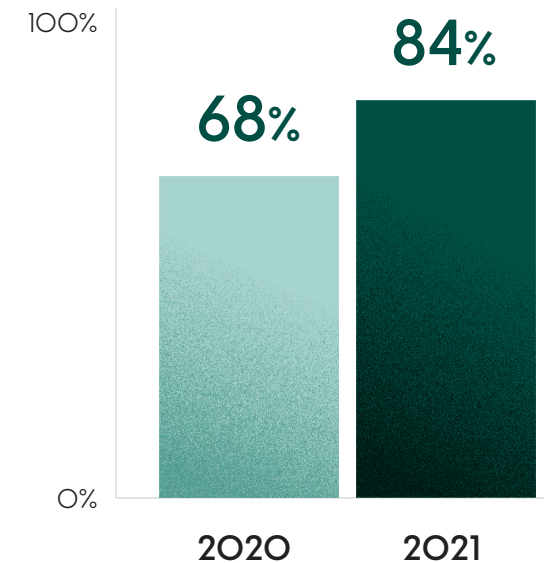
The Skills Gap Widens

Communication skills are key, but they're lacking

How important are communication skills in helping your organization achieve its goals right now? (0-10)

Since we last surveyed respondents in 2020, the importance of communication skills to achieving organizational goals has increased.

More important now

10

8.95 9.56

0

2020 2021
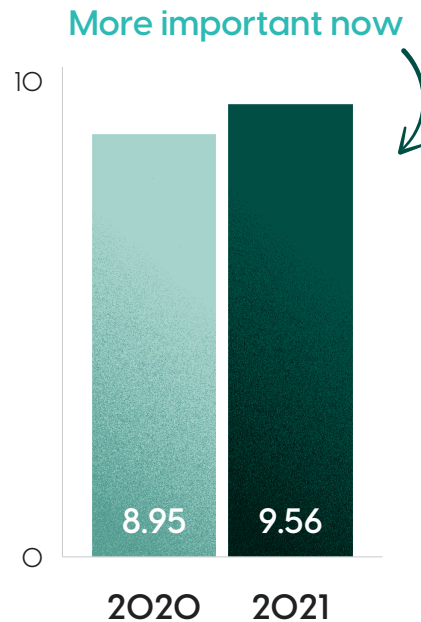
How proficient in communication skills are employees at your organization? (0-10)

While the importance of communication skills has increased, peoples' perceived proficiency in communication skills is not keeping up.

10

Less proficient now

6.75 6.48

0

2020 2021
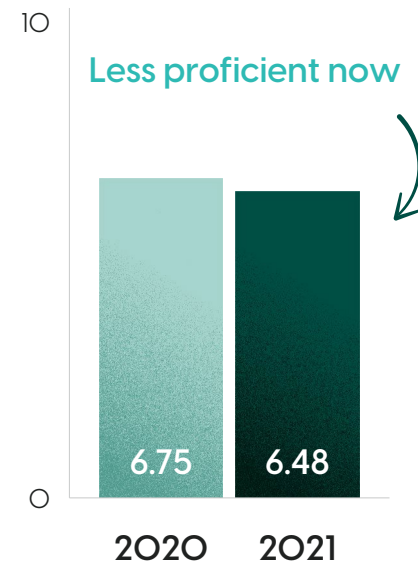
Organizational Challenges Present Opportunities

Addressing communication weaknesses now can turn them into future strengths.

In these times of rapid change, we are seeing a need to prioritize communication in organizations. High-ranking challenges to organizations, which can also be viewed as opportunities, include the ability to communicate well online, and the ability to disseminate—or cascade—key messages, as well as aligning stakeholders across an organization.

Organizations that recognize and address these communication limitations now will be more differentiated and better positioned to attract and retain top talent in the future.

Given the events and impacts of COVID-19, what are the top three communication challenges at your organization?

01 Communicating well in online, remote, and/or virtual settings

02 Communicating to achieve and maintain alignment between stakeholders

...tied with

Cascading messages across the organization

Top Three Power Skills for Common Roles

Power Skills Every Employee Needs in 2022

Today's worker needs a minimum set of power skills for success in tomorrow's workplace.

Successful organizations, even those in highly technical fields, are prioritizing development of power skills. Communication, adaptability, and emotional intelligence are seen as universally needed skills for the modern workplace.

Investment in these human skills benefits not only the organization, but also each of its stakeholders. Being adaptable to changing protocols has been a hallmark of the COVID-19 era but it can also relate to working with new people or tackling projects in a new way. Emotional intelligence is an essential component for empathetic interactions with coworkers, clients, and others, especially in stressful or unpredictable situations.

What are the top three soft skills employees need to have right now?

01   Communication

02   Adaptability

03   Emotional Intelligence

Remote Workers Need to Communicate Intentionally

Power skills are key to success in hybrid and remote work environments.

Lack of physical presence requires more nuanced communication. Globally, "remote job postings on LinkedIn have increased by more than 5x since the start of the pandemic."[8] Upwork also found an uptick in remote work with businesses expecting 58% of their workforce to be remote in five years.[9]

Regardless of role, remote workers need to fill the emotional gap left behind by their lack of physical presence. This looks to be a trend on the rise. As many settle into permanent remote or hybrid roles, extra emphasis is being placed on proficiency with virtual communication, effective communication in general, and a commitment to adaptability. We're no longer reacting to an unprecedented era; we are intentionally creating a new one.

What are the top three soft skills those in Remote roles need to have right now?

01   Virtual communication

02   Communication

03   Adaptability

Leaders Need Emotional Intelligence

By deliberately focusing on power skills, leaders can strengthen their entire organization.

As workers disperse into remote or hybrid roles, social ties within organizations risk weakening. The potential breakdown in connections heightens the pressure on leaders to build and strengthen relationships within and across teams.

It's no surprise that respondents felt a need for leaders to develop improved communication skills and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can be understood as the ability to sense, understand, and manage emotions.[10] Empathetic leadership is especially key for success in 2022.

What are the top three soft skills those in Leadership roles need to have right now?

01 Communication

02 Emotional Intelligence

...tied with Leadership

Salespeople Need Influence Skills

Adding persuasion skills can help salespeople adapt to a changing sales environment.

Like other functions, the act of selling is increasingly happening at a distance. LinkedIn asserts in its *2021 State of Sales* annual report that remote business development is increasing, with buyers preferring remote interactions and virtual selling benefiting both sellers and buyers.[8]

As sales increasingly move to the online space, it is clear both negotiating parties would benefit from honed communication, listening, and persuasion skills. Virtual handshakes are an art worth perfecting for the digital age.

What are the top three soft skills those in Sales roles need to have right now?

01 Communication

02 Listening

03 Persuasion

Marketers Need Creative and Storytelling Skills

The key to engaging consumers is understanding how to connect with others.

If your organization doubled down on digital communication during COVID-19, you're not alone.[11] The quest to help brands stand out online has never been more urgent, and it starts with compelling content.

For these reasons, creativity, communication, and storytelling combine to form a power skills platform for marketing success.

What are the top three soft skills those in Marketing roles need to have right now?

O1 Creativity

...tied with Communication

O2 Storytelling

HR Needs to Lead With Empathy

Power skills in the HR department can enhance an organization's ability to attract talent.

With the Great Resignation underway and ongoing workforce disruptions related to COVID-19,[12] human resources professionals and culture keepers need to be empathetic and emotionally intelligent communicators.

Christine Tatham, a VP of People and Culture, said "companies that truly care about people, and who proactively focus their leadership efforts on engaging their people, will avoid 'The Great Resignation' and position themselves as an employer of choice."[13]

What are the top three soft skills those in HR / People & Culture roles need to have right now?

01 Communication

02 Empathy

03 Emotional Intelligence

Data Roles Need Analytical and Communication Skills

Data only has value when a human has the skills to interpret its meaning.

The 2020 *Future of Jobs Report* by the World Economic Forum found that data roles are increasing in demand across industries. Additionally, the WEF reported analytical thinking and innovation were the top skills "employers see as rising in prominence in the lead up to 2025."[14]

Data points without the ability to interpret insights, and communicate clearly, provide little value in the workplace. That's why power skills like communication are essential for analytical and data-driven roles in 2022.

What are the top three soft skills those in Analytics / Data roles need to have right now?

01 Critical Thinking & Analysis

...tied with

Analytical Thinking & Innovation

02 Communication

Financial Roles Need Analysis Skills

Managing finances well requires both technical acumen and power skills.

So-called "hard skills" have long been a baseline for employability in financial roles, but power skills also play a key role in their professional growth and success.

Critical thinking and analysis, analytical thinking and innovation, and complex problem solving are the key power skills differentiators for finance professionals in 2022. Communication skills followed close behind, ranking fourth for financial professionals, aligning with insights shared by Indeed's Editorial Team.[15]

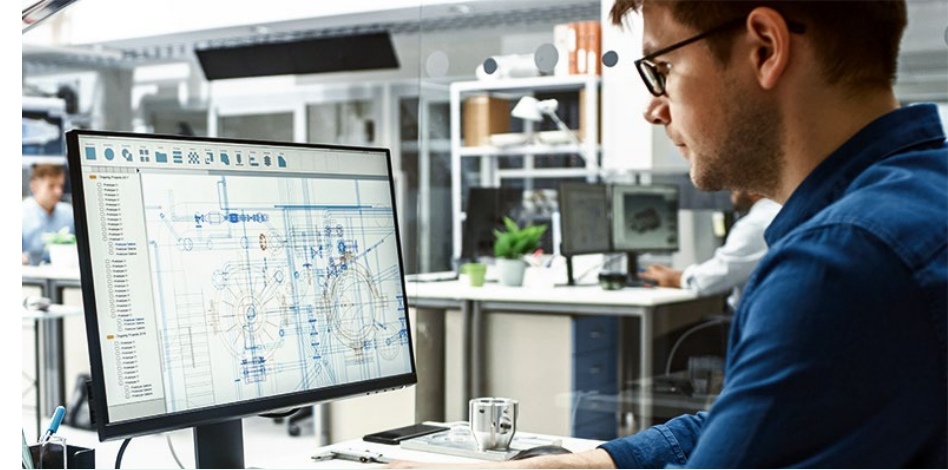**What are the top three soft skills those in Finance roles need to have right now?**

01 Critical Thinking & Analysis

02 Analytical Thinking & Innovation

03 Complex Problem Solving

Technical Roles Need Analytical Skills

Even the most technical positions require human connection and can benefit from power skills.

According to the 2020 World Economic Forum *Future of Jobs Report*, analytical thinking and innovation was the top skill set "employers see as rising in prominence in the lead up to 2025."[14]

Our survey data confirmed critical thinking and analytical thinking are already imperative for professionals in AI, Science, Engineering, and R&D roles for this year. Communication ranked fifth and remains a necessary skill for translating complex information into actionable insights.

What are the top three soft skills those in AI / Science / Engineering / R&D roles need to have right now?

01   Analytical Thinking & Innovation

02   Complex Problem Solving

03   Critical Thinking & Analysis

The Power of Learning and Development

The Power of Learning and Development

Most organizations are investing in upskilling

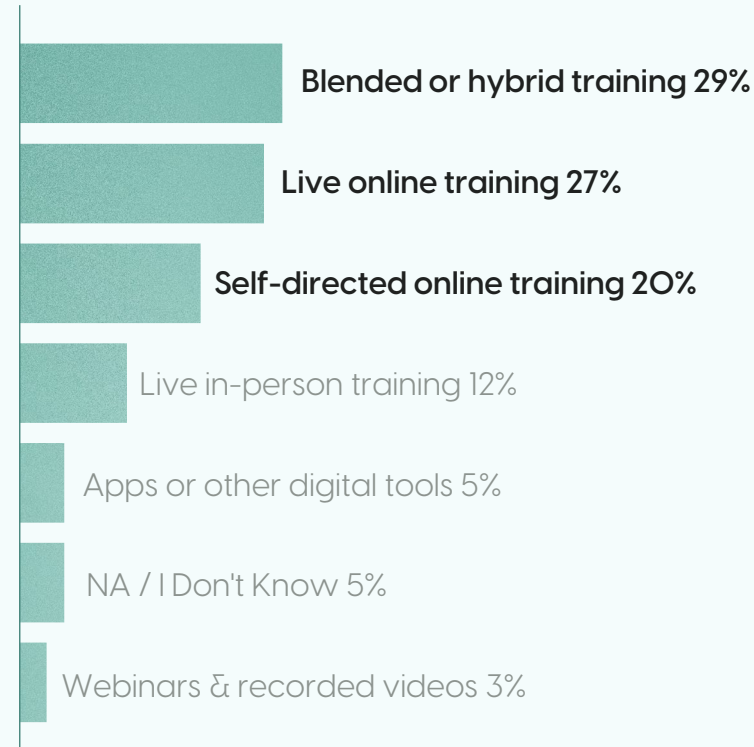# 76%

Of L&D budgets will stay the same or increase in 2022

There is room to improve L&D culture

Only # 18%

Of respondents feel their organization's L&D culture is **high**

Most training will happen online

Which training method do you predict your organization will invest in **most** in 2022?

Blended or hybrid training 29%

Live online training 27%

Self-directed online training 20%

Live in-person training 12%

Apps or other digital tools 5%

NA / I Don't Know 5%

Webinars & recorded videos 3%

The future of work is hybrid

79% Say the future of **work** will be hybrid

71% Say the future of corporate **training** will be hybrid

Keys to live online training success

Provide engaging content

Design for accessibility

Use interactions to promote participation

Keep sessions under four hours

Choose mornings, mid-week

Give breaks

Keep your camera on

Learning & Development Is an Investment, Not an Expense

As we ride the waves of change, learning and development should be viewed as an investment in the organization's future and its people. That spend pays for itself on several levels, including improved business performance as well as employee satisfaction.

Organizations that develop their people are more likely to survive and thrive during times of flux. According to McKinsey, "if companies cut their learning budgets now, they're only delaying their investment, not netting a saving—especially since the current crisis will require a larger skill shift than the 2008 financial crisis did."[16]

At the same time, 97% of employees say they want to "expand or continue their current time to learn," per data from Glint.[17] Research from Open Sesame and Lighthouse also found that if companies "offered more online training options, learners were more than twice as likely to say their employer helped them to adapt and transition during the tumultuous times of the past year."[18]

Clearly, training has mutually beneficial effects. As Deloitte put it, "by enabling workers to fulfill their potential, we can be confident they will add the most value to our organization."[19] Our research indicates L&D budgets are being protected, so the prognosis is good for all involved.

L&D Budgets and Culture

Healthy L&D Budgets Are Projected for 2022

In the world of talent development, we've seen crises and resilience in equal measure. While the future is uncertain, one thing is clear: workers want to develop and improve their skills;[17] and this desire is on the radar for savvy executives.[21]

Our research indicates organizations are keenly aware of the need to prioritize worker talent development, with most budgets staying the same or increasing.

"

Now is not the time to pull back on workforce development efforts, but instead to double down on commitments to building a resilient workforce that can adapt in the face of constant change.[20]

Returning to Work in the Future of Work, Deloitte, 2020

Most organizations plan to invest in upskilling their workers.

40%
Budget will stay the same
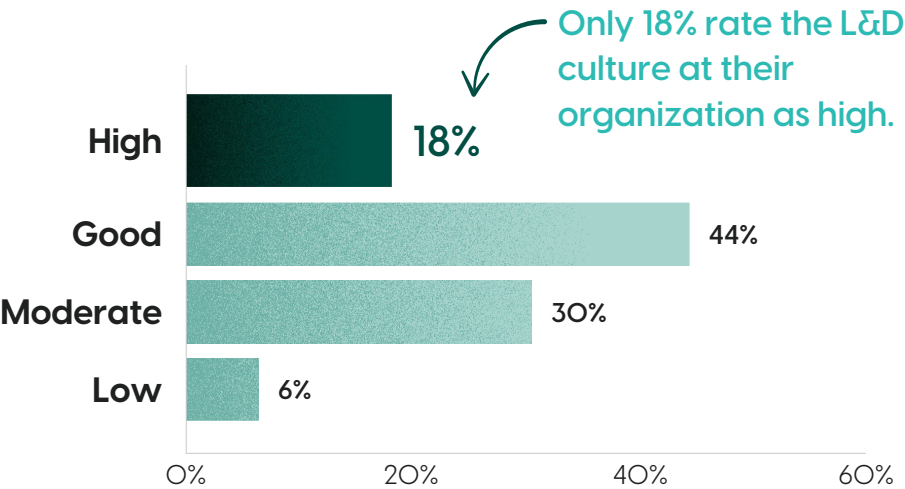
36%
Budget will increase

15%
NA / I don't know

9%
Budget will decrease

Most Organizations Could Improve Learning Culture

How would you rate the learning and development culture at your organization?

Only 18% rate the L&D culture at their organization as high.

High — 18%
Good — 44%
Moderate — 30%
Low — 6%

0%   20%   40%   60%

Note: NA/I don't know = 1%
Results do not add up to 100% because rounding was involved in the reporting.

In competition for top talent, organizations would do well to increase their focus on professional development. PwC states companies should expect potential candidates to "negotiate hard" for "expanded benefits such as career growth and upskilling opportunities."[21]   While our data shows adequate funding for training, our results also show room for organizations to increase their commitment to a culture of workforce development. Gaining and retaining top talent depends on it.

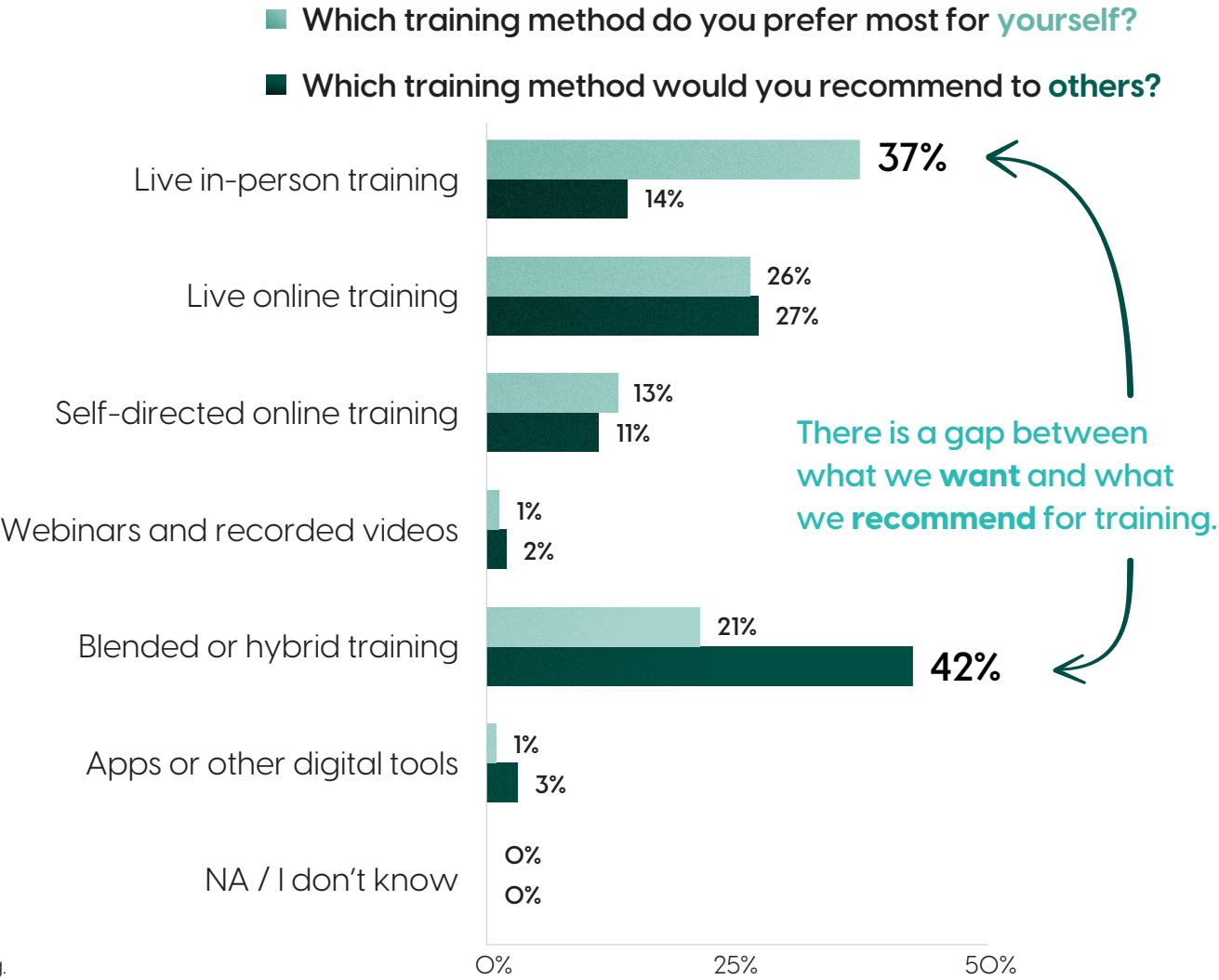**High:** Employees have substantial opportunities for growth, and are actively and regularly engaged in learning

Good: Employees have regular opportunities to learn

Moderate: At times, some employees may have learning opportunities

Low: There are little to no opportunities for employee learning

Blended or Hybrid Is Recommended

A strong plurality of respondents express a preference for live, in-person training, but even more people would recommend blended or hybrid training for others.

This tension between what people may want, and what they might end up recommending, highlights the challenges that training leaders have when navigating training goals and needs during times of change. Ultimately, savvy training leaders understand the flexible benefits of hybrid and blended training, and are especially willing to recommend them, even if that recommendation isn't always their personal preference.

Note: Results do not add up to 100% because rounding was involved in the reporting.

■ Which training method do you prefer most for **yourself?**

■ Which training method would you recommend to **others?**

Live in-person training	37% / 14%
Live online training	26% / 27%
Self-directed online training	13% / 11%
Webinars and recorded videos	1% / 2%
Blended or hybrid training	21% / 42%
Apps or other digital tools	1% / 3%
NA / I don't know	0% / 0%

0%   25%   50%

There is a gap between what we **want** and what we **recommend** for training.
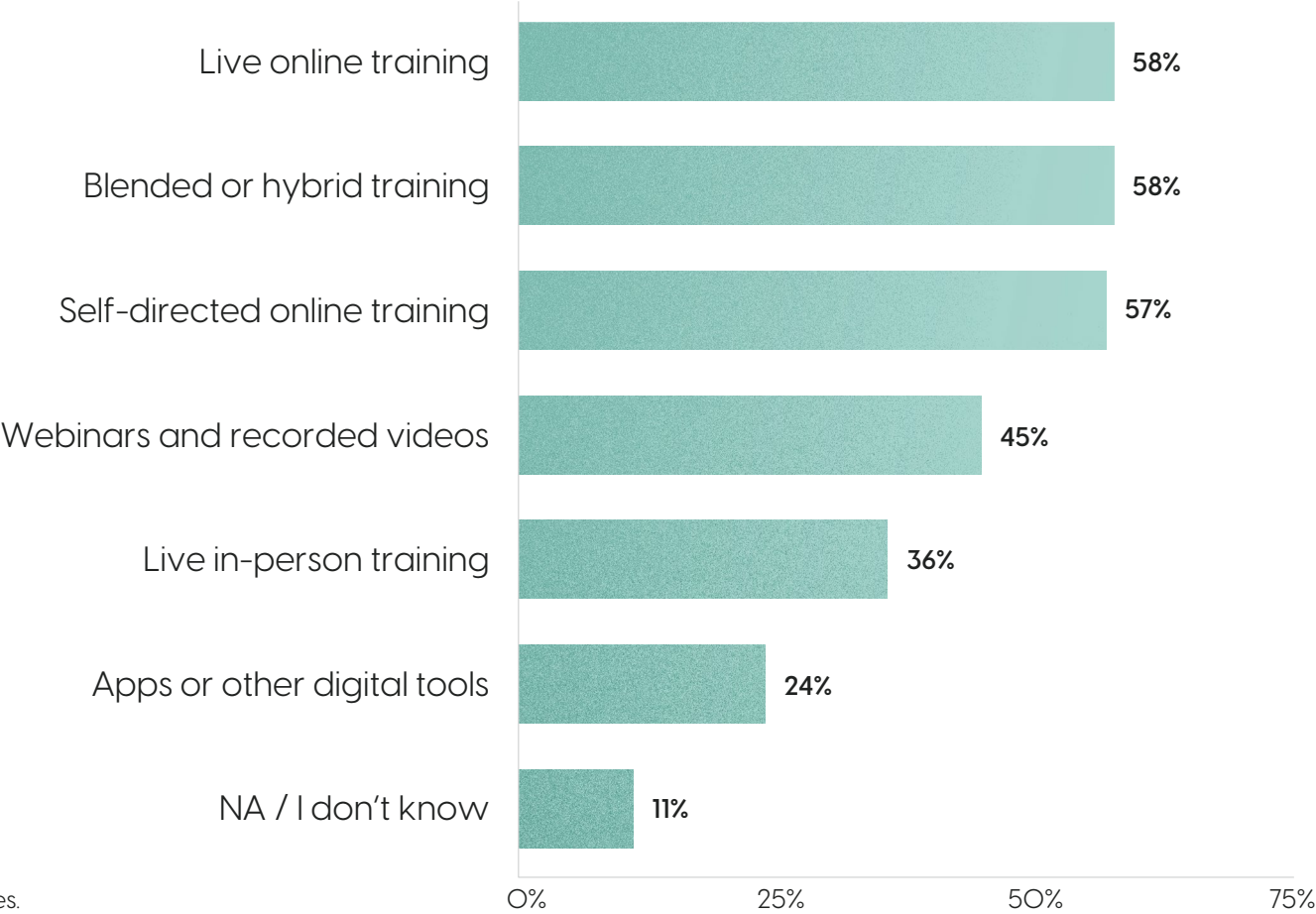
L&D Plans to Spend Most Training Dollars Online

The top three training modality expenditures for 2022 are all predicted to be predominantly online. Two additional commonalities are that these top three training modalities can flex and accommodate learner needs.

- Blended or hybrid training offer the ability to incorporate a variety of learning modalities. Hybrid is also beneficial because it brings remote and in-person attendees together to learn synchronously.

- Live online training is valuable because it reaches people in remote locations to learn synchronously.

- Self-directed online training allows people the opportunity to learn on their own.

Which types of training does your organization plan to invest time and money into in 2022? Select all that apply. (Other = 0%)

Training Type	Percentage
Live online training	58%
Blended or hybrid training	58%
Self-directed online training	57%
Webinars and recorded videos	45%
Live in-person training	36%
Apps or other digital tools	24%
NA / I don't know	11%

0% 25% 50% 75%

Note: Results do not add up to 100% because the question allowed multiple responses.

Training Modalities

Ready or Not, Hybrid Is Here!

79% Say the future of **work** will be hybrid

71% Say the future of corporate **training** will be hybrid

An all in-person workplace is no longer the norm.[21]

PwC found that 78% of employees would prefer to have their choice of remote work options (either fully or partially), when COVID-19 was no longer a concern.[21] With the move to online and hybrid work becoming normalized, it makes sense that corporate training will also flex to meet the needs of remote and

hybrid teams. Nearly three-quarters of our respondents said hybrid will be the future of corporate training (22% said it will be online / remote), and that blended / hybrid training will be the top training method their organizations are investing in throughout 2022. As for in-person, only 3% see it as the future of corporate training, and only 5% feel it's the future of work.

Survey Question: What does the future of work look like at your organization?
Survey Question: What does the future of corporate training look like?

2022 L&D Spending Prioritizes Blended or Hybrid Training

In 2021, either in-person or live online learning dominated training spending with L&D investing more in live online training. Looking ahead, L&D plans to invest in blended or hybrid training most.

Note: Results do not add up to 100% because rounding was involved in the reporting.

■ Which training method takes up most of your **current** training budget?

■ Which training method do you predict your organization will invest in most in **2022**?

Live in-person training
- 2021 — 27%
- 2022 — 12%

Live online training
- 29%
- 27%

Self-directed online training
- 16%
- 20%

Webinars and recorded videos
- 4%
- 3%

Blended or hybrid training
- 13%
- 29%

Apps or other digital tools
- 0%
- 5%

NA / I don't know
- 10%
- 5%

This shift towards blended or hybrid training provides key flexibility for the learner.
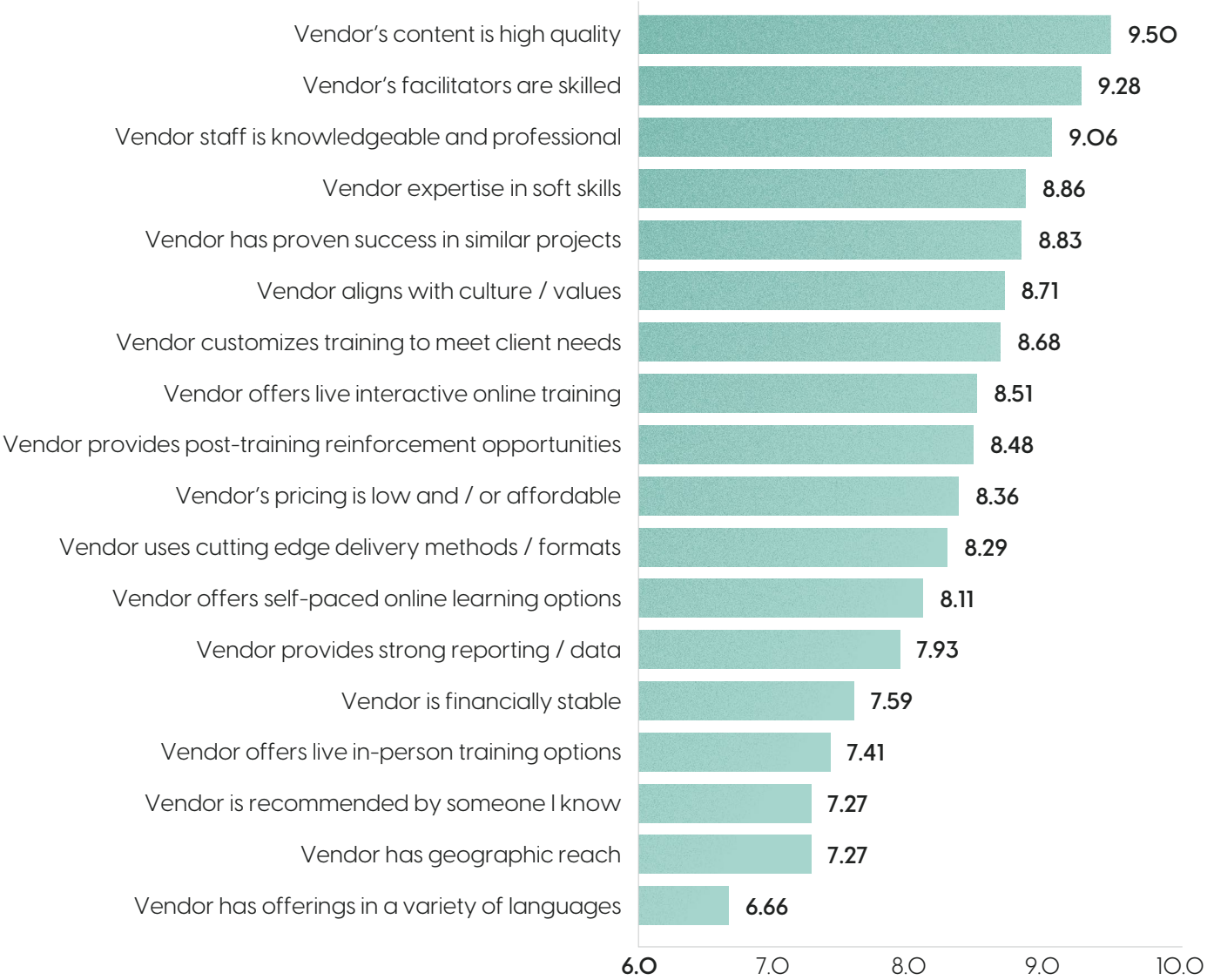
0%   20%   40%

Tips for Choosing Third-Party Trainers

There are tens of thousands of e-learning and online training organizations,[22] and according to Allied Market Research, the global corporate training market is projected to reach $417.2 billion by 2027.[23]

Approximately 42% of our respondents outsource their power skills training to third-party vendors. There are a variety of very important factors, such as high-quality content, skilled facilitators, and knowledgeable and professional staff, that impact the L&D buyer's selection criteria.

When choosing a training vendor, how important are the following factors? (0-10)

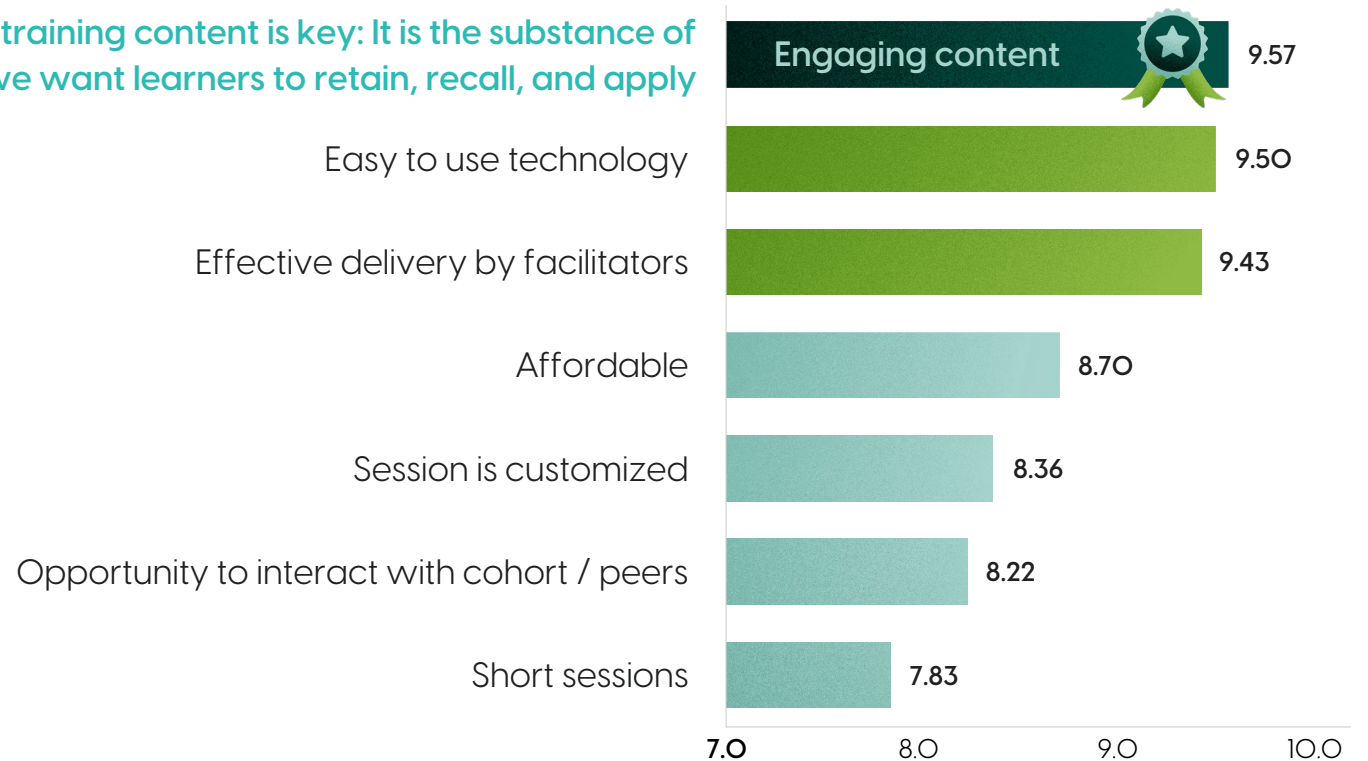| Factor	Score
Vendor's content is high quality	9.50
Vendor's facilitators are skilled	9.28
Vendor staff is knowledgeable and professional	9.06
Vendor expertise in soft skills	8.86
Vendor has proven success in similar projects	8.83
Vendor aligns with culture / values	8.71
Vendor customizes training to meet client needs	8.68
Vendor offers live interactive online training	8.51
Vendor provides post-training reinforcement opportunities	8.48
Vendor's pricing is low and / or affordable	8.36
Vendor uses cutting edge delivery methods / formats	8.29
Vendor offers self-paced online learning options	8.11
Vendor provides strong reporting / data	7.93
Vendor is financially stable	7.59
Vendor offers live in-person training options	7.41
Vendor is recommended by someone I know	7.27
Vendor has geographic reach	7.27
Vendor has offerings in a variety of languages	6.66

Delivering Successful Training

Successful Live Online Training Starts With Content

How important are the following factors for live online / virtual interactive training? (0-10)

It makes sense that content was rated higher than other elements in importance, because it is the core of a professional development curriculum. To provide an engaging experience that drives outcomes, content reigns supreme.

Almost as important as the content is the effectiveness of its delivery by facilitators. Technology for live online training must also be easy to use. Combined, these three provide a solid formula for live online learning success.

Engaging training content is key: It is the substance of what we want learners to retain, recall, and apply
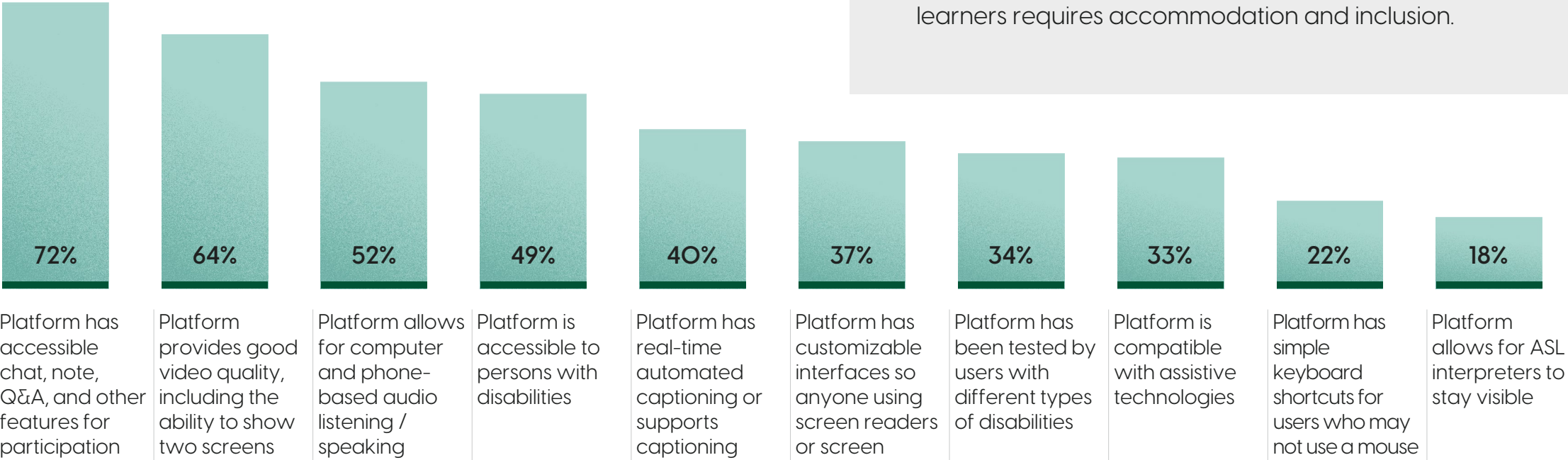
Factor	Rating
Engaging content	9.57
Easy to use technology	9.50
Effective delivery by facilitators	9.43
Affordable	8.70
Session is customized	8.36
Opportunity to interact with cohort / peers	8.22
Short sessions	7.83

7.0   8.0   9.0   10.0

For live online virtual training sessions, which accessibility features are most important? Select all that apply.
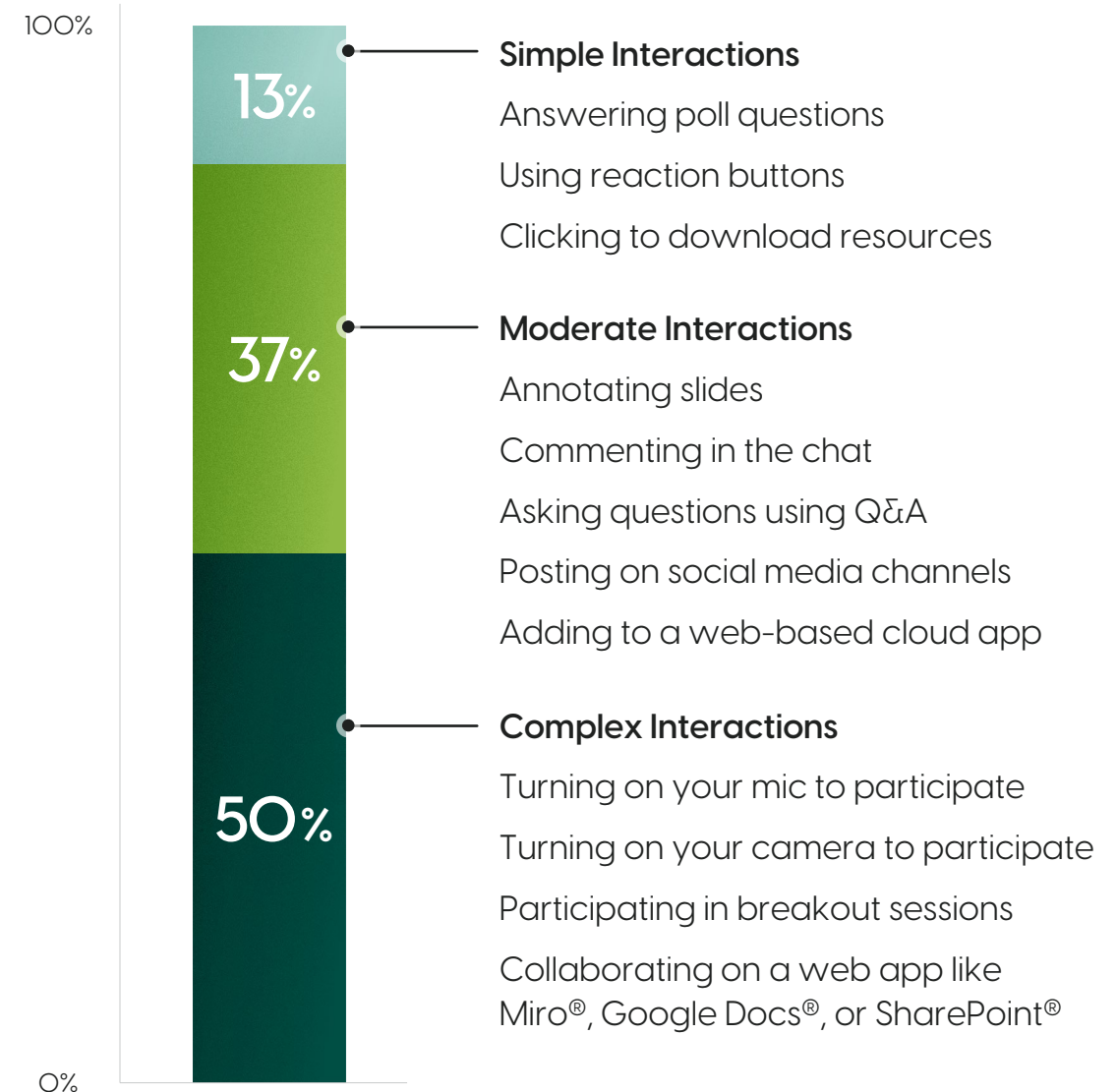
Other = 3%

Design With Accessibility in Mind

Online accessibility isn't just mandated by law, it is a best practice and the right thing to do for learners. When designing trainings, it is important to ensure they are accessible to all people. Research indicates "30% of college-educated employees working full-time in white-collar professions in the U.S. have a disability."[24] Serving all learners requires accommodation and inclusion.

72%	64%	52%	49%	40%	37%	34%	33%	22%	18%
Platform has accessible chat, note, Q&A, and other features for participation	Platform provides good video quality, including the ability to show two screens	Platform allows for computer and phone-based audio listening / speaking	Platform is accessible to persons with disabilities	Platform has real-time automated captioning or supports captioning	Platform has customizable interfaces so anyone using screen readers or screen magnification can adjust the video windows as needed	Platform has been tested by users with different types of disabilities	Platform is compatible with assistive technologies	Platform has simple keyboard shortcuts for users who may not use a mouse	Platform allows for ASL interpreters to stay visible

Note: Categories modeled after the American Bar Association's *Virtual Meetings Accessibility Checklist and Best Practices.*[25]

Results do not add up to 100% because the question allowed multiple responses.

Engage Your Audiences With Interactions

Online audiences have a range of competing distractions at their fingertips. One way to draw them into live online training sessions is to keep them engaged with interactions.

In her book, *Presenting Virtually*, Patti Sanchez shares three levels of interactions for online presentations: simple, moderate, and complex.[26] While all have their strengths, we found people strongly prefer more moderate to complex interactions in live virtual trainings. This makes sense, given that such interactions particularly help distinguish this learning experience from other online learning experiences, such as self-directed learning.

For live online virtual training sessions, which do you prefer more?

100%

13%

Simple Interactions

Answering poll questions

Using reaction buttons

Clicking to download resources

37%

Moderate Interactions

Annotating slides

Commenting in the chat

Asking questions using Q&A

Posting on social media channels

Adding to a web-based cloud app

50%

Complex Interactions

Turning on your mic to participate

Turning on your camera to participate

Participating in breakout sessions

Collaborating on a web app like Miro®, Google Docs®, or SharePoint®

0%

Insights Into Preferred Training Length

When we asked our respondents how long is the right time for training in a day, brevity was the theme: in-person trainings have a range of acceptable lengths, but online training ideally shouldn't exceed 4 hours in a day.

What is the maximum total acceptable time for training in a single day?

Live In-Person Training

13% 12% 12% 17% 4% 19% 6% 17%
1 hour 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 hours

Collectively, 88% of responses fell within the 1–4-hour window

Live Online Training

20% 32% 19% 17%
1 hour 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 hours

Collectively, 93% of responses fell within the 1–4-hour window

Self-Directed Online Training

38% 29% 12% 14%
1 hour 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 hours
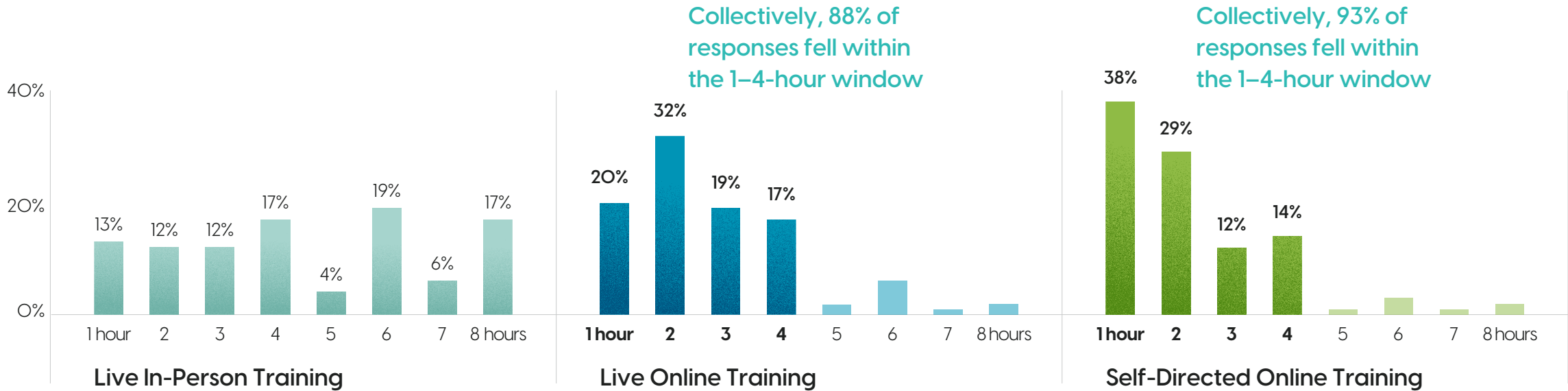
Note: Results do not add up to 100% because rounding was involved in the reporting.

Schedule Trainings in the Morning Mid-Week

With every digital notification competing for our attention, timing for online training can mean the difference between an engaged and distracted learner. That concern can be mitigated by simply scheduling trainings on days farthest away from the weekends.

We found Tuesday-Thursday are the most preferred days of the week for live online training. We also found that most prefer live online training sessions to occur in the mornings and / or the afternoons.

Note: Results do not add up to 100% because the question allowed multiple responses.

What is your preferred day of the week for live online virtual training? Choose all that apply.

No preference = 16%

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2%	21%	55%	56%	60%	31%	3%
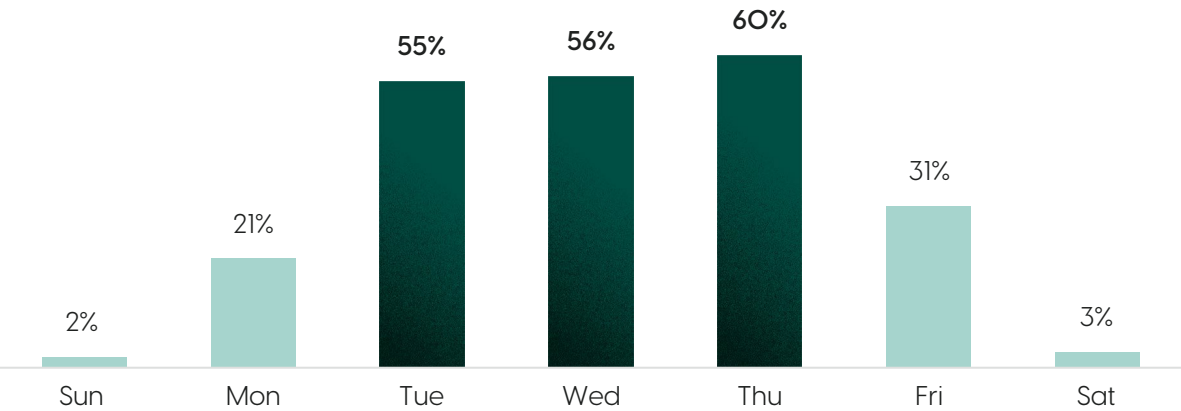
Do you prefer mornings, afternoons, or evenings for live virtual online training sessions? Choose all that apply.
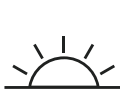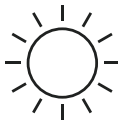
Mornings 68%   Afternoons 45%   Evenings 11%   No preference 9%

Be Intentional With Break Times

While the time spent learning is important, the time taken away from learning matters, too.

Research by Microsoft found breaks can decrease stress while increasing focus and engagement.[27] Our own data confirmed respondents feel breaks are needed every 45-60 minutes for live online trainings.

Survey question: For live online virtual training sessions, how often are breaks needed? Every 45 min (37%), every 60 min (37%), every 30 min (9%), every 90 min (8%), every 75 min (6%), every 15 min (3%), every 105 min (0%), every 120 min (0%), other (0%).

Please Turn Your Camera On

Being fully present for training is challenging for busy participants but necessary for optimal learning outcomes. According to research by Uniphore, turning one's camera on, especially during conversations, has led to increased feelings of engagement and connection.[28] Additionally, Zoom found 82% of users said there was greater trust and 91% said there was greater engagement with video on.[29]

We found most people prefer video cameras to be on during live online trainings, including for facilitators, peers, and oneself. One way to encourage attention, accountability, and the use of cameras is to lead by example and turn on your video camera.

However, there are very good reasons why people may turn their cameras off. These shouldn't be overlooked and instead be approached with care. For instance, turning the camera off can help reduce the cognitive load and fatigue imposed on users.[30]

Survey question: For live online virtual training sessions, do you prefer if:
- A virtual online facilitator / teacher has their video on?
- Peers have their video on when participating in a live online virtual training session?
- You have your video on when participating in a live online virtual training session?
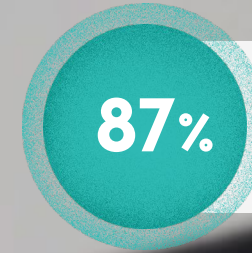
87% prefer **online facilitators / teachers** to have their video on

62% prefer **peers** to have their video on

62% prefer to have **their own** video on

Shareable Takeaways

Communication is the most important power skill required today.

Communication skills are especially important for remote and leadership roles.

Communication skills are increasing in importance, yet employees are not being perceived as very proficient communicators.

Training your employees is an investment in your organization's future.

Hybrid and blended professional development modalities are increasingly popular and likely to be permanent fixtures in the L&D space.

Engaging content, rich interactions, and accessibility should be priorities for live online training.

Online trainings shouldn't exceed four hours in any given day.

About Duarte

The Power Skills Experts

"

Duarte workshops always give me new insights as to how to think differently about my communication challenges and give me the tools to apply my learnings in a really practical way."

Andree Rose

Power skills may be a new concept, but your soft skills training solution is built on a foundation of 30+ years of client success.

You may know Duarte as the presentation company, but we're so much more.

Yes, we help some of the world's biggest brands and most influential speakers create and deliver inspiring presentations, but we also teach individuals and organizations communication and power skills which are crucial for workplace success.

With over 24 options available across multiple formats, you're certain to find the communication training you and your enterprise need to succeed in the workplace of tomorrow.

How Duarte Can Help

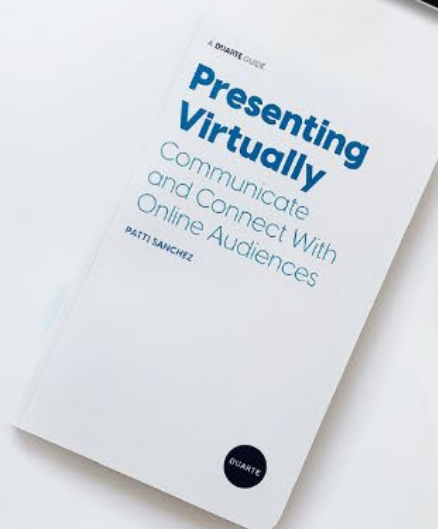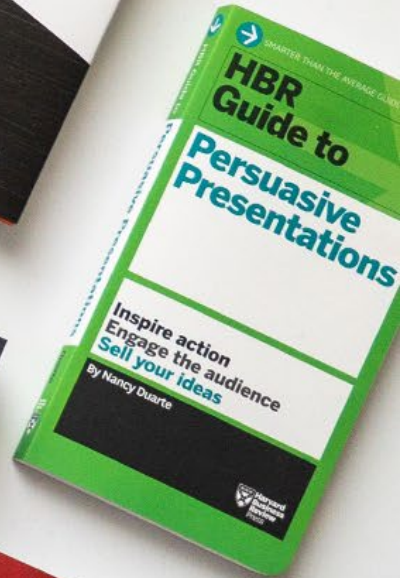## We increase your influence so you can move audiences.

Duarte exists to increase your influence and impact, from everyday interactions to high-stakes communication. Through our creative services and comprehensive training portfolio, we help individuals, teams, and companies move their audiences to act. We do this through the Duarte Method™—our research-based framework built on three decades of work with the world's highest performing brands—that places empathy at the center of communication.

How can we help you?

Transform Communication Culture

Maximize Impact of a High-Stakes Event

Simplify Complex Ideas

Strategy

Delivery

DUARTE

Story

Boost Personal Influence and Skill

Visuals

Accelerate Change

Our Methodology

Story

Virtual Communication ●
Presenting Virtually
Become a virtual presentation pro using techniques from Duarte's new guide, delivered in short engaging video lessons

Presentation Fundamentals ●
Presentation Principles
Based on the HBR Guide to Persuasive Presentations, learn to tell compelling stories and create audience empathy

Narrative Design for Presentations: Intro ● ●
VisualStory®
Create presentations using the combined power of story and visuals

Narrative Design for Presentations: Advanced ●
VisualStory® Plus
Transform audiences with a deep understanding of how narrative and design can change minds

Storytelling With Data ● ●
DataStory®
Build data recommendations that enable decision-making

Story for Presentations ● ● ●
Resonate®
Use story to hold your audience's attention and initiate action

Influence With Story ● ●
Story Fundamentals
Tell the right stories at the right time to inspire action

Visuals

Document Design ●
Slidedocs®
Leverage presentation software to create strong long-form documents

Visual Thinking ● ●
Slide:ology®
Turn words into pictures and simplify complex concepts in presentations

Presentation Design ● ●
Slide Design™
Quickly make clean, compelling slides in PowerPoint™

Delivery

Virtual Presenting ●
Captivate™ for Virtual Communication
Learn to communicate effectively in virtual environments

Public Speaking ● ●
Captivate™
Strengthen your stage presence; available in small and large group formats

Strategy

Communication Strategy ● ●
Illuminate™
Lead change by communicating well at each step of the journey

Receptive Communication* ● ●
Adaptive Listening™
Uncover your default listening style and listen in a way that meets your speaker's needs

*Coming soon

Duarte Academy

● In-Person Workshop   ● Live Virtual Workshop   ● Self-Paced Online Course

About This Report

About This Survey

This report summarizes findings from an online survey Duarte conducted from September to October 2021. The survey was open to anyone, but those who identified as L&D professionals were specifically encouraged to participate. The survey was promoted via social media and list serves, and those who completed the survey were entered into a promotional giveaway opportunity and were promised early access to the ensuing report.

The survey had 294 completed responses, and 80% of participants identified as working in L&D. Logic was used in the survey to direct those who work in L&D to only respond to the questions about training methods, budgets, training spending, important factors for live online training and when choosing a training vendor, and outsourcing training.

See page 51 for full respondent profiles.

Respondents

Thank you to the survey participants who shared their feedback so that others could benefit from their insights.

In what region is your company headquartered?

Africa	0%
Asia	7%
Caribbean	0%
Central America	1%
Europe	17%
Middle East	2%
North America	64%
Oceania	4%
South America	3%
Other	1%

What industry is your organization in?

Accommodation & Food Services	1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	1%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2%
Construction	2%
Educational Services	34%
Finance & Insurance	8%
Health Care & Social Assistance	9%
Information & Media Systems	6%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	4%
Manufacturing	4%
Mining	0%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	12%
Real Estate & Rental Leasing	0%
Retail Trade	2%
Transportation & Warehousing	2%
Utilities	3%
Wholesale Trade	0%
Other	8%

What is your department?

Analytics / Data / Insights	1%
CX Team	2%
Engineering / R&D / Technology	1%
Events	0%
Exec Team / Leadership	7%
Finance	1%
Human Resources / People & Culture	14%
IT / Systems	4%
Learning & Development / Training	60%
Marketing Comms	1%
PR / Comms	0%
Sales	1%
Security	0%
Other	8%

What is your role?

C-Level	7%
SVP / VP	2%
Director / Manager	43%
Executive Admin	1%
Individual Contributor	30%
Teacher / Student	12%
Other	4%

What is the size of your workforce?

Fewer than 100	34%
100-249	8%
250-499	8%
500-999	9%
1,000–2,499	9%
2,500–4,999	6%
5,000–9,999	8%
10,000–24,999	5%
25,000+	13%

What are your gender pronouns?

He/Him	32%
She/Her	58%
They/Them	0%
Other	0%
Prefer not to answer	10%

What is your age?

18–24	0%
25–34	8%
35–44	24%
45–54	34%
55–64	23%
65–74	7%
75+	0%
Prefer not to answer	3%

Which of the following best describes you?

Asian or Pacific Islander	9%
Black or African American	3%
Hispanic or Latino(x)	9%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0%
White or Caucasian	63%
Multiracial or Biracial	2%
Race/Ethnicity Not Listed	0%
Other	0%
Prefer not to answer	13%

Do you work in Learning and Development (L&D)?

Yes	80%
No	16%
NA / I don't know	4%

Note: Results do not add up to 100% because rounding was involved in the reporting.

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Acknowledgements

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