

Building a diverse and skilled tech workforce

In a world where technology is evolving at an unprecedented pace, the demand for specialised digital skills has never been higher. Digital skills are required for virtually any job, in any sector. That's why it has never been more important to level up skills and digital literacy to create a workforce of digital natives, and build the UK's talent pipeline for the future.

Temps de lecture : minute

8 May 2024

In fact, 57 percent of UK tech firms believe the current digital talent shortage is one of the most significant barriers to achieving their growth plans. Businesses must invest in their employees and improve their digital skills in order to grow.

Organisations must turn to under-utilised talent pools to create multigenerational workplaces that bridge the digital skills gap. Whether it's Gen Z breaking into the workforce, returners coming back from a career break, or Ex-Forces transitioning to the tech sphere, expanding the pool from which candidates are chosen, will increase the diversity of the workforce.

The rise of remote and hybrid working, along with advancements in AI, requires businesses to offer enhanced learning and development opportunities to improve the digital skills of their workforce.

Shifting the approach to skills development

To stay on top of core business priorities such as AI and cyber, businesses need access to skilled people proficient in key areas including transformational change, data and analytics and software engineering. To access this talent, they can recruit from under-utilised talent pools as well as partner with training providers to access staff with specialist skillsets – it's no longer enough to have traditional "tech experts".

Providing employee training in these areas can help close the digital skills gap and promote a truly diverse workforce.

A new era of learning and collaboration

Introducing a new era of learning creates a fundamental shift in the development strategy for digital skills training. Using a new approach offers even more flexible, dynamic and client-focused learning experiences which ultimately accelerates career progression and growth.

Businesses need to adapt and revolutionise their learning and development strategies to give staff greater access to more flexible learning in specific areas such as cyber and data analytics. Doing this will equip employees with the ability to customise knowledge and skills to client-specific requirements. Specialised training is key to this.

Meeting global needs through specialised practices

Traditional education courses such as computer science and training programmes provided by industry often cover a broad spectrum of digital skills, but lack the specificity required to master key roles and technologies. This often leads to businesses struggling to complete highly

technical projects due to the difficulty accessing specialist skillsets such as software engineering and development. The new demands facing businesses has necessitated a fresh approach to digital skills development both for businesses and job seekers.

As part of this fresh approach, businesses need multigenerational workforces to pair new learning with old experiences. Older generations bring years of experience and institutional knowledge which can be extremely valuable for mentoring and developing less experienced employees. The transfer of knowledge can bring significant advantages for bringing the depth and breadth of skills and expertise to a business. Especially in the context of specialised training through dedicated practices, the next generation of digital nomads can pick up hyper relevant skills that set them apart in the workplace, positioning them to oversee the future of tech innovation.

There should also be an emphasis placed on raising the next generation with these skills through promoting increased engagement at an educational level as well as encouraging women in STEM and other under-represented groups within the technology space.

Without specialist training, delivered by training providers, industry and educators, the UK is at a risk of falling behind global competitors and will fall short of the Chancellor's Science and Technology superpower aims, ultimately holding back growth.

Sheila Flavell CBE is Chief Operating Officer at *FDM Group*.