

HR continues to have a strong focus on skills development, with 61% upskilling or reskilling in the last year, latest report reveals

3 years ago



'People Profession 2022', the latest annual benchmarking survey from the CIPD and Workday, shows that upskilling is a key priority for people professionals, enabling them to make the profession future fit and responsive to the many challenges currently facing employers and their people.

The survey found that 89% of people professionals engaged in some form of L&D in the last year. A third (34%) have upskilled in response to immediate business needs, while 22% said their development was focused on gaining longer-term skills, highlighting a strategic, long-term view for some.

In addition to investment in skills, the report, which surveyed 1,496 people professionals across the UK, highlighted that there are plenty of positives to focus on, including:

- The majority (75%) of people professionals believe their people function works collaboratively across the business to meet the needs of the business
- 73% of HR professionals believe their people function contributes positively to their organisation's performance in a strategic and valuable way
- Engaging with data to inform decision-making has become more of a priority since 2021, increasing from 21% to 27% of respondents

Overall, the findings paint a positive picture, highlighting the impact, value and reputation of people

professionals in organisations, and that the reputation of the profession is growing year on year.

The report also highlights some key areas of development needed for the profession, such as facilitating more flexible business operations, supporting line managers, and having more of a focus on organisational development and change management skills.

It also notes the need for the profession to invest in its own wellbeing, particularly considering ongoing global challenges, such as the continued impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis.

While 55% of UK practitioners said their mental health was either good or very good, three in ten practitioners said that both their mental and physical wellbeing is negatively impacted by their work (31% and 29%). Extra support may also be needed for those in the early days of their career.

Just (51%) of professionals with less than 5 years' experience within the profession said their mental health was good, compared to 59% of more experienced professionals

Peter Cheese, chief executive of the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, comments: "People professionals remain at the centre of supporting their organisations through periods of immense challenge and change. During the pandemic, organisations relied heavily on HR to make tough decisions, and we find ourselves in yet more ongoing uncertainty with a tight labour market and the cost-of-living crisis.

"In the face of great challenges, people professionals have consistently stepped up. It's fantastic to see the continued commitment to learning and development and the ongoing efforts around professionalisation, and the positive contribution to organisation's overall strategy. However, it's crucial we also take time to look after ourselves and our own wellbeing, especially in the current context we face.

"Our expertise and skills have never been as vital and we should continue building on lessons from the pandemic to ensure the people profession is future fit, through consistent upskilling, and adapting to new technology and ways of working."

Michael Douroux, group vice president, Northern Europe and South Africa, Workday, comments: "HR professionals have been thrust into the spotlight amongst the uncertainty that the world has experienced over the past few years. They have been tasked with supporting workforces through both personal and private lives while attracting and retaining talent in a highly competitive market. In a short space of time, the role of HR professionals has grown considerably, as the relationship between the business and its workforce evolves rapidly. We have experienced a decade's worth of changes in just two years.

"Alongside supporting the workforce, HR leaders also need to support themselves and build resilience within their own teams. With the rulebook on what is 'normal' continually being rewritten, successful leaders must support their teams during these changing times. We hope the insights from this research will help you to plan for the unexpected and to carve your own path through this challenging and exciting time."

Story from CIPD