



# Are **Upskilling** and **Reskilling** Initiatives Worthwhile Rewards?



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**Upskilling and reskilling initiatives are increasing in corporations across the country.**

**A 2021 [McKinsey](#) survey found that 69 percent of employees say their company does more skill-building in the wake of the pandemic than before.**

It's no surprise, given the advantages that employee learning and development programs bring to companies. [Kate Heinz](#), a senior product marketing manager at tech professionals platform Built In, lists several benefits, including:

- **Employee retention.** She cites a [ClearCompany](#) study that reports 94 percent of employees would stay longer at their jobs if companies invested in their career development.
- **Increased productivity.** Improving employee's skill sets increases their confidence and allows them to be more efficient and effective.

To what extent do employers offer learning and development opportunities? The Future of Jobs Report 2020 by the [World Economic Forum](#) found employers provide reskilling and upskilling to 62 percent of their workforce. This is expected to increase by a further 11 percent by 2025.

But what do employees think about upskilling? Should career development be a part of your total rewards package?

## Employees Are Eager to Learn

Workers want to improve their skills. The results of a 2021 [PwC survey](#) finds that over 75 percent of employees want to learn new skills or retrain completely to stay competitive in the job market and grow their careers. Crucially, less than half (40 percent) were able to reskill during the pandemic. This suggests an unmet demand for learning and development initiatives.

Similar findings are reflected in The State of American Jobs, a report based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted in association with the [Markle Foundation](#). It found almost nine in ten (87 percent) Americans understand the importance of continuous learning and training if they want to advance their careers. Further, 45 percent of Americans have taken a class or training in the past year to improve their skills.

All of that research is supported by [LinkedIn's 2022 Workplace Learning Report](#), which found that employees' top three motivations to learn are all connected to their careers. Those motivations are:

- ❏ If it helps me stay current in my field.
- ❏ If it's personalized to my career goals.
- ❏ If it helps me get promoted or get another job internally.



## Employees Will Change Jobs to Upskill or Reskill

Such is employee demand for upskilling or reskilling that many are willing to leave their jobs to find such opportunities. Career advancement is the third most common reason (of 16) that employees leave roles, according to the [PwC Pulse Survey](#): Next in work. Moreover, they seek non-monetary benefits in benefits packages, such as career growth and upskilling opportunities.

A 2021 [Gallup study](#) on upskilling, commissioned by Amazon, further proves the importance of professional training in the job market. Almost one-half (48 percent) of U.S. workers would switch jobs if they were offered skills and training opportunities, while nearly two-thirds (65 percent) believe upskilling is “very important” when evaluating a new job.

In fact, when offered a new position, some employees consider learning and development to be one of the most important factors to consider. A 2018 [Udemy](#) report found that 42 percent of employees say it's the most important benefit after salary.



## The Verdict: Make Upskilling and Reskilling Part of Your Rewards

It's clear that employees care deeply about upskilling and reskilling. They understand the importance of learning new skills in order to advance their careers and are willing to move jobs to find professional development opportunities.

Leadership development coach and educator [Palena Neale, Ph.D.](#) recommends that executives not wait for their employees to come to them to request learning and development opportunities. "Upskilling should be widely promoted and resourced at every level," she writes. "Learning and development need to be integral to the company culture and prioritized by senior leaders."

[Daphne Kis](#), founder and CEO at WorldQuant University, goes even further. The only way to make these kinds of learning and development programs transformative is to make them a core part of your company's benefits profile. "It is not enough for companies simply to implement reskilling programs," Kis writes. "These programs must be aggressively publicized to new hires and to current employees."

In short, upskilling and reskilling programs and opportunities **must be part of your total reward package.**

