



# **CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CET):** NOW AND WHAT COULD BE NEXT

Research Partnership between National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and NTUC LearningHub

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# CONTENT

- 2 Executive Summary
- 3 Introduction
- 5 Research Methodology
- 6 Key Research Findings
  - 6 Skills
  - 7 Access to Training
  - 9 Challenges to Sending Workers for Training
  - **10** Preferred Mode of Training
  - **12** Outcomes of Training
  - **13** Job Vacancies
  - **14** Talent Development and Career Support
  - **15** Awareness and Participation in Training-related Initiatives
- 16 Recommendations

#### 19 Conclusion

- 20 Bibliographies
- 23 Acknowledgements
- 23 Research Project Team

## **Executive Summary**

The Future of Continuing Education and Training (CET) is a universal concern because of the many factors that disrupt the conventional assumption and practice of the current CET model that views skills as atomised and where lifelong learning exists in a skills deficit manner with the purpose of plugging skills gap. It is imperative that policymakers and key stakeholders (education institutions, employers, trade unions and training providers) begin to envision the future CET system so that workers are adequately prepared for the changing work environment.

To provide insights into how CET can be enhanced to upskill our workers to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's labour market, this research study adopted a mixed method approach. It consisted of a 15–20-minute quantitative survey with 564 business leaders across industries, complemented with in-depth interviews, to provide a broad understanding of the current training and learning practices and opportunities for workers, and the impact of training on employment outcomes for workers, from the perspective of the business leaders. The team also extracted data from past research studies by NTUC Strategy that are relevant to this study to better understand the training and development of workers.

Some key findings from the research study as follows:

- 1. Skills mismatch (63.1%) continues to be the most prevalent form of mismatches according to business leaders.
- 2. The top five transferable skills sought after by business leaders are Adaptability, Customer Orientation, Communication, Problem Solving and Collaboration.
- **3.** Only 50.9% of business leaders have sent their workers for training in the past six months, and trade unions are associated with higher employer investment in training for workers.
- **4.** Workers with skills gaps are not the top priority for training (14.5%) as compared to workers with high potential (44.9%).
- **5.** Top 3 preferred modes of training are on-the-job training, internal workshops/ seminars/ courses and online learning. Mobile learning is the least preferred mode of training.
- **6.** Majority of the business leaders report observing positive changes in their workers posttraining such as higher working performance (84.2%), able to do additional or new job responsibilities (85.1%) and enhanced knowledge (87.6%).
- **7.** Three in four business leaders have participated in training-related initiatives by the Government or Labour Movement. However, the overall utilisation of initiatives remains low at an average of 14%.
- 8. Unions (17.9%) remain one of the top three avenues where business leaders have heard of training-related initiatives, with the others being human resource departments in the company (27.5%) and Government websites (25.9%).

## Introduction

The early 2000s introduced the Fourth Industrial Revolution, enabling individuals to seamlessly move between online and offline domains. Technology has become an essential part of almost every aspect of the human experience. This phase prioritises talent over capital, information over industry and automation over manual labour. As the world transits into the Fifth Industrial Revolution of the future, this will see man and machine working hand in hand, safely and efficiently and signal an increasing emphasis on human intelligence and skills (George & George, 2020). This would accelerate as well as necessitate the transformation of skills by every individual to meet the ever-changing work demands since every subsequent industrial age both creates new job opportunities and destroy redundant jobs of the preceding age (Xu et al., 2018). It is thus imperative to equip workers with the necessary skills needed to survive and succeed in the rapidly changing work environment.

Continuing Education and Training (CET) has become an indispensable prerequisite for every country for the purposes of maintaining economic productivity. Traditional approaches to education and training are fast becoming irrelevant as the front loading of skills for single lifetime qualifications can no longer stand against the tide of rapidly changing skills needs (OECD, 2018). This has called for future education and training systems to be flexible in meeting changing work demands and equipping individuals for present and future skill deficiencies, "encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning" (UNESCO et al., 2015).

In most countries today, there are patterns of under-investment in skills training leading to such deficiencies. This has been attributed to various factors such as the dependence on immigration, increasingly ageing populations, extensive opportunity costs for employers, the poaching of skilled workers and business short-termism, some of which are experienced by Singapore in this current climate.

In Singapore, structural, and social gaps remain, in part caused by growing political, socioeconomic, and technological changes. Imminent changes will take place with complex political, socio-economic, and technological forces at play and intertwined with CET (Gog, 2013).

At the political level, Singapore needs to re-balance the social impact and roles to be played by the individuals, the community and the Government. CET must play a bigger role in supporting the nation's aim to achieve a more inclusive society with the pursuit of excellence: (1) Level up low-income Singaporeans; (2) Enhance workers' employability; and (3) Keep social mobility high so that everyone can move up through their efforts regardless of their social backgrounds.

At the socio-economic level, there is a demand for complex skills and a shorter lead time to build competitive advantage rapidly. Skills strategies have become a critical part of business strategies. Issues of income disparity, ageing population, increase in the number of freelancers, the long-term unemployment rate among Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs) and the need for sustainable job growth for a more educated workforce emphasise the importance of transforming the CET sector.

At the technological level, it is well demonstrated that the nature of work is changing. The Emerging Stronger Taskforce Report (2021) observed the trend towards a more digitally connected global economy, creating new opportunities for businesses to access markets and talent across geographical boundaries.

The political, socio-economic, and technological forces converge, reinforce, and interact with one another and resulted in a twofold challenge for CET. Firstly, CET will need to respond more quickly to meet the fast-changing skills demand. Secondly, CET is also impacted by the new technologies that offer new methods for learning but also disrupt traditional approaches of learning.

In recent times, CET in Singapore has evolved to prepare the workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. The CET Masterplan 2020 that was introduced has three key areas of focus:



Building deep expertise in the Singapore workforce, with increased involvement by employers in building and valuing skills.



Enabling individuals to make informed learning and career choices through the improved delivery of education, training and career guidance.

 Developing a vibrant CET ecosystem with a wide range of high-quality learning opportunities.

There has been an increasing shift towards lifelong learning. There is also less emphasis on delivering training in a classroom-based setting, a phenomenon made more prominent by COVID-19, as seen in the dramatic shift towards learning on a virtual platform.

To better understand the training and development of workers in Singapore, NTUC Strategy has conducted a research study in partnership with NTUC LearningHub.

## **Research Methodology**

The research study adopted a mixed method approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. It consisted of a 15–20-minute quantitative survey with 564 business leaders across industries to provide a broad understanding of the current training and learning practices and opportunities for workers, and the impact of training on employment outcomes for workers, from the perspective of the company and senior management. Indepth interviews were also conducted to gain in-depth insights on the training practices of companies.

The team also extracted data from past research studies by NTUC Strategy that are relevant to this study to understand the training and learning practices of workers.

#### Survey Respondents

A total of 564 responses were recorded from the quantitative survey with Business Leaders with a good spread across 14 sectors: Manufacturing (15.2%), Information and Communications (13.1%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (12.8%), Financial and Insurance Services (12.2%), and Professional Services (11.7%). Business Leaders operating in the Education, Construction, Transportation and Storage, Health and Social Services, Real Estate Services, Administrative and Support Services, Public Administration, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services, and other sectors make up the remaining 35% of responses.

There is equal representation of unionised companies (46%) and non-unionised companies (46%), with the remaining 8% being unsure of their company's unionisation status. Most companies have a lower representation of females than males.

Many of the surveyed companies have a younger workforce, with 61.9% of companies having less than 40% of their workers aged 45 and above.

61.7% of the companies have less than 40% of their workers being Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs).

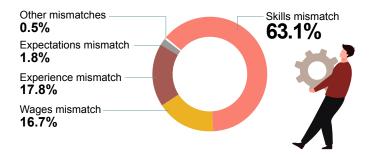


## **Key Research Findings**

#### Skills

**Skills mismatch (63.1%) continues to be the most prevalent form of mismatches according to business leaders** (see Fig 1). This is followed by experience mismatch at 17.8%, wages mismatch at 16.7%, expectations mismatch at 1.8% and other mismatches at 0.5%. The top 3 industries most concerned about skills mismatch are Public Administration, Real Estate Services and Wholesale and Retail Trade.

Fig 1. Forms of mismatches



The top five transferable skills (see Fig 2) sought after by business leaders are Adaptability (16.0%), Customer Orientation (13.3%), Communication (13.3%), Problem Solving (9.9%) and Collaboration (8.9%). Fig 3 illustrates the breakdown of the top 3 transferrable skills by industries.

Fig 2. Top list of transferrable skills sought after by business leaders



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

#### Fig 3. Top 3 transferrable skills by industries

## Accomodation and Food Services

- Customer Orientation
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

## Aministrative and Support Services

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Customer Orientation

## Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

- Creative Thinking
- · Problem Solving
- Communication

#### Construction

- Communication
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving

#### Education

- Communication
- Learning Agility
- Customer Orientation

## Financial and Insurance Services

- Problem Solving
- Creative Thinking
- Decision Making

#### Health and Social Services

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making

#### Information and Communications

- Problem Solving
- Adaptability
- Communication

#### Manufacturing

- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Adaptability

#### **Professional Services**

- Problem Solving
- Learning Agility
- Collaboration

#### **Public Administration**

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making

#### **Real Estate Services**

- Communication
- Influence
- Adaptability

#### **Transport and Storage**

- Problem Solving
- Adaptability
- Self-Management

### Wholesale and Retail Trade

- Adaptability
- Problem Solving
- Communication

#### IT/Technology

- Learning Agility
- Communication
- Digital Fluency

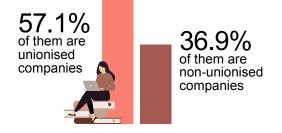
#### Access to Training

**Only 50.9% of business leaders have sent their workers for training in the past six months**<sup>1</sup>. Out of those business leaders who sent workers for training, on average only 33.6% of their workforce in the company attended training. This suggests that 66.4% of workers in the company are missing out on training.

Out of the 287 companies that reported sending workers for training, 57.1% were from unionised companies (see Fig 4). **Trade unions are associated with higher employer investment in training for workers**. It is statistically significant that more unionised companies sent their workers for training as compared to non-unionised companies.

Fig 4. Proportion of business leaders who sent workers for training

Only 50.9% of business leaders have sent their workers for training in the past six months



Note: Remaining 6% are companies who are unaware of their unionisation status.

<sup>1</sup> Six months before February 2021, when the survey was conducted with 564 business leaders.

Business leaders are more supportive of job-related training (68.2%) than non-jobrelated training (21.5%). There were six times more business leaders that reported always supporting job-related training than non-job-related training (see Fig 5). This is likely due to the view that job-related training would be more beneficial for the companies, as compared to non-job-related training.

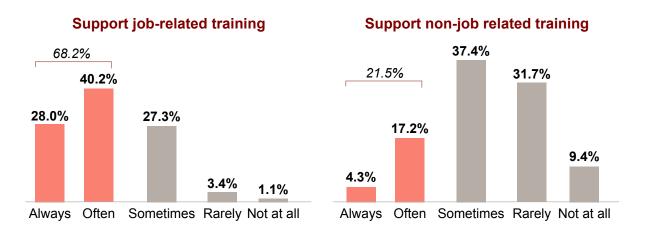


Fig 5. Support for training

Business leaders reveal that workers with skills gaps are not the top priority for training (14.5%), as compared to workers with high potential (44.9%).

Fig 6. Priority for training

#### **Priority for training:**

- 1 | High potential workers
- 2 | Workers with skills gap
- 3 | Younger workers
- 4 | Mature workers
- 5 | New workers
- 6 | Experienced workers





**Only about one-quarter of business leaders perceive more than 40% of their employees to be high-potential**: only a small group of workers are considered high potential (see Fig 7). High potential workers are being prioritised for training as compared to other groups of workers. This implies that only a small group of workers have access to training.

## 8

As resources are always limited, this might put a strain on the mature workers or workers with skills gap that not only require the training but would have benefited the most from it. In the long run, skills polarising may widen between workers who were prioritised for training and those who were not but with skills gaps.

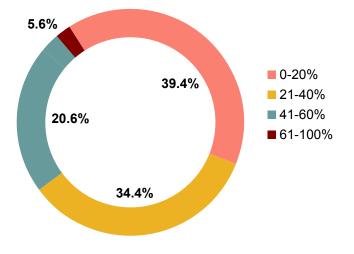


Fig 7. Proportion of workers perceived to be high-potential

#### Challenges to Sending Workers for Training

54.4% of business leaders believe that employers play the most important role in training as compared to the Government (20.3%) and workers (25.3%). **However, 37.8% of business leaders report that high financial costs serve as a strong deterrence** (see Fig 8) to send workers for training. Other challenges include difficulties in identifying relevant courses or workshops for their workers (37.1%), difficulties in matching workers to the training (33.3%), staff reluctance (32.8%) and inadequate manpower if workers are sent for training (32.3%).

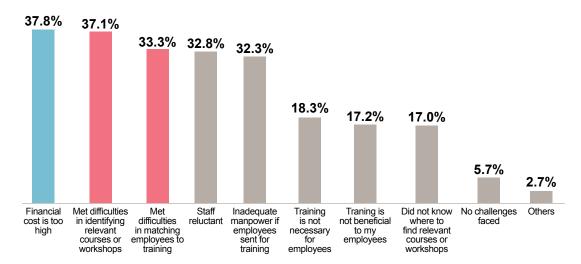


Fig 8. Challenges to sending workers for training

Multiple selection possible

In relation to overcoming the challenges in sending workers for training, **higher training subsidies would encourage 72.7% of business leaders to send more workers for training** (see Fig 9). Other incentives include business consultancy services (54.6%) and certifications offered (46.5%). The requirement for business consultancy services is aligned with the lack of knowledge and expertise in identifying training and matching workers with training, as reported by business leaders.

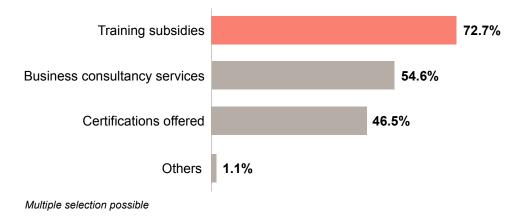


Fig 9. Incentives for companies to send workers for training

#### Preferred Mode of Training

**On-the-job training (55.9%) is most preferred by business leaders, followed by internal workshops/ seminars/ courses (46.6%) and online learning (45.9%)**. Mobile learning was the least preferred mode of training at 9.9%. Top 3 sectors that chose mobile learning app as preferred mode of training are Arts, entertainment and recreation, Information and communications and Construction.

**Similarly for workers**<sup>2</sup>, **on-the-job training was the most preferred mode of training** followed by classroom based, self-paced online learning and instructor led online learning. This calls for the need to bring training to the workplace.

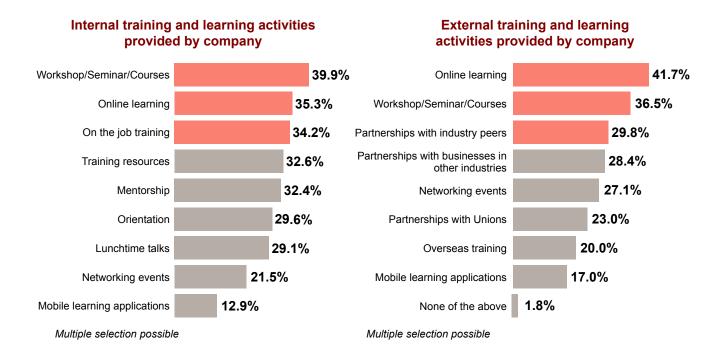
Organising workshops/ seminars/ courses was the most common mode of internal training and learning activities<sup>3</sup> provided by business leaders (39.9%), followed by online learning (35.3%) and on-the-job training (34.2%). The results showed that the modes of training provided by business leaders are consistent with their preferred modes of training.

However, it is interesting to note that despite 55.9% of business leaders expressing a preference for on-the-job training, only 34.2% of them provide it. This may indicate that companies face challenges and require support in implementing on-the-job training (see Fig 10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Based on research findings from Upward Mobility of Workers by NTUC Strategy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Internal training and learning activities are conducted in-house.

Fig 10. Provision of internal and external training and learning activities



The most provided modes of external training and learning activities<sup>4</sup> are online learning (41.7%) and workshops/ seminars/ courses (36.5%). As the survey was conducted between February – April 2021, the increase in provision of online learning was likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic as 41.7% of companies report that they provide training via online learning (see Fig 10). Mobile learning was the least provided form of training and learning by employers, both internally and externally. Based on insights from the in-depth interviews, mobile learning was less well-received by workers as they found it difficult to learn on-the-go and on devices with smaller screens.

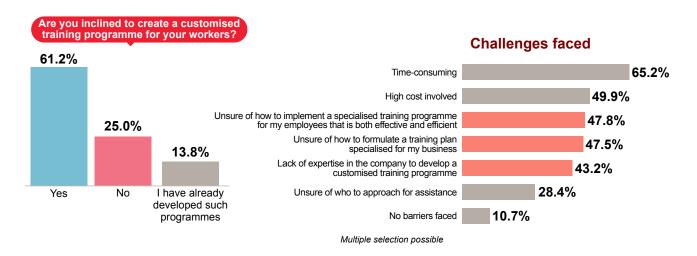
**61.2%** of business leaders report that they are inclined to create a customised training programme for their workers (Fig 11). Meanwhile, only 13.8% reported that they have done so and have implemented such programmes in their company. Out of the 61.2% (n = 345) business leaders that expressed interest in creating a customised training programme for their workers, the main challenge faced was time constraints (65.2%). This is followed by cost constraints (49.9%), lack of knowledge in implementing effective and efficient specialised training for workers (47.8%), lack of knowledge in formulating a specialised training plan for their business (47.5%) and having a general lack of expertise in crafting such customised training programmes (43.2%)<sup>5</sup>.

Based on the insights of the interviews conducted, one of the companies has set up a training committee in the company to facilitate discussion on skills and training courses for workers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> External training and learning activities are conducted by external vendors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The top reasons for not implementing customised training programmes are largely identical to the challenges faced for companies who have already developed such programmes.

Fig 11. Inclination and challenges faced for customised training programme



#### **Outcomes of Training**

**Majority of the business leaders report observing positive changes in their workers post-training** such as higher working performance (84.2%), able to do additional or new job responsibilities (85.1%) and enhanced knowledge (87.6%) (see Fig 12). **Most business leaders also report meeting the outcomes that they set to achieve when sending their workers for training.** Out of the 63.8% of business leaders that sent workers for training in hopes of improving productivity in the company, 59.6% reported that they managed to achieve it. Out of the 66.2% who wished to improve the competencies of their current workers, 58.2% reported that they achieved their desired outcome. Only 3.1% of business leaders indicated that they did not observe any of the outcomes.

In one of our in-depth interviews, the company practises implementing KPIs that workers have to meet post-training as a proxy of training outcomes. For example, to track the number of compliments received after the worker has attended customer service training.

Higher working performance 84.2%	Clearer communication and presentation skills 79.6%	Reasons and Outcomes of Training <ul> <li>Outcomes</li> <li>Reasons</li> </ul>	
Able to do additional or	Developed/suggested	Improved productivity in the company	59.6% 63.8%
new job responsibilites 85.1% 14.9%	innovative ideas 75.5% 24.5%	Improved competencies of my current employees	58.2% 66.2%
Enhanced knowledge	Implemented new processes	Retain existing talents in the company	48.1%
87.6%	74.8%	Job roles of employees have changed	41.8%
Deepened technical skills	Higher motivation at work	Gain an advantage over competitors in the industry	37.3% 38.3%
86% 14%	77.3%	Changing business model of the company	33.4% 38.3%
Broadened technological skills		Attract new talents	24.0% 29.3%
82.3%	15.6% 30%	None of the above 3.1%	
Yes No		Multiple selection possible	

Fig 12. Changes in workers post-training

**Majority of the business leaders observe these positive changes in workers within a year post-training**. Out of the 84.2% of business leaders that have observed higher working performance in workers after training, 53.3% observed this change 1-3 months later. Most post-training changes were observed 1-3 months after training (see Fig 13).

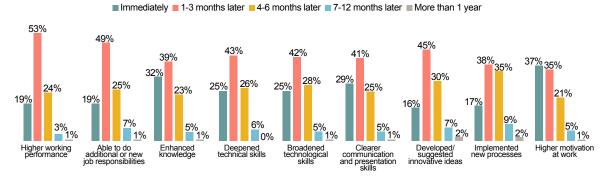


Fig 13. Observation of changes post-training

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The top 3 incentives provided to workers post-training are higher value jobs, job promotions, and pay increments. On average, around 90% of business leaders report that such incentives are provided within a year after training (see Fig 14).

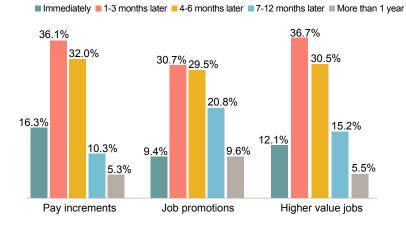


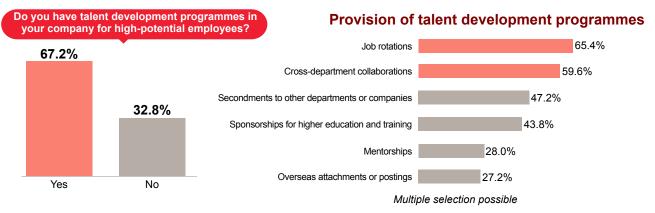
Fig 14. Time period for provision of incentives to workers post-training

#### Job Vacancies

Close to 60% of business leaders report job vacancies in their companies. Out of these business leaders who report having vacant job roles within the company, 77.7% report facing challenges in filling those vacancies. Top challenges faced are skills mismatches and no/ insufficient applicants. The top three sectors that report challenges in filling job vacancies are Financial and Insurance Services, Professional Services and Manufacturing.

#### Talent Development and Career Support

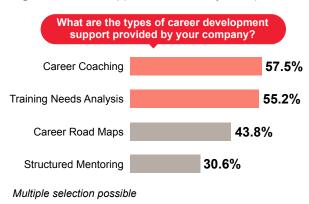
**67.2% of business leaders report having talent development programmes to support their high-potential workers** (see Fig 15). The most common types of talent development programme provided by business leaders are job rotations (65.4%) and cross-department collaborations (59.6%). However, as only 26.2% of business leaders consider more than 40% of their workers as high potential, this suggests that a considerable proportion of workers may be missing out on these talent development support provided by employers and the associated benefits.



#### Fig 15. Talent Development Programmes

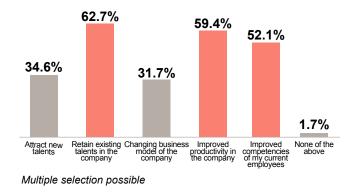
**85.1% of business leaders report that they provide career development support for their workers**. As career development is more generalised than talent development, it is not surprising that more business leaders provide career development support as compared to talent development programmes. The most common types of career development support provided (see Fig 16) are Career Coaching (57.5%) and Training Needs Analysis (55.2%).

Fig 16. Career Support Provided By Companies



**Out of the 480 companies (85.1%) that report providing support for career development, 62.7% report being able to retain existing talents in the company** (see Fig 17). 59.4% reported observing improved productivity in the company and 52.1% reported improved competencies in their current workers. Only 1.7% of business leaders did not observe any of the outcomes after providing support for career development. These outcomes are similar to the general outcomes experienced by companies after providing training.

Fig 17. Outcomes of Career Development Support



#### Awareness and Participation in Training-related Initiatives

Three in four business leaders surveyed said that they have participated in trainingrelated initiatives<sup>6</sup> by the Government, or the Labour Movement. However, the overall utilisation of initiatives remains low at an average of 14%.

It is plausible that due to the huge variety of initiatives targeted at helping employers, most are unsure of which initiative would best address their concerns. Alternatively, it could be due to the administrative work, when applying for these initiatives that deter companies from participating in these initiatives. This could be exacerbated in companies that are short-staffed or do not have a dedicated department focused on employee learning and development.

Despite the demand for more training subsidies, the utilisation of existing programmes is low, implying that greater support must be provided to companies to better access and utilise the subsidies.

Unions (17.9%) remain one of the top three avenues where business leaders have heard of training-related initiatives (see Fig 18), with the others being human resource departments in the company (27.5%) and Government websites (25.9%).

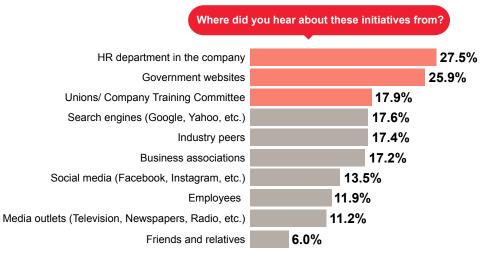


Fig 18. Sources of initiatives

<sup>6</sup> List of training-related initiatives not exhaustive

Multiple selection possible

## **Recommendations**

1

KEY INSIGHT 1 Inequality in access to training

Workers with skills gaps are not the top priority for training

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

## Promote more equal distribution of training opportunities for workers

High-potential workers are the top priority for training. Resources are used to develop a narrow pool of talent. The rest of the workforce may still be 'valued' within the organisation but are not prioritised for training. Narrow talent model of "professional favouritism" hence puts workers who are not regarded as high potential by the business leaders at a disadvantage.

As resources are always limited, this might put a strain on the mature workers or workers with skills gaps that might need the training more than high potential workers.

Wider movement within Singapore is required to develop a wider, more inclusive definition of talent and shift away from "professional favouritism": Wealth of talent (Brown et al., 2019) model that recognises the capabilities and contributions of all rather than a few. Hence, the findings suggest the need to promote more equal distribution of training opportunities for workers.

Greater incentives could also be provided for companies with a certain age profile to send their workers for specific training. For companies with more mature workers, companies could be incentivised to send the workers for digital courses, so that (i) it alleviates the digital divide across ages (ii) pushes those who are not high potential workers out for training.

Government could step up marketing efforts to the companies especially the HR on the initiatives to raise awareness and educate the company on equality of training opportunities to all workers. As highlighted in our research findings, HR department within companies remains a strong channel of publicity, especially when they are either in direct liaison with the business leaders that determine workers' training or are in-charge of workers' training.



**KEY INSIGHT 2** 

**N** 

The most provided mode of external training and learning activity by business leaders is online learning

Mobile learning is the least preferred form of training and learning by business leaders

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

## Companies could leverage NTUC LearningHub's Learning eXperience Platform (LXP) to upskill workers

The pandemic has accelerated the need for digital education and online learning. Mobile devices have also changed the way things are done, from booking a cab or ordering food online, to how we work, how we communicate, and finally how we learn. Mobile learning encapsulates the ability to progress through course content on one's device and offers the accessibility and flexibility for workers to learn new skills on-the-go.

Companies could leverage LXP to implement training possibilities for workers. LXP provides a one-stop online learning platform that enables upskilling and reskilling among workers, making learning accessible for every worker. Workers would have access to over 75,000 online courses to learn new skills on-the-go through bite-sized quality content via a mobile application.

LXP also offers timely, on-the-go, and bite-sized upskilling quality content for workers, supporting them with different needs in the community with a suite of digital delivery formats. This includes formats like microlearning and mobile learning, which allow workers to learn anytime and anywhere. Beyond learning, LXP also serves as a platform for jobs and skills development for both workers and companies, helping them stay relevant and competitive.



#### **KEY INSIGHT 3**

Close to 60% of business leaders report job vacancies in their companies, and 77.7% of them face challenges in filling those positions

On-the-job training most preferred by business leaders and workers

#### RECOMMENDATION 3 Leverage NTUC's training and placement ecosystem as a strategic partner for transformation

Recently, the NTUC's training and placement ecosystem — comprising Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), NTUC LearningHub (LHUB), NTUC Industry Training and Transformation (IT&T) and Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute (OTCi) — has reorganised to better integrate capabilities to support workers and companies in a more seamless and holistic approach.

At the upstream, companies could leverage IT&T to review their business and workforce strategy with the Operation and Technology Roadmap (OTR) tool. These structured workshops, participated by management and union leaders, aid in mapping out new value proposition, technology, manpower and other capabilities in response to new customer needs, business requirements and trends. This process facilitates the customisation, co-creation and collective ownership of actionable transformation and jobs-skills action plans, in alignment to the vision and objectives of Industry Transformation Maps.

To support the implementation, companies could tap on e2i to build capabilities and increase productivity through job redesign, funding support for technology upgrade, acquire manpower through Job Security Council network and placement schemes e.g. Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP), Place-and-Train (PnT) and career services.

In terms of workers' upskilling, companies could tap on LHUB's capabilities such as competency mapping, training needs analysis, and other customised training consultancy and solutioning. To better drive future skilling, both companies and workers could leverage LXP to provide timely and on-the-go learning for workers to upskill and companies to invest in workers upgrading. To further strengthen the nexus between government, business and union leaders across levels, OTCi provides targeted tripartite and bipartite leadership development programmes.

Companies could also tap on the wider ecosystem resources through NTUC's training and placement network. With access to this suite of capabilities and support, management partners and union representatives can work together through the Company Training Committee platform to prepare the ground for a smoother business transformation journey, mobilise workers for upskilling, into new jobs, and address the aspirations of workers.

## Conclusion

The pandemic has exacerbated the technological innovations and have fundamentally changed the labour market, changing the type of labour required; in other words, transforming jobs (Nunes, 2021). By 2025, the World Economic Forum has estimated that 86 million jobs would be destroyed while 97 million jobs would be created across 26 countries, an updated estimation taking into account the disruption made by the pandemic and automation (Zahidi, 2020). Speed is of the essence in picking up new complex skills to meet the fast changing skills demand. One of the ways to overcome the challenge of filling job vacancies is to upskill and uplift current workers as building on existing talent is more cost-effective than hiring new talent.

Our policies in Singapore are moving in the right direction of empowering individuals to take charge of their career and skills strategies. While efforts have been placed in managing short-term job creation and helping displaced workers into jobs, an equally, if not more important mission on hand would be to envision the future of CET to plan and prepare for the future labour market structure that is evolving.

This will, by no means, be an easy task and we need all stakeholders (i.e., Government, Unions, Employers and Training Providers) to come together to rethink and to facilitate the transformation of CET sector. Expanding the role of the Labour Movement in the national training ecosystem is crucial to shape continuing education and training for workers.



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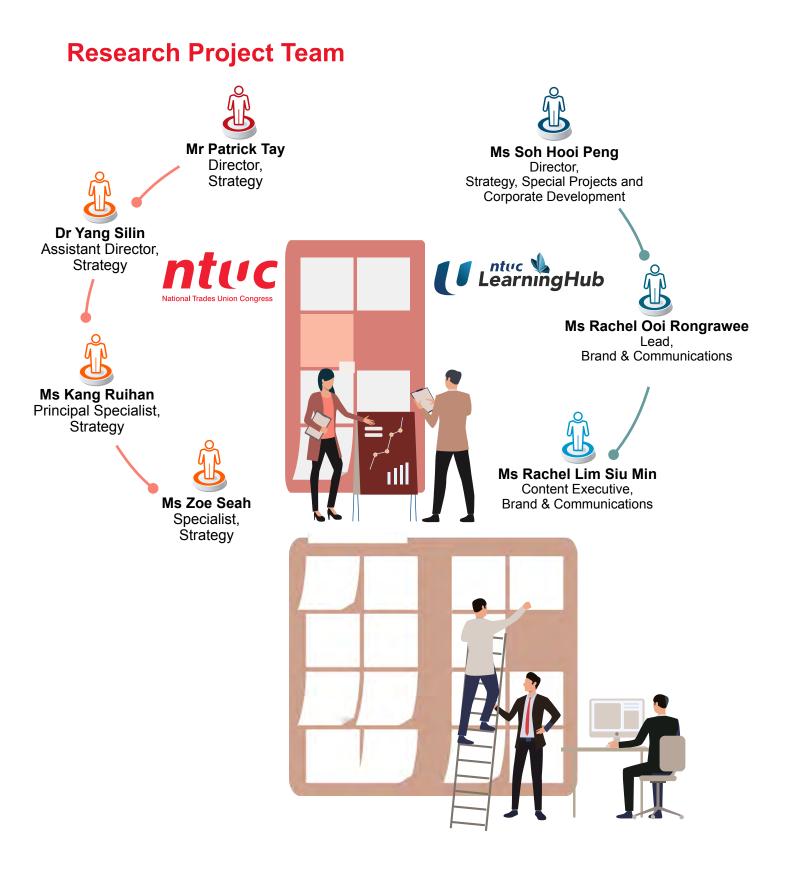
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