



Harnessing Young Talent

The Open University (OU) conducted an employer survey into perceptions around young workers. As part of your exclusive Learning at Work Week content from OpenLearn, we share some of those findings and provide some valuable solutions to help you harness the potential of your organisation's young talent.

This is a time of financial constraint, and meeting the needs and wishes of a workforce when it comes to training and development isn't easy. Finding new, young talent is hard in itself, but then there's the task of fitting them into your organisation, harnessing that talent and meeting their needs, as well as the needs of your business. This is where free, flexible learning comes in...

The Open University employer survey into harnessing young talent showed that nearly half (46%) of organisations reported that they have struggled with recruiting young people into the workplace in the past year, and more than half of them have struggled with retaining those that they have recruited. Why?

Maybe because of a mismatch between young people's skill levels and employer expectations. In the past three years, the survey uncovered a decline in soft skills (eg, communication, team work, time management etc.) which many attributed to, among other things, a lack of opportunity to work with and learn from colleagues in a remote or hybrid work setting. 58% of organisational leaders said they had noticed that skill level / expectation discrepancy.



A solution?

[Free, wide-ranging, bite-sized courses that fit around work and life.](#)

[Soft skills courses?](#)

No problem.

And in terms of learning from older, more experienced colleagues, then what better way than to equip those people to coach and mentor your young talent?

Try our [Workplace learning with coaching and mentoring](#) & [Exploring career mentoring and coaching](#) courses.

In fact, among the benefits employers have seen young people requesting more of in the past three years, according to our survey, are:

- Flexible working (47%)
- Increasing salary demands (46%)
- Hybrid working opportunities (42%)
- Wellbeing support (24%)
- Mentoring and shadowing opportunities (24%)

OpenLearn's series of [8 hybrid working courses covers everything from digital skills and communication, to leadership and change management](#), designed to meet the needs of this new (now normal) hybrid working situation for many, if not most, organisations.

And employers have seen young people specifically requesting short courses with certification (31%), mentoring or coaching (30%), informal online courses (29%), vocational qualifications (25%) and apprenticeships (level 2-3) (24%).

[The Open University works with more than 2,900 employers to provide workplace education, so get in touch to learn how we could help.](#)

And what are you doing to support your young talent further, outside of the workplace? That wellbeing support that a quarter of young employees wanted (and which many more might not want to disclose they want or need)? Why not equip them with some tools to make life a little easier?

[Your wellbeing MOT](#) – get feedback on your lifestyle, diet and physical activity

[Exploring mental health and wellbeing](#)

[Tips for planning a self-care routine](#) – simple steps that can make a difference

A short, two-hour course on [exercise and mental health](#)

But that's not where wellbeing ends, with mental or even physical health... how about:

- [financial management](#), specifically aimed at young adults entering work for the first time
- [planning for their future, and their retirement](#) – it's never too early!
- [or even caring for older family members?](#)

We hope these survey findings are useful, and that the resources The OU and OpenLearn can offer, for free, provide some solutions for Learning at Work Week and beyond.

Join our FREE webinar...

The Open University is hosting a full day of keynote speakers and panel discussions, hosted by presenter and journalist, Ben Hunte, to understand how employers can attract, develop and grow young talent. Expect insights from Gen-Z's career expectations and values to ideas and practical advice on addressing the hybrid working and learning challenge and how to successfully grow your young talent.

[Click here to join us, for free, on 22 May](#)