MASTERSTART
SOUTH AFRICA

MASTERSTART REPORT

Workplace Learning & Skills Development Trends

PREPARING YOUR ORGANISATION FOR 2024

What's inside

Overview

When it comes to understanding South Africa's dire skills shortages, you won't find much information or guidance. This leaves business leaders and Learning and Development (L&D) managers at a loss for how to manage skills shortages among employees.

At MasterStart, we're rooting our learning solutions in the present to equip business staff into adaptable leaders.
Our learning methodology rests on 5 pillars:

Flexible	Practical	Supportive	Human-centric	World-class certifications
All online courses are designed for professionals who want access to relevant resources through an adaptable online course design.	The course material translates theory into action & gives you a toolkit to apply in your working world.	Coaches and Learning Course Coordinators support & nurture learners' progress throughout the course.	With human connection at the heart of everything we do, the courses go far beyond information & knowledge-gaining.	We offer certified short online courses developed in partnership with leading business schools, universities & industry experts.

To better understand the L&D space in a South African context, we hosted a **webinar** [1] featuring industry leaders, as well as our own leading voices, to find out what the latest trends are and how they impact the real world of skills development in South Africa.

Watch the **MasterStart Panel Discussion – Workplace Learning & Skills Development Trends webinar** [2] moderated by Founder and MD, Jody Basson.

Panellists:
- **Elmarie Cronje** – *Head of Learning and Development, EOH*
- **Devaan Parbhoo** – *Head: Digital HR, Santam*
- **Alexia Cox** – *Chief Learning Officer, MasterStart*
- **Neo Molefe** – *Executive Director, Transcend Corporate Advisors*

"One of the **biggest challenges in skills development** is how to curate and optimise **learning that achieves success across the board** – programmes that make sense to everyone. With many various voices and needs – how to address each one?"

— *Jody Basson, Founder and MD of MasterStart*

What Are the Global L&D Trends?

How can businesses serving millions equip their staff to maintain their competitive edge? And what mindset does the modern employee need to keep theirs? According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) **Future of Jobs Report 2023** [3] (which includes data from South Africa), companies report that skills gaps and an inability to attract key talent are top barriers to transformation across industries, showing a clear need for training and reskilling. To stay competitive, they report six out of 10 workers will require (re)training before 2027, but as of now, only half have access to training opportunities.

When training employees on skills to improve the profit margin by sharpening their competitive edge, it is also worth ensuring that they are equipped for changes to their roles in a net zero world. Even though the most popular model of measuring national success is economic (by way of GDP), as human beings, it is vital that we also measure the sustainability of success. According to the **United Nations Net Zero Coalition** [4], many countries have made promises to become carbon neutral, but the UN emphasises that "commitments need to be backed by bold, credible actions."

Such actions come from **developing a green workforce** [5]. When each employee is trained to recognise their role in creating a more sustainable profit margin, they are also ensuring ways to stay professionally relevant. For example, the **risks of climate change will directly impact jobs in extractive economies** [6] like oil production and mining. To protect against job loss and underdevelopment, management teams must be trained to recognise the changes and be equipped with ways to adapt.

Offering Training Isn't the Same as Raising the Standard

Manpower Data [7] shows that globally, 57% of surveyed employees are pursuing training outside of work due to a lack of viable in-house career development opportunities.

The disruption in skills is primarily due to the lack of cognitive skills needed for complex problem-solving in the workplace. There has been a global shift in how people and companies think about professional skills.

The **skills economy is transforming daily** [8] and visibly moving towards professional agility and foresighted adaptiveness, i.e., individuals being able to constantly and proactively upskill for their roles. One such shift is the understanding that while hard coding skills are relevant, not everyone in the organisation requires knowledge of programming languages to be productive in their roles. So, instead of learning to code, it's much easier and wiser to simply learn to integrate and apply new technologies into one's regular scope of work.

According to the WEF, analytical thinking is the most important human skill right now, followed by creative thinking and the three self-efficacy skills of resilience, flexibility and agility; motivation and self-awareness; and curiosity and lifelong learning.

Technology literacy (training workers on how to use AI and big data for their job requirements) is currently the third-fastest-growing core skill. Other skills on the rise include leadership and social influence, systems thinking, talent management, service orientation, and customer service.

Top 10 Skills of 2023

1. Analytical thinking
2. Creative thinking
3. Resilience, flexibility & agility
4. Motivation & self-awareness
5. Curiosity & lifelong learning
6. Technological literacy
7. Dependability & attention to detail
8. Empathy & active listening
9. Leadership & social influence
10. Quality control

Figure 1: 'Cognitive skills top the list for 2023'. Image: World Economic Forum.

While achieving all these skills in a reasonable and transformative manner could seem insurmountable, tapping into the skills under the 'working with others' category could alleviate the burden. When leaders actively listen and create opportunities for upskilling their staff, they have the potential to inspire company-wide transformation.

Top 10 Skills on the Rise

1. Creative thinking
2. Analytical thinking
3. Technological literacy
4. Curiosity & lifelong learning
5. Resilience, flexibility & agility
6. Systems thinking
7. AI & big data
8. Motivation & self-awareness
9. Talent management
10. Service orientation & customer service

Figure 2: 'Future skills – Growing in importance'. Future of Jobs Report 2023 Image: World Economic Forum

Skills like service orientation and customer management often stem from personal qualities of empathy and practised professional charisma. Such individual skills are incredibly valuable to leading companies because, in the modern

(read: post–Covid) economy, leaders are encouraged to hire agile talent. This means that **staff can be moved into projects as needed, building company-wide adaptability** [9].
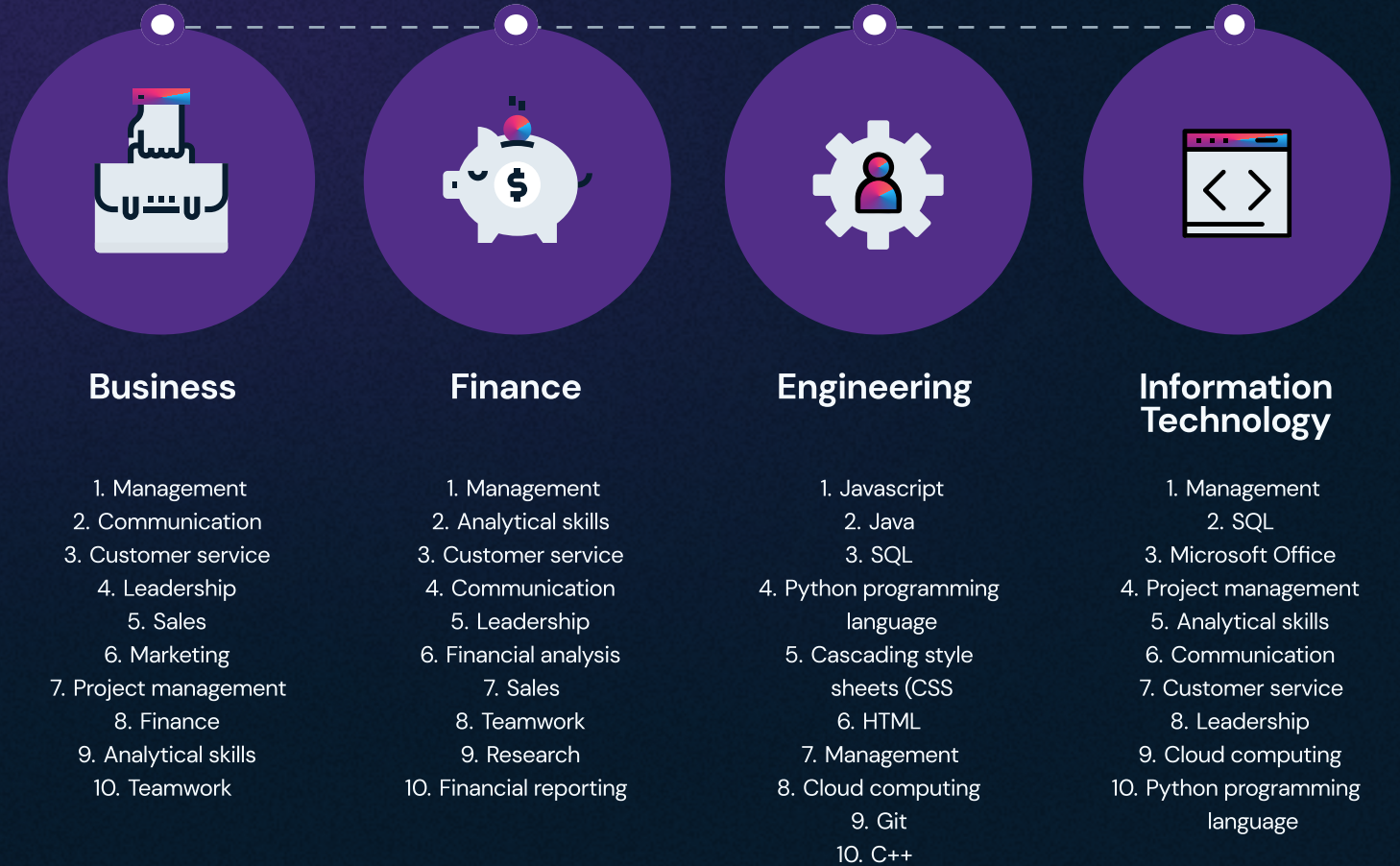
The **LinkedIn 2023 Workplace Learning Report** [10] warns that if organisations want to survive and thrive amid economic headwinds, agility – which stems from constant learning – is what leaders must focus on to build a resilient and adaptive future. This Learning Report highlighted the following four key focus areas of L&D:

- **Aligning learning programmes to business goals**
- **Upskilling employees**
- **Creating a culture of learning**
- **Improving employee retention**

With the premise that "organisational success depends on people's success", 89% of professionals say that proactively building employee skills will help companies navigate the evolving future of work. The report shows that 93% of organisations are concerned about employee retention, and the most prevalent way to improve retention is by providing learning opportunities.

Most in-demand skills by function

Business

1. Management
2. Communication
3. Customer service
4. Leadership
5. Sales
6. Marketing
7. Project management
8. Finance
9. Analytical skills
10. Teamwork

Finance

1. Management
2. Analytical skills
3. Customer service
4. Communication
5. Leadership
6. Financial analysis
7. Sales
8. Teamwork
9. Research
10. Financial reporting

Engineering

1. Javascript
2. Java
3. SQL
4. Python programming language
5. Cascading style sheets (CSS
6. HTML
7. Management
8. Cloud computing
9. Git
10. C++

Information Technology

1. Management
2. SQL
3. Microsoft Office
4. Project management
5. Analytical skills
6. Communication
7. Customer service
8. Leadership
9. Cloud computing
10. Python programming language

In–Demand Skills Data; see "Methodology" page 11. **LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2023** [11].

According to a 2023 McKinsey & Company report, **Elevating Learning and Development** [12], corporate learning needs a revolutionary makeover. An increasingly competitive business landscape, rapid technological advances, and rising complexity are reshaping the global workforce. At the same time, multigenerational workforces, constant uncertainty, and the speed at which knowledge becomes outdated have brought the importance of upskilling and reskilling to the fore.

As Workplace Learning & Skills Development Trends webinar panellist **Devaan Parbhoo** [13], Head of Digital HR at Santam, says in the insurance sector, specifically, there is a heightened demand for awareness of these influences and how they change the way services need to be shaped. Skills and learning need to cater to this.

Global Trends in L&D

Humanised Learning

Learning in the digital age demands a humanised learning approach that provides learners with personalised, meaningful, and supportive learning experiences.

AI-Based & Adaptive Learning

AI coaching for personalised instruction 24/7, data-driven learning analytics, and adaptive learning platforms will lead the learning way.

Leadership & Management

Leadership in a boundaryless world is less about formal authority and more about the use of insight, connection to values, personal accountability, and action.

Continuous Learning

Workplace skills continue to evolve and have an increasingly shorter shelf life, necessitating lifelong learning to stay relevant and competitive.

Blended Learning

Blended learning enables employees to unlock their full potential, personalise their educational journey, and achieve their learning goals dynamically and effectively.

Soft Skills Development

While hard technical skills are essential to design Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)-based applications, soft skills allow us to integrate technology into various socio-economic value chains effectively.

L&D in South Africa: The Challenges

Although experts and academics sometimes touch on the topic of L&D in the South African context, there needs to be more local and national commentary on skills development. With our finger firmly on the pulse of global trends in L&D, MasterStart is hyper-aware of local needs and challenges, the failures of past attempts to redress these issues, and the need to empower South Africans through skills development that addresses our unique challenges.

B-BBEE Scorecard's Impact on Skills Development

L&D for businesses in South Africa must consider Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) compliance in the context of their own organisations. While social and economic advancement through skills development is the goal, there is also a financial element to consider. Skills development is a priority element of B-BBEE, and the Skills Development Scorecard measures a business's total training expenditure on black employees as a percentage of its annual payroll. The investment required on the applicable B-BBEE Scorecard is significant, but it doesn't keep pace with the rapid skills requirements the modern workplace requires.

Panellist Neo Molefe, Executive Director of Transcend Corporate Advisors, says the Department of Trade and Industry codes have amended the Scorecard three times since their inception to keep them relevant to socio-economic and industry changes. But it's unlikely that they will be changed again soon since government efforts are directed to address broader socio-economic challenges that focus on improving the reach and grasp of digital literacy and basic education. Such large-scale campaigns are not completely focused on soft skills like analytical thinking and creative problem-solving as they are on hard, technical skills.

South African companies face several challenges in fulfilling their skills development strategies while also meeting B-BBEE point requirements. One is that training is often not based on industry-relevant skills but on whichever will score the most points.

Another, according to Molefe, is that the B-BBEE scorecard is completed retrospectively, so in-demand skills are often misaligned with company goals or remain underdeveloped. He believes one solution could be to amend the codes to make them more relevant.

Elmarie Cronje, Head of Learning and Development at EOH, says the challenge for businesses lies in managing their L&D budget, identifying what they want to achieve in alignment with the company's goals, and creating a roadmap to make it happen. "Balancing B-BBEE and organisational needs is tricky, and there are huge considerations for all the Setas they report to."

Molefe says it's important that companies take a strategic and focused approach to the B-BBEE scorecard to ensure they train competent talent that will meet current and future business needs.

Current Efforts to Bridge the Skills Gap

South Africa faces huge challenges in providing good vocational education and industry-specific skills development. According to **Professor Stephanie Allais** [14], SARCHi Research Chair in Skills Development at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at the University of Witwatersrand, these challenges are hampered by the nature and structure of our labour market. This market is characterised by inequality, a fragmented workforce, a casualised labour market, and a historical and

current built-in dependence on cheap labour and the **exploitation of primary resources** [15].

The Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (Setas) were designed to solve the problems of a highly casualised labour market. The aim was to collect labour force information when companies submitted their workplace skills plan, aggregate employers' priorities for each sector, assist in education planning and fund the necessary training in each sector. However, Prof Allais says, along with a lack of engagement, it became increasingly apparent that employers "aren't very good at predicting future needs".

The Dept of Higher Education and Training noted in their White Paper for **Post-school Education and Training** (WPPSET) [16] that, although South Africa has implemented a range of ambitious measures that would improve skills planning, "the system neither produced good information about skills needs nor increased the quality of provision in areas needed in the economy".
The Department of Higher Education and Training's **National Skills Development Plan, 2030** [17], aims to increase workers'

participation in various learning programmes to a minimum of 80% by 2030. However, looking at South Africa's outdated education matrix, Molefe says the problem is they're simply focused on getting as many people as possible educated without looking at the actual skills they need to survive in the real world.

The bottom line regarding L&D in South Africa is that governmental efforts aim for range while the private sector aims for relevance in specific industries. Between these two approaches, there's an opportunity for both parties to bridge the gap so more South Africans can transition from only accessing the fundamentals to reaching better heights with in-demand skills. For those in the mid-level corporate sector, like insurance and banking, soft skills development is more important right now. Since B-BBEE was conceptualised to bridge skills disparities among South Africans in the national labour force, it has an important place in the creation and delivery of skills development programmes.

However, South African small to medium-sized corporate businesses often struggle to ensure the quality and level of education required to develop

relevant skills. Some of the key challenges in achieving a broader scope of skills development are:

- Pre-existing skills gaps and digital divides in availability and knowledge must be bridged before implementing advanced training offerings.

- Budgets for high-quality training emphasising industry-relevant soft skills, like analytical thinking and creative problem-solving, are limited.

Additional financial challenges and regulatory navigation of the **Skills Development Levy** [18].

How Corporate South Africa Is Responding to Current Skills Development Needs

In the 2023 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report, 56% of South African respondents state that between half and all of their workforce will need to change their skills in the next three years. But are companies listening? The report shows that locally, only 58% of organisations described themselves as being prepared regarding how employers manage careers and deliver learning and development.

According to the report, this positions South Africa as "not ready." The risk to businesses when they don't provide skills training is low productivity, high staff turnover, and high costs, and it adds to the exodus of people who pursue quality educational opportunities abroad.

Pam Maharaj, Deloitte Consulting Africa Human Capital Leader, says South African organisations should not only reskill their workers but also focus on building the inherent capabilities humans need to be resilient and adaptive. She says:

"As economies shift from an age of production to an age of imagination, they will be driven by creativity and uniquely human capabilities."

With the Government-only programmes waging an uphill battle to make an overall difference, it's up to the private sector and academia to ensure the relevant skills required in their industries are being offered to their existing and future workforces. Cronje points out that there are indeed many important voices, and it's our duty of care as L&D practitioners to make an impact. She says:

"We are in a sweet spot of being able to do this nationally for our people."

MasterStart research shows individuals without degrees can acquire critical skills comparable to those with degrees, highlighting the potential for innovative approaches and developing skills-based courses that address talent shortages and skills gaps head-on. However, this requires collective action from the public and private sectors to provide the affordable, flexible, and scalable reskilling pathways that displaced workers need to transition into jobs of the future.

A Look Back on 2023: Key Takeaways and Trends in L&D

Top Skills & Common Client Needs

In the last seven years, there have been several societal changes, including a significant shift in what and how people want to learn.

Alexia Cox, Chief Learning Officer at MasterStart, says deciding on which courses and competencies to develop is done holistically, considering a number of factors, namely:

- What are the functional skills individuals and organisations need?
- What are the new leadership and management skills individuals need?
- What skills are needed at an executive level?
- What skills are needed in the tech arena?

Cox and her product development team also consider where an organisation could be sitting in its own life cycle, what the market position of an organisation could be, how to ensure the training would make an organisation sustainable in a fast-changing environment, and how to ensure an individual employee remains relevant.

The Chief Learning Officer explains how, up until now, content was always king. But she says that it no longer works. *"Time is everything now, so keeping it simple and making an impact is what's important."*

70:20:10

One of the well-known structures of learning design is the **70:20:10 method**. This is based on the principle that 70% of learning comes from experience, experiment and reflection, 20% from working with others, and 10% from formal interventions and planned learning solutions. It's important to note that it's a framework for bringing L&D into the workplace, not a rule. In any given situation, depending on the work environment and the organisational results required, the ratio will change.

Incorporating the lessons from the 70:20:10 principle and optimising for shifts in that ratio, we create bite-sized chunks of learning that participants can immediately apply at work. Our courses tap into the desires and openness of the learner so lessons are better absorbed and implemented. We've also learned that peer-to-peer learning works better when applying practical, technical, and digital skills in real-world contexts.

9

Don't Play Catch-up

Cronje says they are taking a longer view approach to ensure their future skills development aligns with their business strategy. To avoid continuously playing catch-up, B2B clients need to set goals for specific skills during the strategy phase and then prepare the ground for the course material to take root. "You can't stay uncomfortable and not adapt; you'll be forced to play catch up, and this doesn't help your prospects nor the company's competitive edge."

Talking about courses, she feels that those that make sense in theory alone cannot sustain clients' growth, and the focus should be on balancing digital courses with immersive learning. "There are also challenges in upskilling multigenerational workforces, such as the fear of new technology, the embarrassment of learning at this level of their career, or because some employees don't see the need for specific skills in their role. This kind of thinking dulls the company's edge and impairs the individual's career prospects." As Head of Digital HR at Santam, Parbhoo says change management and leader development are critical skills, and we need to look at how we build those skills, create stickiness (memorable lessons), and shift those skills from problem to problem. He sees AI literacy as paramount as it supports so many business functions, from consultancy and data analytics to business development. He says:

"*We have to use AI in order to be more productive and create more impact.*"

Cronje agrees leadership competencies and bringing in the human component by encouraging employees to ask themselves who they are, where they are, and why they are, are big focuses for EOH, from graduate level upwards. The ideal would be if this could be a module in all courses.

She says they've found a lag in consulting and sales departments where employees struggle with the new way of working, connecting, and understanding "where their clients are." She adds that we need a new approach to business development: "A lot of people want to go back to what worked in the past and made them successful, but there needs to be a shift, and they need to start thinking differently."

Parbhoo says that within the insurance sector specifically, micro-impacts affect individuals based on macro-level changes in geopolitics, technology, climate change, and digital learning. With the amount of information on these topics in the public domain, there is a heightened demand for an awareness of these influences and impacts. He says that competitors in the industry are also dealing with the same issues, so being aware of them and their impacts on one's industry "shifts the way services need to be shaped."

Macrotrends driving business transformation graph

Trends ranked by share of organisations surveyed that identified this trend as likely or increasingly likely to drive transformation in their organisation.
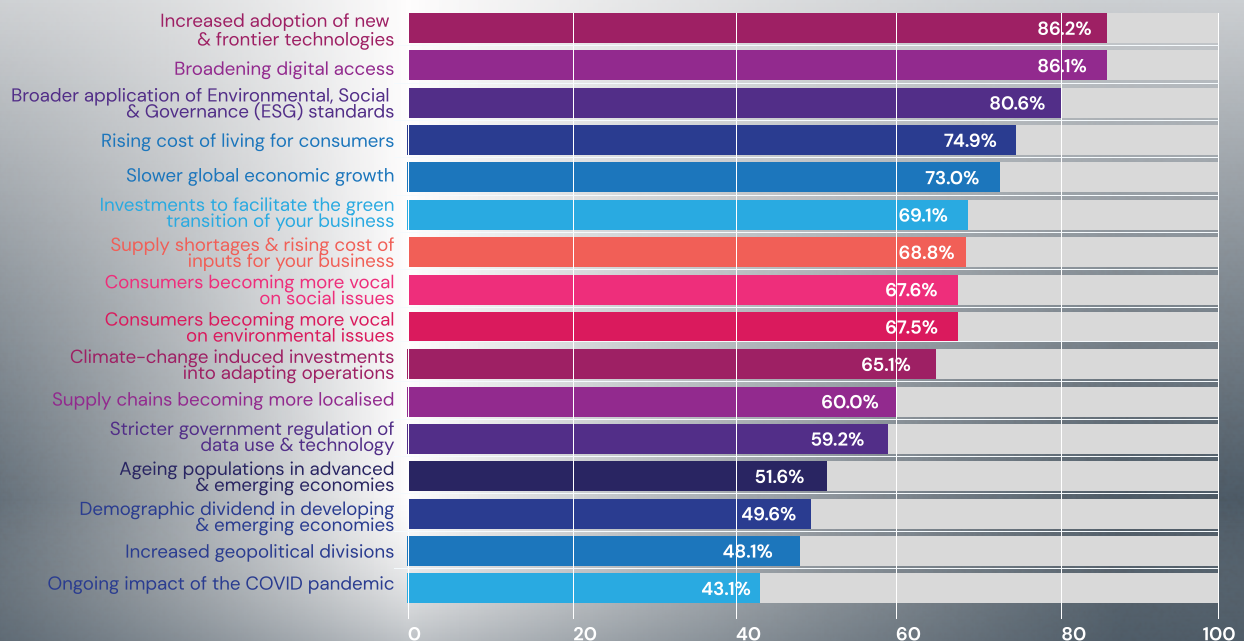
Trend	Percentage
Increased adoption of new & frontier technologies	86.2%
Broadening digital access	86.1%
Broader application of Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) standards	80.6%
Rising cost of living for consumers	74.9%
Slower global economic growth	73.0%
Investments to facilitate the green transition of your business	69.1%
Supply shortages & rising cost of inputs for your business	68.8%
Consumers becoming more vocal on social issues	67.6%
Consumers becoming more vocal on environmental issues	67.5%
Climate-change induced investments into adapting operations	65.1%
Supply chains becoming more localised	60.0%
Stricter government regulation of data use & technology	59.2%
Ageing populations in advanced & emerging economies	51.6%
Demographic dividend in developing & emerging economies	49.6%
Increased geopolitical divisions	48.1%
Ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic	43.1%

Figure 3: Macrotrends driving business transformation. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey, 2023.

10

How Have These Needs Been Addressed?

As a proudly South African Learning Solutions company, we've adapted to the changing needs of South African businesses.

1 **We have grown our portfolio to 32 courses this year** across functional, leadership, management, and executive. We consider the relevance of each module to ensure the themes that underpin courses, e.g., AI useability, hybrid working, leadership, and the macro trends driving business transformation

2 Through client consultation, we have **addressed common industry needs to develop five key courses**, all of which are set to be launched in 2024. These are Green Skills, Digital Literacy, Advanced Risk, Strategic Consulting, and Strategic and Purpose-Driven Leadership.
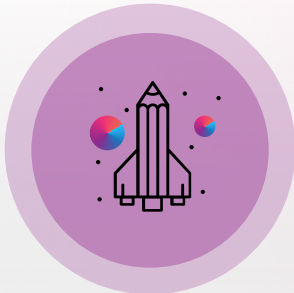
3 **Digital literacy is a skill on the rise**, even as AI literacy is coming in hot behind it. We've balanced this need as a priority, especially since managing data involves every member of an organisation.
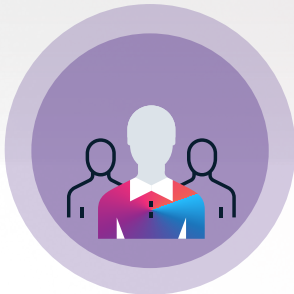
4 **Leader development** – developing individual knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) that empower leaders and managers to rise to the expectations of the future – is incorporated into our programmes.
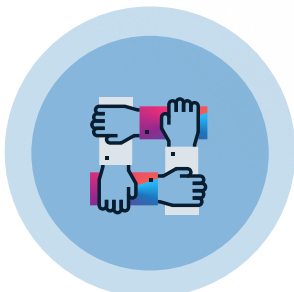
5 Our **humanised learning approach** ensures personalisation and human interaction with both experts and peers. This results in deep learning that helps participants use theory to solve real-world business problems and challenges.
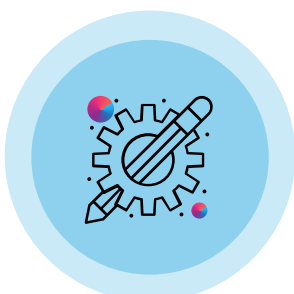
6 **Adaptive learning**, which addresses the needs of individuals through learning pathways, effective feedback, and supplemental resources, further ensures learners can implement what they know the minute they return to work.
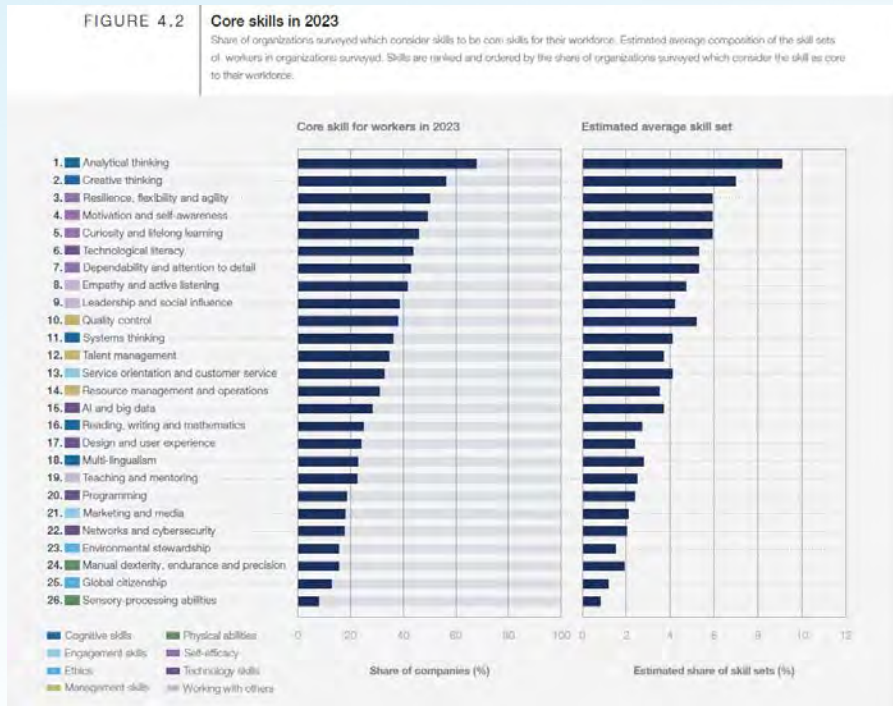
Notable Trends in Our Own Data

Figure 4: Core skills in 2023. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey, 2023.
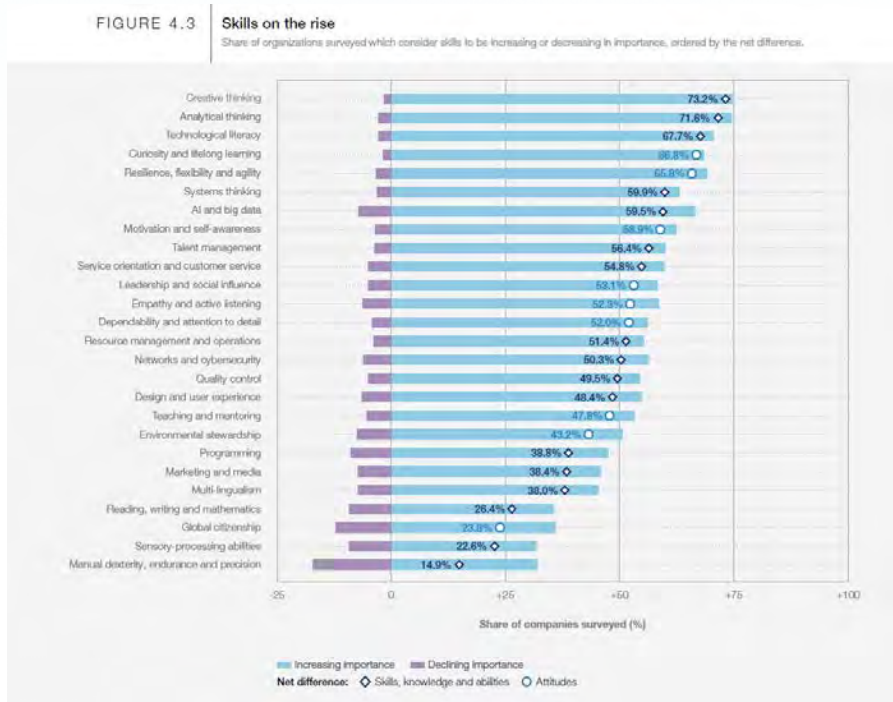

Figure 5: Skills on the rise. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey, 2023.

MasterStart has seen a noticeable massive shift from a demand for technical skills towards a demand for applying those in a business context. In 2021–2022, there was a rush to learn technical skills such as coding, but in 2023, there is less of a need for this and a greater demand for cognitive skills, such as analytical thinking, to understand tech inputs (such as AI) and the various kinds of outputs. Parbhoo noted that it's imperative that businesses understand how to leverage AI literacy in support of leadership, consulting, and management.

Over the last three years, demand for functional courses (project management, data analysis and visualisation, and risk management) and leadership (leading with impact and strategic leadership) have demonstrated consistent and growing trends.
We have also seen huge interest in our **Power Skills** [19] course as a standalone programme. However, many of these soft skills are integrated into our other courses. The top soft skills gained across functional courses were complex problem–solving, active learning and learning strategies, resilience and flexibility, and negotiation and conflict management.

Course Demand From 2021 to 2023

2021

In 2021, there was a high demand for functional courses (52%). Functional skills training aims to develop leadership competencies that strengthen and support the type of management the business requires.

Course Type by 2021

- 51%
- 2%
- 30%
- 17%
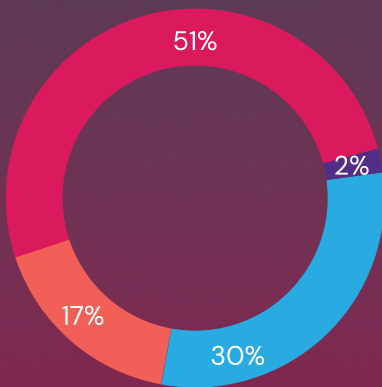
■ Functional
■ Leadership
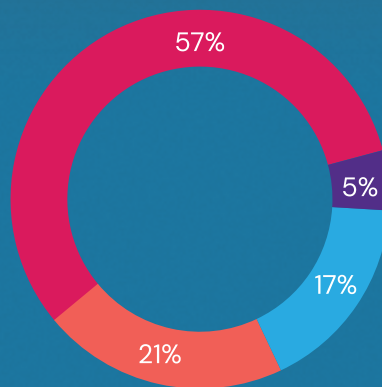■ Management
■ Technical

Figure 6: Course Type by 2021. MasterStart. 2023.

2022

This was followed by management, leadership, and technical courses. Leadership and management courses aim to develop these competencies within an individual, how they can develop them in others, and apply them across the business. This was the second year after the pandemic, and AI and tech had yet to gain traction.

In 2022, demand for functional and technical programmes grew, while leadership and management were slightly less in demand. However, leadership was still up from the previous year.
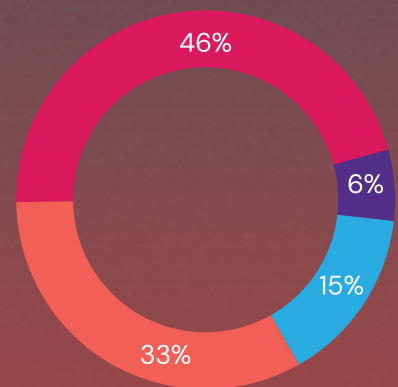
Course Type for 2022

- 57%
- 5%
- 17%
- 21%

■ Functional
■ Leadership
■ Management
■ Technical

Figure 7: Course Type for 2022. MasterStart. 2023.

2023

2023 saw a dramatic turnabout for leadership and management courses, growing by 10 points at the expense of the functional type. Technical courses also saw a slight uptick. This aligns with our panellists' view, the WEF trend expectations, and we expect it should carry into 2024.

Course Type for 2023

- 46%
- 6%
- 15%
- 33%

■ Functional
■ Leadership
■ Management
■ Technical

Figure 8: Course Type for 2023. MasterStart. 2023.

Application Is the New Learning

There are so many education opportunities available both locally and internationally, but the 'one size fits all' methodology of most courses locks too many people out. And when it comes to business, the exclusivity of obtaining an MBA only widens the gap of inequality.

The **MasterStart methodology** [20] makes education accessible to everyone, even those without an academic background. Our humanised, learner-centric approach combines the best of tech with human touchpoints at every stage of the journey, enabling students to immediately practice what they've learned in a real-world context.

We focus on the business school method of the practical (the how) of learning, in contrast to traditional universities where they primarily teach the theory (the what). Take, for example, how generative AI takes care of the 'what' and how easily anyone can access that. It's the practical application that staff need to learn now — and do so while on the job.

Our course design is founded on the principle that the best learning happens in practice. An example is learning something, then applying it that week and layering these skills for the duration of the course. This way, understanding and innovation deepen, and learners can connect existing knowledge to new skills and immediately apply it in the workplace.

Another supporting pillar of our methodology is humanised learning. People learn better when surrounded by others, so we teach synchronous sessions to promote contextualised learning. Not only is this the most sustainable way to scale training, according to Basson, but it means we are facilitating instead of just teaching. He says, "While we adapt for relevancy, we remain human-centric. Our instructors won't be replaced by robots anytime soon."

However, tech plays a huge role in how we present courses and is an important factor in learner success. The trick is to balance digital courses with immersive learning. Online workshops may sound outdated, especially with the advent of VR and AI, but Basson believes they are still relevant, and their success comes down to what you're using them for and how you use the format to engage with learners. Freely available resources like the virtual panel discussion are built on tech but prioritise human expertise and experience.

Pro-tech skills advocates like Parbhoo insist we must think differently about how we perceive emerging technologies. They remove the drudgery of regular tech and should be embraced as a personal assistant, coach, facilitator, and team member. He says: "We must be open to tech and ask how we can make it relevant for ourselves, instead of being left behind and saying, 'I'll get there when I get there.'"
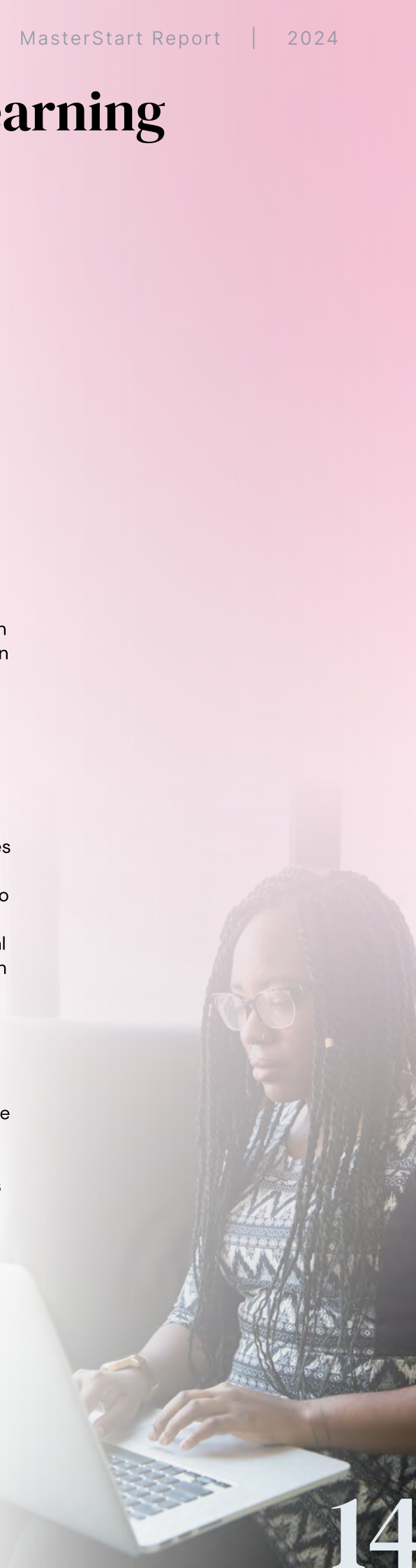
Lifelong learning

The ability to learn is one of the basic skills for success in the knowledge society. Since all learning design structures change with the times, Cronje says from her experience of the 70:20:10 model that the 20% has grown (detracting from the 70%), while the 10% has remained what it is. This is because not everyone, especially hybrid workers, has the time to learn on the job. She regards the 20% as the most beneficial section of this method, with enormous potential for creating learning opportunities.

With rapid changes in the workplace, brought on through new technologies, changes in the job market, and shifts in societal needs, "learning to learn" is essential for people to adapt and keep participating in society and employment. Learning to learn is not a new concept, but it is enjoying quite a revival in L&D circles. The formal definition allows learners to restructure their 70:20:10 model in ways that work for them: 'The ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups."

The Proof Is in the Pudding

Acquiring learning skills is central to 'learning to learn' and refers to tasks such as note-taking, time management, reading effectively, study skills, and writing tests. Learning to learn is an essential component of lifelong (continued) learning, and education and training environments need to focus on developing this both as a mindset and a competence.

Embracing a mindset of continuous learning is a personal enrichment tool that fosters intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Still, it's also a strategic asset for professional growth and adaptability while contributing to the progress and resilience of communities and societies as a whole. It allows individuals to stay relevant in their careers, acquire new skills, and navigate the complexities of a modern, knowledge-based society.

As the Chief Learning Officer, Cox believes that if you want to build capability in a person, you should be looking for ways to inspire a hunger to learn in them. The MasterStart methodology is designed to do just that, and it's great to welcome back students who sign up for course after course every year.

Addressing Skills Needs in 2024

When looking at course design, Cox says the first thing to consider is the relevance of a course to the various industries and how the skills gained can be applied in the workplace. These themes could be AI or hybrid work, for example.

According to The WEF Future of Jobs Report 2023, the fastest-growing roles are being driven by big data and AI, which are expected to create the highest number of future jobs, with 75% of survey respondents expecting job growth in this area.

For example, we'll be looking into incorporating AI literacy to address these new tech challenges. As Parbhoo says, AI and digital are completely different. "Digital literacy is a way of being, and AI is a way of doing right now."

Top 10 fastest growing jobs

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

1. AI and Machine Learning Specialists	6. Data Analysts and Scientists
2. Sustainability Specialists	7. Robotics Engineers
3. Business Intelligence Analysts	8. Big Data Specialists
4. Information Security Analysts	9. Agricultural Equipment Operators
5. Fintech Engineers	10. Digital Transformation Specialists

Source
World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2023

Note
The roles which survey respondents expect to increase most rapidly from 2023 as a fraction of current employment.

Figure 9: Top 10 fastest-growing jobs. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2023.

What's Your 2024 L&D Strategy?

Research shows that a company's success is largely based on its intangible assets: skilled employees, exceptional leaders, and knowledge. This has elevated the role of L&D practitioners in the workplace and society.

To capitalise on the investment in training programmes and learning development strategies, those who work in L&D should embrace a broader role within their companies to create a vibrant workforce skilled in the jobs of the future. MasterStart is ready to help you achieve that. We're here to help organisations with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives and chart a Green Transition into business sustainability. We'll cover skills development across multiple pillars – renewable energy, technology, innovation, policy, mining, and investments — to help learners address the challenges of a disruptive and ever-changing world. Leadership development will be a core module in all courses.

The aim is to support the development of leaders who are empowered to navigate uncertainty and disruptive forces with creativity, empathy, and confidence. As Cronje emphasises: "We need to bring in the human element to look into the ontologies and epistemologies of the people involved in leadership positions."

While the ways we lead and manage teams may change, every effort — from the minutiae of accounting to the long-term impact of high-quality L&D — is always in service of improving the reach, range, and relevance of your business.

APPENDICES

1. Webinar
2. MasterStart Panel Discussion – Workplace Learning & Skills Development Trends webinar
3. Future of Jobs Report 2023
4. United Nations Net Zero Coalition
5. Developing a green workforce
6. Risks of climate change will directly impact jobs in extractive economies
7. Manpower Data
8. Skills economy is transforming daily
9. Staff can be moved into projects as needed, building company-wide adaptability
10. LinkedIn 2023 Workplace Learning Report
11. LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2023
12. Elevating Learning and Development
13. Devaan Parbhoo
14. Professor Stephanie Allais
15. Exploitation of primary resources
16. Post-school Education and Training
17. National Skills Development Plan, 2030
18. Skills Development Levy
19. Power Skills
20. MasterStart methodology