CIPD | Learning to Work

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE, TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 135,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Developing the next generation

Research report

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Foreword

Tackling youth unemployment is now recognised as a major issue by policy-makers, charities and many employers. It is clear that too many young people are being overlooked for opportunities, despite businesses' concerns about where their future talent is coming from. Employers play a central role when it comes to improving young people's access to the labour market, and it is vital that organisations bring in young people if they are to build the skills they need for future success.

Getting employers involved in helping to prepare young people for work and making their own organisations more 'youth friendly' is something the CIPD has been leading on since we launched our Learning to Work programme back in 2012. Over the past three years we have seen an increase in the number of employers who are interested in increasing engagement with young people, including by offering more access routes into their organisations, such as Apprenticeships and graduate schemes.

However, offering and recruiting for these roles is only one half of the equation. It is also crucial that when a young worker begins their career, the experience sets them up for a long and successful working future. Line managers have a crucial role to play here, a topic we covered in our *Managing Future Talent* guide. But, also fundamental to ensuring future success are the programmes themselves, their content, structure and how they are integrated into the wider business. Here is where the role of the HR

and learning and development (L&D) practitioner is key and why we have drawn on best practice case studies of the programmes used to develop young people in more detail in this latest research report. The research is designed to help anyone working on, or considering introducing, their own programme.

A recurring challenge for those seeking to bring in young people into their organisation is often establishing the business case, which is why when we originally launched the Learning to Work programme we explored this in some detail and why we look at this further in this latest report. It is no good introducing a new programme for young people without first considering the wider business case and ensuring it fits in with future resourcing needs. For many, including Barclays and Capgemini, who both feature in this report, it is about attracting and retaining non-graduate talent, providing an attractive alternative to university while also plugging skills gaps.

In recent years we have seen substantial debate around the topic of skills gaps, with the education sector, and even young people themselves, facing public criticism for not developing the right skills needed in the workplace. The role of the employer in plugging these gaps has been disputed by some but we know the tide is changing, with skills development playing a central role in the design of many programmes targeted at young people. However, it's important that employers do not oversimplify the younger generation when

they design and implement a new programme.

There are many prevailing myths and generalisations about what the youngest generation is like, such as they are more networked, less competitive and less loyal, meaning they more likely to move between organisations. Exploring the differences between the key broad generational groups estimated to represent today's workforce was a key starting point for this research, as it helps to bust these myths and provides a useful starting point for HR and L&D professionals exploring the needs of young people in their organisation.

While it is important to avoid generalisations, gaining an appreciation for some of the key strengths and development areas for the younger generation can help to ensure that programmes are designed in a way that gets the most from young talent. Organisations such as Fujitsu and ActionAid, for example, share how they are taking advantage of the energy and enthusiasm that their apprentices have. Implementing well-thought-out programmes that both draw out strengths and address weaknesses is key to getting the development of the younger generation right. These individuals have enormous potential to contribute to an organisation's success and it's important that as a profession we recognise this and play our part in making this happen.

Katerina Rüdiger
Head of Volunteering and
Employability Campaigns
CIPD

Introduction

Background to the research
During the last few years we have seen a widespread recognition of the challenge of youth unemployment, and a corresponding rise in alternative entry-level development programmes – such as innovative graduate schemes, new apprenticeships and work-based degrees. Through our Learning to Work programme we have worked with young people and organisations to promote and drive good practice, highlighting the benefits of broadening access to work and the importance of employer action.

In this report we turn to consider what happens in the workplace post-recruitment. We explore methods of developing 16–24-year-olds in the workplace, and identify what works and why; which skills do young people enter the workplace with and what's the most effective way of building their capability? We also consider learning preferences of young people, and how these align to interpretations of 'Generation Y' behaviours.

Our purpose is to help organisations understand how they can build the business case, not just for broadening access to employment, but for investment in development to drive organisational performance. It is relevant for anyone working in HR, L&D or a line management role seeking to understand how they can best meet the development needs of the next generation.

Throughout the report we refer to what leading organisations in this space are doing, and the challenges they are overcoming, so that others can learn from examples of great practice. The findings build on our guide for line managers, *Managing Future Talent* (Peate and Taylor 2014). We also connect the research to wider changes in the L&D profession (which we explore in Stuart and Overton 2015) and share the implications for HR and L&D practitioners.

'We explore methods of developing 16–24-year-olds in the workplace, and identify what works and why.'

Learning to Work

The Learning to Work programme is led by the CIPD to promote the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment. The CIPD's purpose is to champion better work and working lives, which starts with young people being able to access the labour market.

The overall aim of the programme is to promote the business case for investing in the future workforce. We encourage HR professionals to offer a wide range of access routes into their organisations and ensure their recruitment and management practices are youth-friendly. We also promote direct contact with young people via two youth volunteering programmes, Steps Ahead Mentoring and Inspiring the Future.

Overview of programmes for young people

Only a few years ago the graduate programme was typically the main source of structured entry-level development for young people. But this is now changing. Seventy-six per cent of HR professionals report that their organisation offers at least one programme aimed at young people (CIPD 2015). Many of these programmes help to broaden access, through schemes such as apprenticeships, work-based degrees and industrial placements (Table 1). And others have sought to evolve their existing graduate programmes to ensure they meet both business and learner needs.

Research methodology

The research was conducted between January and February 2015 with five case study organisations (Table 2). Interviews were held with senior HR and L&D professionals. Focus groups and interviews were also held with young people currently on graduate programmes, industrial placements or apprenticeships. Each organisation was selected on the basis of their use of innovative programmes and learning methods. We have researched a range of programmes with different target audiences, ranging from those leaving school at 16 to graduates. We have specifically explored:

- apprenticeship schemes in ActionAid, Barclays, Capgemini and Fujitsu
- the industrial placement and graduate scheme in Fujitsu
- the work-based degree programmes in Barclays and Capgemini
- the LPC/MA course in Reed Smith.

The research also draws on both findings and unpublished survey data from the CIPD *Learning to Work* survey report (2015). In addition we have conducted a literature review to explore existing research.

Report overview

The report is organised into five sections. Following the introduction we share the findings of our literature review. We then explore the business case for developing people at the start of their careers. In Section 3 we reflect on the skills young people have and common skill gaps. Next, we share key learning methods used by organisations. In Section 5 we then consider how young people's preferences may influence learning methods deployed.

Table 1: Key programmes

Apprenticeships	An apprenticeship is a combination of employment and training, culminating in the apprentice receiving a national recognised qualification. Employers train individuals in the context of their organisation, so apprentices develop their skills while contributing to the organisation. Find out more in *Apprenticeships that Work* (CIPD 2014).
Industrial placements	Industrial placements typically involve a sandwich year in between the student's second and third years of their degree. Placements typically last for 12 months and the purpose is to enable the young person to gain real-life work experience and apply the learning back in their degree programme.
Work-based degrees	Work-based degrees are often the product of collaborations between employers and universities. They enable employees to study for a degree, while remaining in their job and are often at undergraduate or postgraduate level.
Graduate programmes	Graduate programmes typically last one to two years and involve a structured programme of development. A common feature of many schemes is rotation across a number of business areas.

Table 2: Case study organisations

ActionAid is a leading international charity which supports women and children in extreme poverty, fighting for their rights and for lasting change. Their 180 employees and network of volunteers work across 45 countries in partnership with 15 million of the world's poorest and excluded people.	ActionAid have recruited three apprentices to work in the HR, fundraising and campaigning departments. The initiative is based on a partnership with Christian Aid, Plan UK and the City and Islington College. The apprentices have gone into genuine roles and attend college on Friday to complete their formal learning as part of the business administration apprenticeship framework.
Barclays is a major global financial services provider who move, lend, invest and protect money for 48 million customers and clients worldwide. They have over 300 years of banking history and employ 140,000 people.	The Barclays apprenticeship programme employs up to 2,000 young people, and specifically targets those in the NEET category.[1] It includes both an intermediate and higher apprentice route, and apprentices can join in a range of business areas, including investment banking. 120 people each year also go through the Barclays degree programme (a three-year work-based degree). Barclays also have an established graduate programme and there are progression routes between each of the schemes.
Capgemini is a key provider of consulting, technology and outsourcing services. They work with clients to create and deliver business and technology solutions. Their 145,000 employees work in over 40 countries worldwide.	Alongside a graduate programme, Capgemini have broadened access to include a higher apprenticeship programme and work-based degree at Aston University. They currently have 254 people completing the higher apprenticeship in software engineering, which takes two years. At the end of the apprenticeship they have the option to move onto the three-year degree programme.
Fujitsu is the world's third largest IT services company. Headquartered in Japan, they offer a range of technology products and services. Approximately 162,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries.	There are three key access routes for young people at Fujitsu: an apprenticeship programme (recruiting 90 people each year), an industrial placement scheme (recruiting 30 each year), and a graduate programme (recruiting 80 each year). The apprenticeship lasts for two years, and recruits go into a real job from day one. The industrial placement scheme recruits students in the third year of their degree for one year of paid work experience. The graduate programme involves two years of structured development and role rotations.
Reed Smith is a global law firm, supporting many of the world's leading companies in complex transactional work, litigation and disputes. The firm's history stretches back to 1877, and they now employ more than 1,800 lawyers in 25 offices.	The programme we have focused on in Reed Smith is a little different from the others, as the process of becoming a solicitor is regulated by the Law Society. The most common route is for individuals to complete a qualifying undergraduate law degree or conversion course. They then must gain a trainee position with a law firm (typically applied for in the second or third year of their degree) and complete a Legal Practice Course (LPC). This is followed by two years as a trainee solicitor within the firm.

Reed Smith have developed a programme which adapts the mandatory year-long LPC course for new legal trainees into an MBA-style master's, incorporating business learning and practical skills application to build commercial and client awareness, while maintaining the regulated content. Each year approximately 25 trainees join after completing their undergraduate and graduate degrees. The course combines formal learning at BPP University, alongside client-based project work and upward mentoring with senior leaders. |

[1] Those not in employment, education or training.

1 What does existing research tell us?

'Diversity within each generation can be as different as across generations.'

Overview of the different generations

Four generations are estimated to represent today's workforce: Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Penna and CIPD 2008), with Generation Z due to join the workforce soon (Table 3). Below we draw out common themes from existing literature regarding Generation Y and Z, but it is worth underlining that diversity within each generation can be as different as across generations (Penna and CIPD 2008). The attributes outlined below will therefore not apply to everyone and so understanding specific needs and drivers is still critical.

Generation Y and Z employment

According to the latest ONS figures (2014), over 3 million young people (aged 16 to 24) are part of the UK workforce, compared with 733,000 unemployed. There are also 2.72 million young people economically inactive, mostly full-time students who will join the workforce soon.

Three-quarters of employers now offer programmes aimed at young people, the most popular of which are work experience and apprenticeships. Graduate schemes, apprenticeships and school-leaver programmes are considered the most effective pathways to work (See Table 1).

Generation Y and Z attributes

Technology is perceived to be so significant within the lives of Generation Y and Z that researchers have labelled new generations on the basis of their familiarity with digital devices. Prensky (2012) coined the term 'digital natives' to describe a generation of tech-savvy individuals with a positive attitude to technology, accustomed to the speed of the Internet and to multi-tasking. The 'net generation' is goal and achievement oriented, with a preference for active learning and social activities (Brown 2005).

One study defines Generation Y as intelligent, ambitious, questioning individuals accustomed to

Table 3: Generations in the workforce

Veterans	Born between 1939 and 1947
	Also known as traditionalists
Baby Boomers	Born between 1948 and 1963
Generation X	Born between 1964 and 1978
Generation Y	Born between 1979 and 1999
	Also known as Millennials
Generation Z	Born after 2000
	Often grouped with Generation Y

networking, multi-tasking, always connected and often more academically qualified than their managers, who are expected to be mentors and coaches (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012).

Some have suggested that Generation Y seeks personal fulfilment, a meaningful job in a friendly organisation, work–life balance and is also strongly motivated by career advancement (Meier and Crocker 2010, Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012). Although, they conceive their career as a 'scramble net' and not a ladder (Penna and CIPD 2008) and 57% expect to leave their organisation in the next two years (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012). According to research by PwC (Finn and Donovan 2013), unlike Generation X, they prioritise support, appreciation and flexibility over salary.

Learning and development for Generation Y and Z
When young people enter an organisation it is important to provide an induction programme tailored to their specific needs, instead of a generic one (Oxenbridge and Evesson 2012, Culliney and Broughton 2013). The induction is an opportunity to meet colleagues, familiarise themselves with the new environment, alongside being introduced to both the company and their specific role (Culliney and Broughton 2013). While this is applicable for all employees, it is especially relevant for young people, as the transition from education to employment might be *'traumatic and disorienting'* and many lack confidence (Smith 2003, p17, in Oxenbridge and Evesson 2012).

According to the CIPD *Managing Future Talent* guide (Peate and Taylor 2014), young people also specifically benefit from clear objectives, regular feedback,

opportunities for upward communication and guidance on which skills they can develop or are developing on the job.

Further, they need a strong support network, according to most employers. Suggestions include mentoring and coaching support from an effective line manager (Peate and Taylor 2014). Buddies or other peer support can also be particularly helpful for young people, who may feel less at ease with their manager initially.

A range of learning and development methods are used to support ongoing development. For example, individual and group teaching, guided study and social learning are frequently adopted in apprenticeship programmes (Peate and Taylor 2014). Collaborations are often formed to offer young people the chance to work and gain formal qualifications. For example, there has been an increase in joint partnerships between private companies and universities to deliver work-based degrees (UKCES and UUK 2014).

Skill gaps
According to research carried out by Ashridge Business School (Paine Schofield and Honoré 2010), young people need to develop writing skills, deeper and analytical thinking, self-awareness, acceptance of criticism and emotional intelligence. These skill gaps were apparent in both home life, school and university.

While often defined as the 'tech-savvy' generation, some highlight that the IT skills of young people cannot be assumed, as they vary widely in the population (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012) – perhaps suggesting that young people's relationship with technology may be more complicated than it might first appear.

Some studies indicate that Generation Y looks for information when it is needed, and therefore does not prioritise the memorisation of knowledge in their mind (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012, Tapscott 2008). Consequently, they need help to understand which sources of information are reliable and how to verify information (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012). The latter conclusion is not shared by Tapscott (2008), who surveyed 11,000 young people in the US, finding that the 'Net Generation' scrutinises any information encountered. These differing views suggest that further research is required.

Learning preferences
There is a limited research body on the work-based learning preferences of young people. However, while the literature is far from conclusive, it does indicate that the traditional classroom training model may not always be the most effective.

Some argue that young people have a short attention span (Honoré and Paine Schofield 2012, Tapscott 2008); therefore content needs to be broken down and constant feedback provided to keep them engaged. For this reason a bite-sized model of learning may be appropriate; however, this may also be true of other generations.

While some espouse the benefits of technology in engaging young people in learning, one study published in 2005 (though still capturing the views of Generation Y) has a different conclusion. It finds that young people have a strong preference for face-to-face interaction, whereas older learners are more satisfied with courses fully delivered online (Oblinger and Oblinger 2005).

'Generation Y are a group of smart, ambitious and questioning fast-thinkers, able to multi-task.'

However, it's important to consider that learning technology has advanced significantly in the last ten years.

Summary
Our review of the literature indicates that Generation Y are a group of smart, ambitious and questioning fast-thinkers, able to multi-task. Their familiarity with digital devices and social platforms does not necessarily imply a preference for learning technology; the literature suggests technology should instead be conceived as a tool to complement the learning experience.

We should, however, bear in mind the limitations of existing studies. There are often differences in sample groups, such as young people active in the labour market and those in higher education, who are often studied together. One must also take into account whether the 'life stage' of those participating in research may influence their motivations and attributes.

Moreover, Generation Z needs more dedicated research, as the literature largely focuses on Generation Y at present. There is also a greater need for research exploring young people's relationship with technology and their learning preferences, particularly using a behavioural science lens.

In essence, the themes identified in this section provide a useful starting point for HR and L&D professionals to explore the needs of young people in their organisation. In this report we build on the literature by delving deeper into the skills, development methods and learning preferences young people exhibit in our case study organisations. First, we look in more detail at the business case for investment.

2 Building the business case for investing in development

In this section we explore the business imperatives for the various programmes introduced in our case study organisations, and identify the impact they've had. We also outline considerations for identifying the right roles and business areas for young people to go into.

Business imperatives

Meeting business needs

All of the case study organisations recognise that investing in young people has a connection to 'giving back' and the wider corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda. For example, Graham Salisbury, ActionAid, explains that the decision to recruit apprentices was partly based on a connection to the organisation's core purpose and commitment to practise what they preach:

'If you are campaigning on policies in Bangladesh, you can't ignore it in Basingstoke or Bermondsey.'

However, a CSR perspective or desire to 'give back' was not the primary motivational factor in the decision to widen access. Instead, it was frequently driven by business need. As Sarah Bampton (Fujitsu) recognises, *'this is about long-term talent management, and reducing youth unemployment is a great secondary benefit. So, we want to make sure the business is in it for the right reasons.'*

This link to talent management is a common connection:

'The Barclays Degree Programme was designed to grow our own

non-graduate talent, high-potential young people who we felt wanted an alternative to university. It meant we could begin to tap into, and identify, talent earlier than graduates.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Addressing skills shortages

For Capgemini the need to attract non-graduate talent has a link to wider skills shortages in the industry:

'If you looked at the software engineering pipeline it was forecast to be something like 150,000 jobs that were going to go unfilled. And that's only going to grow year on year. The pool we were fishing from had got so small, we had to decide to do something else.' **Rebecca Plant, Capgemini**

Fujitsu have experienced similar shortages, and have introduced apprenticeships and industrial placements to help overcome this issue:

'One of our biggest challenges actually is finding good technical graduates coming out of university. There's a gap in what's coming out onto the market and the demand that we have for them.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

In Reed Smith the requirement in the graduate pool was to enhance commercial awareness, and this necessitated a different approach:

'Legal graduates, often with a largely technical legal education, enter an environment where our customers are saying, "We want people who are commercial business people who will add

'One of our biggest challenges actually is finding good technical graduates coming out of university. There's a gap in what's coming out onto the market and the demand that we have for them.'

value not just from their technical (legal) knowledge but also from their commercial, industry sector awareness. Yes who are lawyers, but actually we want them to think of themselves as business people first and foremost."' **Nigel Spencer, Reed Smith**

Rebalancing the organisation
Addressing organisational demographics is also a common imperative for widening access routes:

'One [driver] was the demographic issue within our workforce, where we were hiring a lot of graduates to fill some non-graduate positions and seeing a high turnover, but also, seeing an older age profile than we maybe would have liked to have seen. So, by bringing our apprenticeship programme entry age down to 16, it meant that we brought in a lot of younger people, four or five years younger than typically we were bringing in.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

'Ultimately the main demographic of our organisation is a white male in their forties, and upwards. Our president in Japan then said, "Actually we are here as an organisation to create the human-centric society." We then needed to ask, "Does the demographic of our organisation really align to that vision? Can they make that happen?" I think we took a long, hard look at ourselves and said, "probably no."' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

Interestingly, ActionAid found that stringent educational requirements, prevalent across the industry, were actually leading to a lack of diversity in the organisation and an unnecessary over-qualification of the workforce. They recognised that increasing diversity was critical to the charity's success and therefore altered their course:

'One of the things that encouraged us to go down the apprenticeship path was that a lot of the roles that we have people in, where the people are graduates or have MAs or MScs, they don't actually need that qualification. … We've just had a junior-level administration/research post which we've been trying to fill – we've had 272 applications. All of our shortlisted people had either master's degrees or PhDs.' **Graham Salisbury, ActionAid**

Building the business case
All of the case study organisations agreed that, no matter what business imperative, getting line manager buy-in and senior sponsorship is an essential factor of successful implementation. While many organisations have similar business needs, we know it can be challenging to build the business case for why investing in development is important. So, here we share examples of the impact the various programmes have had in the case study organisations, to help give you the evidence and insight you need to make the case for change.

Broad business benefits
In Barclays the schemes have been a resounding success:

'The business benefits have been very broad. Retention has been great amongst young people, and diversity has been great.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Likewise, Fujitsu are starting to see the demographic shift they were aiming for:

'We're quite proud that in attracting young talented individuals to the organisation, we are starting to change the demographic of the organisation. For instance, we have a more favourable gender diversity in young talent than we do with

the rest of the organisation.' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

While ActionAid is a much smaller organisation than our other case studies, Graham Salisbury agrees that this does not detract from the overall impact:

'There is no reason why a smaller organisation couldn't benefit. … When you spend the time developing them, giving them information and knowledge, coaching them, then you see the benefits. That spin-off has a knock-on to you personally. You start thinking, "If we invested in everybody and they all grew in that particular fashion, wouldn't it be a good thing?" It creates a very positive environment within the business.'

In Reed Smith, Nigel Spencer has seen a clear difference in trainee behaviour before and after they have attended the year-long MBA-style course, and is therefore able to pinpoint the clear business impact:

'One difference now is that they enter the business having been out at a client over the past summer, having known and spoken to lots of the partners, having sat in the commercial side of the client, not just the legal side, so they can actually add that experience and learning into conversations. The graduates self-assessed that they were much more confident in holding commercial, client conversations – not surprisingly as they had practised this over the summer on the placement. … So you're fast-forwarding the "speed to capability" and value delivery from when they walk in the door on day one. Given that in a law firm model it's two years since you recruited them and you've paid for their courses, you want that ROI back as quickly as possible.'

Shajjad Ali, Apprentice at ActionAid, agrees that companies should actively invest in young people:

'Companies need the sort of person that is hungry to learn, because they are going to give back a lot. Okay, they have to invest some time training them, but what they are going to see by the end of it is someone who is better trained, better prepared in life and more capable to do a great job.'

Wider team impact
Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu, has also noticed that the impact of young people has spread across the organisation:

'It makes a real difference to how people feel about who they work for, and therefore how they do their job. You've got that intangible stuff, but you've also got the tangible bottom-line impact as well. Those two things together mean it's just a no-brainer for us. I think, if we decided to turn graduates and apprentices off tomorrow, there would be uproar. It would have such a massive impact on how people view the business and our ability to provide great service to our customers, and be a diverse and responsible employer that people want to work for.'

Rebecca Plant, Capgemini, has also identified a broader team impact:

'It almost switches something else on in existing employees, that they can help and mentor and support, which is fabulous. … Everybody's game has been pushed up one, so in effect the productivity has gone up throughout the organisation.'

Others also reflect that recruiting more young people helps to foster positivity:

'The positive engagement they bring, the attitude and loyalty rub off on other colleagues. … In the contact centres they make a big difference, they really do change the dynamic.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Future talent
For Fujitsu there are also two additional benefits: recruitment costs have gone down and they are creating a pipeline of future leaders:

'Bringing young talent in means that we don't have to spend a lot of money on recruiting more expensive experienced hires. Our ratio has gone down dramatically and therefore our costs have.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

'We can see real value in the programmes and investing time, effort and money into making the programmes work. When you strip it all back it's about making sure we have future leaders, and that is actually happening. Thirty per cent of those on our Future Leaders Programme[2] started as graduates in the organisation.' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

Brand and reputation
A number of the organisations also feel that there has been an added benefit to their brand and reputation:

'It's given us a massive amount of positive publicity, especially our decision to pay them all the London Living Wage. We can show a child being taken out of poverty overseas, but now we can also say, "Look at the lives of these three people who have benefited from us doing this."' **Graham Salisbury, ActionAid**

'There are plenty of negative things that are said about banking, but actually on apprentices, it's something we are really proud of.' **Mike Hill, Barclays**

Impact on young people
Alongside these broad business benefits, the young people interviewed also identified the tangible impact the programmes are having on their lives and their perception of work:

'There's not even one day that I have thought "I don't want to go to work". There is everyone there to support me, and it's been a great journey so far.' **Irha Syed, Barclays**

'It has helped us become more independent and given us more of a feeling of being responsible for our own actions. Personally it's also made us more open-minded about the world because we see the sort of changes the company are making, and how a little bit of input can make a massive difference.' **Shajjad Ali, ActionAid**

'With the background that I've come from, I've bounced from job to job and sometimes been unemployed. So it feels like "Wow, I've got such a great opportunity in front of me. I never would have thought that I would be in this position over a year ago." I didn't have many qualifications and I didn't know where I was going, but coming onto this programme I think is the best career move I've made in my whole life. The opportunities are endless here as long as I do my job.' **Osmond McNellie, Barclays**

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[2] The Fujitsu Future Leaders Programme is a leadership development programme for junior to middle managers.

Considerations for identifying the right roles and business areas

Alongside using insight to highlight potential benefits, a key part of building the business case is identifying which areas of the business are suitable for young people to go into, and subsequently which roles. This entails being clear about the enablers or barriers in your organisation, and assessing line management capability.

The *Learning to Work* survey (CIPD 2015) explores HR professionals' views on which factors are important in designing roles for young people (Figure 1).[3] The primary consideration is reported to be having the right support network in place.

The findings from our case study research reflect this data, particularly the need to ensure there is robust line management capability, and the right development opportunities. As Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu, explains:

'There is a lot of due diligence that goes on before we open up a vacancy. … We need to make sure the business has a supportive environment for an apprentice, that vocational on-the-job learning is appropriate and that this is the way to support the learning.'

This often means reviewing each business area on a case-by-case basis:

'I think some areas of the business are better suited to the type of on-the-job learning that an apprenticeship brings with it. We did try some apprenticeships in some of the more specialist areas and had less success. I think it's a little bit horses for courses. We do look at each area, we think about the environment, we think about the learning journey for a young person, whether an apprenticeship is the right fit.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Figure 1: Important factors in designing roles for young people, by organisation sector (%) (CIPD 2015)
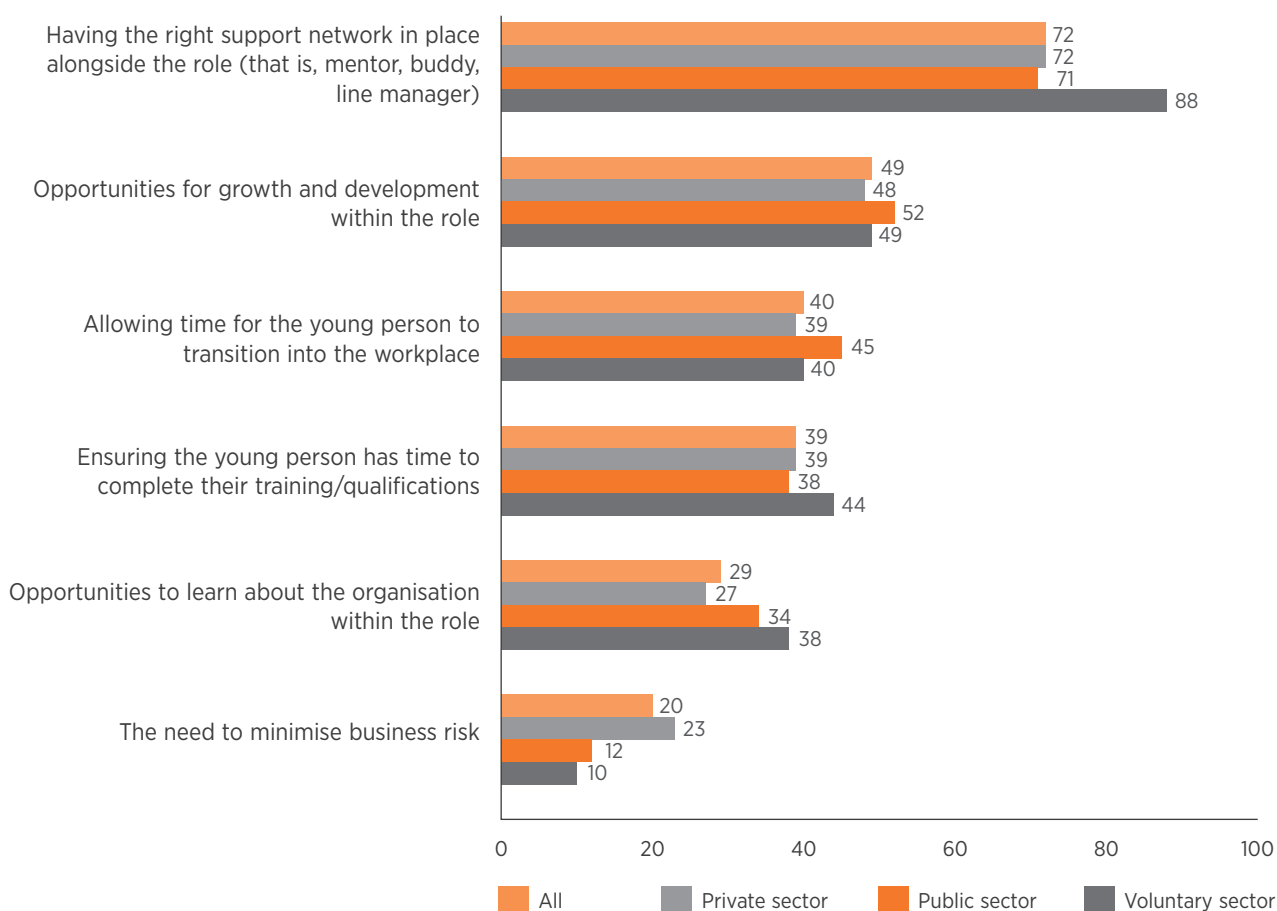
Base: All HR professionals who currently employ young people (n=553)

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[3] On behalf of the CIPD, YouGov undertook a survey looking into views of HR professionals in relation to employing young people. The survey was carried out between 7 November and 30 November 2014 and findings are based on responses from 868 HR professionals and employers.

A number of the organisations spoke about the importance of the business taking responsibility for identifying the right roles:

'We ask the business 12 months in advance to forecast their need for graduate roles. They are funded by the business. They have to be responsible for saying, "Actually, this is a role that is suitable for a graduate. The graduate will add value back to the organisation." We then go about recruiting those numbers.' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

This helps to ensure that ownership is firmly within the line of business, rather than with the HR or L&D team. This in turn necessitates great people management:

'We make sure, particularly for apprentices and graduates, that the hiring manager is a really good people manager. We have an internal accreditation that we use as evidence of that.' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

The CIPD guide *Managing Future Talent* (Peate and Taylor 2014) provides more insight on the importance of line management capability, in particular providing the robust structure and good communication, alongside personalised development and support.

It's clear that making sure you have the right support in place is a key consideration in thinking through which roles and teams are right for young people. It's also apparent that for a programme to be successful, investment must be made in the capability of both line managers and young people. Building the business case isn't just about demonstrating the tangible benefits, but also about outlining how the wider organisation can help a programme to flourish.

Managing future talent

The CIPD guide *Managing Future Talent* (Peate and Taylor 2014) is designed to help line managers understand how best to support young people in the transition from education to the workplace. It provides an overview of good practice and suggestions for how to provide the right level of support and help inexperienced workers adapt to the workplace. For example:

- managing colleagues' expectations when a young person joins the workforce
- how to build trust and create space for regular one-to-one discussions
- how to help a young person prioritise and manage their time
- facilitating open discussion about the challenges of managing an age-diverse workforce.

You may find it helpful to share this guide with line managers in your organisation.

Top five recommendations for HR and L&D practitioners

1 Gain senior sponsorship and a figure-head who can really drive the importance of recruiting and developing young people in the organisation. Create a narrative which outlines the business benefits and use line manager champions to share success stories.

2 Get clear on your business drivers and check that they are consistent across the organisation – make sure business leaders are in it for the right reasons.

3 Find a good partner who can meet the needs of your organisation and help you establish and set up programmes.

4 Think about your broader HR policies and how conducive they are to recruiting and developing young people, for example questioning your requirements for particular academic qualifications or ensuring you have the right line manager capability in place.

5 Make sure you're prepared for high demand from the business – the benefits of investing in young people are so apparent that the biggest challenge is often the need to expand programmes at pace.

3 Workplace skills

'Young people are often maligned for not having the right skills needed in the workplace and the role of the employer in plugging these gaps is often disputed.'

There has been substantial public debate about skills gaps between education and employment. Young people are often maligned for not having the right skills needed in the workplace and the role of the employer in plugging these gaps is often disputed. In this section we get underneath the surface of these debates to understand, based on the interviews with programme participants and leaders, the skills young people bring to the workplace and the common skill gaps.

Bringing skills to the workplace

As we noted in Section 1, there is substantial diversity within generations, and therefore caution is advised in making generalisations. The young people interviewed all have different levels of experience and educational attainment (some are 16 and have just left school, while others are 22–24 and have graduated from university). Each individual will bring a certain set of skills and strengths to the workplace, and therefore particular skills are not the domain of any one generation or will be uniform across the age group. However, our interviews with young people and programme leaders do point towards a number of skills and strengths that young people typically bring to the workplace. These are represented here in three themes:

1 Enthusiasm, energy and drive

Many of our case study organisations spoke about apprentices having enthusiasm and energy for work:

'The benefit of an apprentice is that they're so engaged. They're grateful for the opportunity. The world's their oyster in that respect, because they just come in with the right attitude.' **Rebecca Plant, Capgemini**

'Because of their different approach to work, a fresh pair of eyes and their energy, they're really delivering greater efficiency.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

This perspective was also reflected in our discussions with young people:

'Youth unemployment is massive. But taking these energetic and fresh minds into a workplace is also a massive, massive bonus for the company.' **Shajjad Ali, ActionAid**

2 New ideas and innovative thinking

Organisations have also seen young people bring new perspective and ideas:

'We've had a lot of great ideas and innovations come from our apprentices. They have been building apps for us, they've been coming up with better ways of doing things, new processes, because they bring that inquisitive mindset, asking "Why do we do this?" "Why can't we do it differently?" "Why don't we do it this way?" All the good things that young people bring.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Claire Theijssen, graduate at Fujitsu, has a similar perspective:

'We bring creativity and fresh thinking. When you're in a company for a few years you get used to the process and you just roll with it.

Whereas someone coming from the outside and having to experience it is like, "Why are we doing that?" I find that pretty much every week I'm questioning one process we have in the company and I think people listen.'

Interestingly this perhaps contradicts the suggestion in our literature review that young people may lack analytical or critical thinking skills.

3 Technological understanding
Mike Thompson, Barclays, feels that technological capability is one of the primary skills young people bring to the workplace:

'They pick up technology very quickly. In a contact centre environment they're able to work with multiple systems really quickly. … They've also brought in digital

skills and a confidence with digital. As a bank that's turning very digital we need young people who can come in and be comfortable with digital technology. They've really helped upskill some of our more experienced staff.'

The apprentices in Barclays share Mike's views:

'Everything is going digital. Definitely I feel that because we are young and savvy to it, it's been easy to adapt to the new systems and just making lives easier in terms of telling customers they can do certain things online.' **Osmond McNellie, Barclays**

It is important to note that young people may not all have the same level of skill. For example they may be experts in how to edit an

online video, but never have used programmes such as Microsoft Excel before. What's helpful in this scenario is their general confidence in technology and ability to adapt what they know to different platforms.

Skill gaps
In our review of the literature we shared a short overview of the skill gaps that have been identified for Generation Y, for example self-awareness, analytical thinking and acceptance of criticism.

In our recent *Learning to Work* survey (CIPD 2015) we explore HR and L&D professionals' views on the key skills to help young people build during their first year in the job. The top three responses were communication skills (64%), teamworking (60%) and confidence (45%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The top three skills to develop during the first year in work and the most challenging skill to develop (%)

Base: All HR professionals (n=868)
■ Key focus for development ■ Most challenging to develop
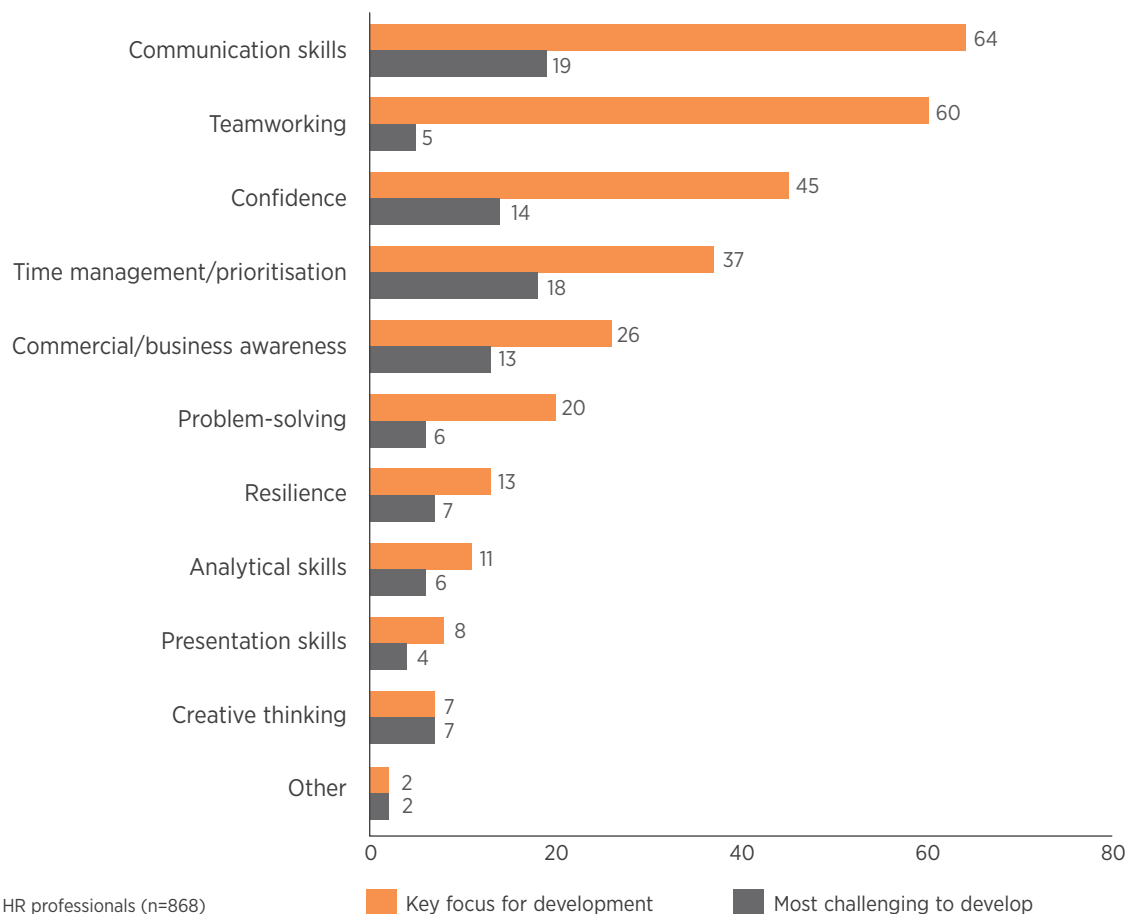
Both communication skills and confidence were considered the most challenging to build, alongside time management/prioritisation. Interestingly, analytical skills did not feature particularly highly.

We also explored this topic with our case study organisations. They identified four key areas of skills gaps, reflecting many of the challenges identified through our survey data.

'Working life' skills
A number of our interviewees highlighted that initial development of young people is typically focused around work-readiness and professional behaviour:

'A big part is "life growing-up" skills. Without being patronising, that bridge from education to work is massive. It's understanding what being a working professional means.' **Rebecca Plant, Capgemini**

'Some of the kids come from very tough backgrounds, they struggle to leave the street behind on occasions and we have to work with them to help them.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

'I think the biggest challenge is professionalism. It's not everybody, and once they understand it they get it really quickly. But it is things like turning up to meetings on time, getting to work on time, putting a tie on. How to word an email correctly. Just what it means to work in an 11,000-strong business in the UK and everything that comes with that.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

The graduates and apprentices also reflected on this challenge, and in particular not always being clear on what to expect in advance:

'Coming into an office was quite a scary thing to learn.' **Demi Cameron-Smith, Fujitsu**

'I didn't know what to expect when I came here. I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't have an idea.' **Susithaa Sathiyamoorthy, ActionAid**

Self-awareness and confidence
A lack of confidence is often a key challenge for young people to overcome, and can often be influenced by life circumstances:

'I'd say confidence is something that is often lacking, particularly if you have been in long-term unemployment. Every corner you've turned around somebody's said, "No you're not good enough." It's not necessarily about skills gaps, there are confidence gaps and that's a big issue, because then we've got to rebuild that confidence.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Many of the young people we spoke to also highlighted confidence as a challenge, but recognised how far they had come through experience:

'In my first couple of weeks I'd be scared about picking up the phone. But now it doesn't faze me; I just pick up the phone and approach people around me. It's definitely a confidence thing.' **Dan Snowdon, Fujitsu**

'I wasn't very confident at first, but now I approach customers rather than them coming to me. That's something I've learned over the last few weeks.' **Irha Syed, Barclays**

This perhaps highlights that while confidence may be difficult to actively build, work experience has a significant role to play. Our interviewees also suggest that building self-awareness is a helpful base for developing confidence, and this resonates with the findings of our literature review:

'We always talk about learning and developing yourself on three levels: manage yourself; manage your team; manage the firm. You have to start with good self-awareness, as it's the bedrock for so many things.' **Nigel Spencer, Reed Smith**

Communication
Communication and relationship-building was highlighted as a challenge more by the young people interviewed than programme leaders (who tended to associate this area more broadly with general work skills and confidence).

For example, as Thomas McCumiskey, Capgemini, shares:

'Learning how to talk to people who don't have your technical expertise and trying to convey that information is challenging. You need a reasonable amount of patience and resilience to not say anything you shouldn't.'

Dylan Valentine, Fujitsu, has experienced a similar challenge:

'The amount of times I would speak to someone and say something completely inappropriate and not have an absolute clue about what I did wrong at the time. I've really learned leadership skills about how you should actually talk to people in the last year.'

Commercial skills
For Nigel Spencer, Reed Smith, the skill gaps in those leaving university were in commercial capability, especially due to a lack of previous opportunities to 'learn by doing' outside the classroom. He wanted to ensure that new trainees at the law firm were thinking from the client's perspective, and this led him to develop new learning methods to help build these skills at an early stage (see Section 4).

Nigel assessed trainees' perception of what the role is about, to see whether the gap had been plugged. Figure 3 outlines the data Nigel has collected. We can see that, before attending the firm's innovative graduate course with the enhanced business learning and client placement, graduates thought that being a City lawyer was primarily about having technical skill. But following Reed Smith's change in emphasis on their new graduate programme, the graduates appreciate the commercial aspects of the role:

'What the data shows is that they've re-framed what their career is about. They thought initially that it was about being a technician and you've recalibrated their mindsets, right at the beginning of their careers, into being people who realise that they will add value and develop best by being more commercial and more business focused.'
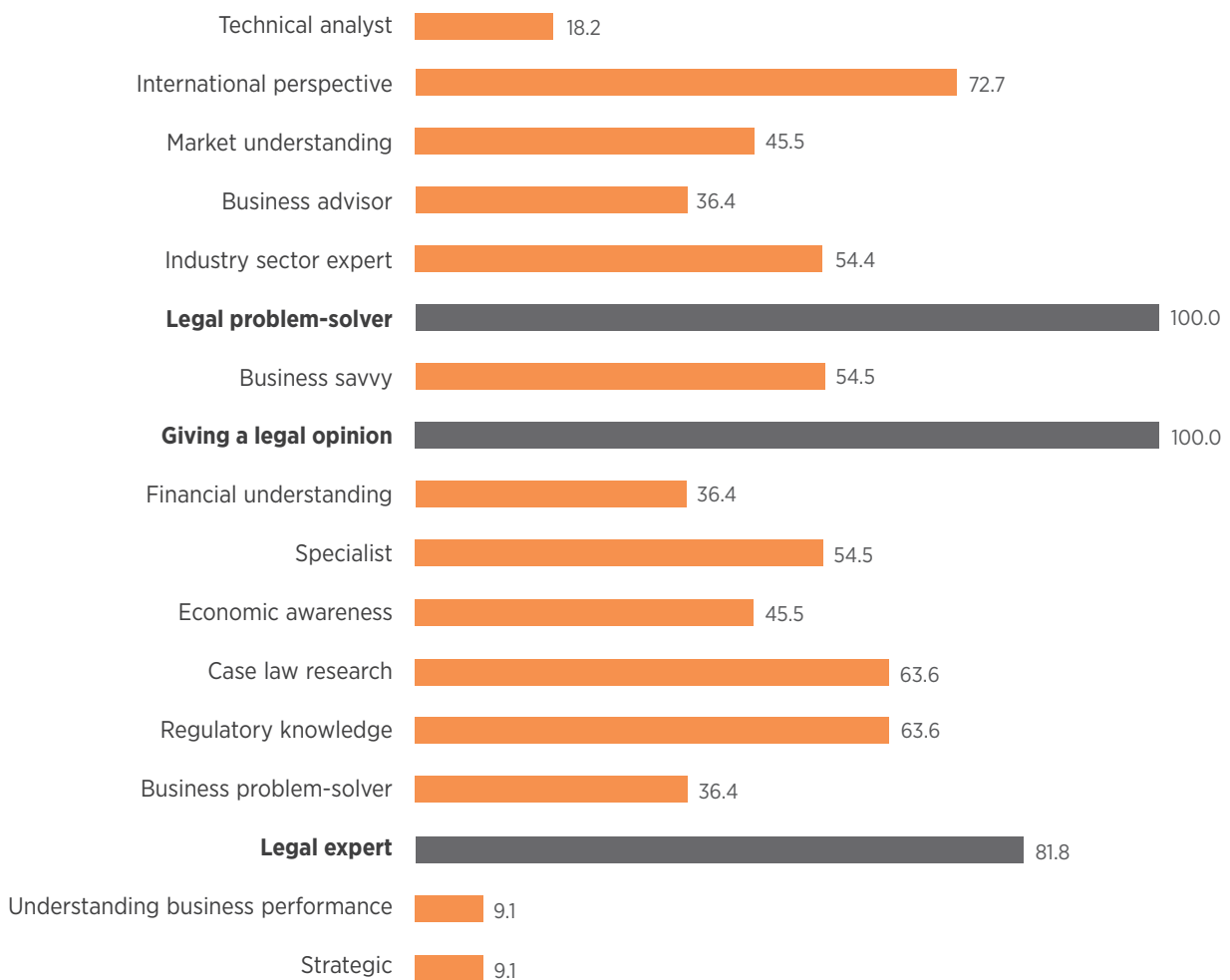
Other skills
Resilience is identified as a key capability to build, often in connection with confidence-building. Interestingly, time management/

prioritisation did not feature significantly as a problem, though many apprentices spoke about the challenge of combining work with study. They also highlighted the importance, and yet difficulty, of building a strong network.

Ultimately, while there are inevitably skill gaps and areas that need focus, young people also bring a variety of skills and capabilities to the workplace. The trick is to leverage the individual's existing skill base and strengths to then address key development areas.

Figure 3: Phrases graduates associated with being a lawyer, before and after the first term of the Reed Smith master's course (McMullan 2013)

When you were at university, which words and phrases did you associate with being a lawyer at a City firm? (%)

Phrase	%
Technical analyst	18.2
International perspective	72.7
Market understanding	45.5
Business advisor	36.4
Industry sector expert	54.4
Legal problem-solver	100.0
Business savvy	54.5
Giving a legal opinion	100.0
Financial understanding	36.4
Specialist	54.5
Economic awareness	45.5
Case law research	63.6
Regulatory knowledge	63.6
Business problem-solver	36.4
Legal expert	81.8
Understanding business performance	9.1
Strategic	9.1

Which words and phrases do you associate with being a lawyer at a City firm now, after the first term of the master's course? (%)

Category	Value
Technical analyst	36.4
International perspective	90.9
Market understanding	100.0
Business advisor	54.5
Industry sector expert	81.8
Legal problem-solver	90.9
Business savvy	90.9
Giving a legal opinion	81.8
Financial understanding	81.8
Specialist	45.5
Economic awareness	72.7
Case law research	63.6
Regulatory knowledge	100.0
Business problem-solver	90.9
Legal expert	81.8
Understanding business performance	72.7
Strategic	45.5

Top five recommendations for HR and L&D practitioners

1 Assess which skills and strengths young people currently bring to your organisation (or could do in future).

2 Create a narrative which tells the story of the skills young people bring.

3 Consider how you can enhance young people's strengths to build self-awareness and confidence.

4 Audit skill gaps across the organisation to identify the specific challenges you need to meet. Understand which gaps are critical to long-term organisational performance and therefore which to address first.

5 Collect insight and evidence to assess whether you are closing the gap.

4 Development methods

In this section we identify the key learning methods leading organisations are using to develop skills and capabilities of people at the start of their careers. These practices form the basis of many of the programmes outlined in the introduction.

Our case study research has identified the use of nine key techniques, which correspond with the use of 70:20:10 principles, and reflect the findings of our literature review – that a blend of techniques are used in practice (Table 4). The 70:20:10 model is applicable to employees of every generation, but here we highlight the components that are specifically used by the case study organisations to build the capability of young people. These elements are particularly relevant for those at the start of their career, because alongside building technical capability, they specifically address the skill gaps outlined in Section 3: namely, general working skills, confidence, communication and commerciality.

'Our case study research has identified the use of nine key techniques, which correspond with the use of 70:20:10 principles, and reflect the findings of our literature review.'

Table 4: Development methods

70%: Learning from experience	20%: Learning from others	10%: Formal learning
On-the-job learning	Mentoring	Formal qualifications
Business problem exercises	Networking	Classroom training
Giving presentations	Learning from peers and line manager	Intensive inductions

70:20:10

The 70:20:10 model is an approach for learning popularised by Charles Jennings, director of the 70:20:10 Forum. The concept centres on the idea that the majority of our learning comes from experience, with the remainder through learning from others and just 10% from formal learning experiences. While it is not a strict formula, these principles continue to have a significant impact on the L&D profession. The model helps us to see development holistically, and to move away from just focusing on 'the course' as the main learning method.

Learning from experience

On-the-job learning
One of the primary development methods used is learning from experience, on the job. While this is a central aspect of apprenticeships, it also has relevance across every different type of programme. For example, Graham Salisbury, ActionAid, is focused on enabling apprentices to learn from experience:

'What we thought we'd try and do is actually get them to do absolutely anything and everything that is part and parcel of the normal working daily life.'

Business problem exercises
In a number of organisations business problem exercises are used to help people gain experience of working on a project and completing a challenge. In Fujitsu individuals on the industrial placement scheme are set a corporate responsibility challenge:

'For the past few years we've split them into groups and given them a red paperclip and said, "Swap this red paperclip for items of higher value in order to make as much money as possible for our corporate charity partner." That does quite a lot of things. Not only does it teach them about working together as a team, working to a brief, meeting customer expectations, it also helps with collaborating across different regions, networking internally within the business, but also externally outside of the business. So it gives them a fantastic learning experience.' **Nick White, Fujitsu**

Reed Smith have taken a similar approach. During the year spent completing the firm's innovative Business Master's LPC course, the trainees also complete an MBA business intelligence project at a client. They are then expected to present back to senior client stakeholders and to Reed Smith. This provides a fantastic opportunity to both work with a client and understand the expectations of the firm. Nigel Spencer shares one student's perspective on the project:

'The client project was the best learning experience I can remember having taken part in. ... The project had to be excellent and, just as important, was a real-world task of genuine use to the client. Not only did this make the problem more engaging, it forced us to focus entirely on the client's needs. We were forced to constantly think: "Is this relevant to the client's specific problem?"'

Giving presentations
Other organisations have also used presentations as a development method, particularly as presenting to senior leaders is a key way of gaining real-life experience of a challenging situation. In Capgemini the induction period for apprentices ends with an *Apprentice*-style presentation:

'All of their learning gets brought together and they present it to the business.' **Rebecca Plant, Capgemini**

'Senior management came down for the day to play Alan Sugar. They each did something that had been done to them at some point in a client meeting, for example being deliberately obtuse. It helped get the surprises out early, so that you're not surprised by them when you're out in the field.' **Thomas McCumiskey, Capgemini**

Learning from others

Mentoring
Different forms of mentoring are frequently used to build capability. In Reed Smith reverse mentoring is used, which means that trainees mentor more senior colleagues on the business models they have learned as part of their university-based learning:

'I was thinking, "How can we engage this generation, and allow them to have the responsibility they seek, plus get the opportunity to network with future colleagues and build confidence by learning more about our business in readiness for joining?" "What would it be like if we actually changed the roles and removed the hierarchy – so the graduates were in the position where they were teaching others?" The reverse mentoring sessions worked well, because there was mutual learning. ... This is, in effect, flipping forward by about five or six years when graduates would naturally have such leadership development experiences.' **Nigel Spencer, Reed Smith**

Nigel shares a quote from one of the student 'mentors' which illustrates the value of the approach:

'The reverse mentoring sessions are a brilliant idea, perfect for us to consolidate our new understanding, but it's also allowing knowledge to flow "upstream" to current staff, who seem to find the models immediately applicable to the clients they work with.'

In Fujitsu peer mentoring is used, so for example graduates will mentor apprentices.

Networking
Helping young people build a network across the organisation is commonly viewed as a helpful development technique.

'One of the biggest things that was mentioned throughout ALE [an intensive induction period] is the importance of your network. You've

got to put yourself out there and be keen to talk to people and get to know them, and get your skills across to people before you can be of any use to them on a project.' **James Millar, Capgemini**

In Fujitsu the team encourage the graduates and apprentices to build their own community and strengthen their networks:

'They've created their own events. Such as the speed networking event. We got lots of senior people in the organisation to come and meet with them. They had five minutes with each person, and the apprentice could ask them all sorts of questions. It's a really good networking event for young talent in our organisation.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

Learning from peers and your line manager

While a number of these techniques are actively managed and co-ordinated, informally learning from your line manager and from the team is still a critical part of development:

'I've got a really good manager and he pushes me really hard, which although sometimes is a struggle, it's brilliant because I'm getting further than where I thought I would've been at this point.' **Demi Cameron-Smith, Fujitsu**

'The support is immense. From the whole team, everyone. You could go to a mortgage adviser and if you've got a little question, they'll answer it. Everyone teaches you, although they might not know that they are teaching you, they are just doing their job and telling you what they know. It really broadens your whole knowledge of the financial industry.' **Osmond McNellie, Barclays**

Formal learning

Intensive inductions

In Section 1 we highlighted the importance of a quality induction period, and this is also stressed in the CIPD *Managing Future Talent* guide (Peate and Taylor 2014). Entering employment for the first time can be a challenging period for many young people, and so a quality induction period can help young people feel at ease and better understand their role and the organisation. In recognition of how critical this time is, Capgemini have developed an intensive induction programme for new apprentices which they attend before formally starting in their roles. The training covers both corporate ways of working and technical knowledge:

'What's really important for us is having what we call "project-ready skills". We don't release them for blocks of training. Instead they have 11 weeks all up front. What we found was that traditionally they've never got any experience of the world of work, and no experience of the technology we're going to teach them, and they need to do some growing up first. … It's important to go through this process because after 11 weeks they're out with clients.' **Rebecca Plant, Capgemini**

In a similar nature Barclays have also introduced a pre-employment traineeship, which lasts for five weeks. As the apprentices come from a NEET background, it's designed to help them make the transition back into work and help them build interpersonal skills:

'It helps them understand what it means to communicate effectively, to understand body language, to understand teamworking, how to plan and a whole range of core employment skills.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

Formal qualifications

Either as part of an apprenticeship, or through a work-based degree, formal qualifications are used to build and enhance the individual's technical knowledge base. Philip Wampamba and Shajjad Ali, apprentices at ActionAid, explain how this works:

'We go to college on Fridays and that provides the theoretical base, and because it's an NVQ it's evidenced-based work.' **Philip**

'They give us the theory on how to actually apply the work and then you come into work and practise what you've learned.' **Shajjad**

For Rebecca Plant, Capgemini, formal qualifications enable individuals to *'take a step back and think about the why'*. In an industry that places high value on having a degree, this also gives apprentices the equal footing they need to be able to continue to progress and develop their career.

Classroom training

Young people on the various schemes typically have access to a range of classroom training courses, which are available throughout the organisation:

'We've got an open programme of about ten or twelve employee development modules delivered by an external provider, on things like facilitation skills, presentation skills and managing multiple priorities.' **Graham Salisbury, ActionAid**

In some cases bespoke training or workshops are also developed:

'We have implemented a career development workshop for those coming towards the end of their apprenticeship, to really help them think about where they want to take their career.' **Sarah Bampton, Fujitsu**

'A significant part of development is dependent on the cultural environment in which the individual operates.'

Other techniques

Interestingly, none of our case study organisations focused on use of learning technologies as a key development method (though it was sometimes described as part of the core organisation-wide L&D offer). However, there was a recognition that 'bite-sized' learning can be effective.

From a broader perspective, the organisations highlight the importance of creating a culture which enables the young people to have the space to fail, and then learn from their mistakes. While specific learning techniques can be identified, a significant part of development is dependent on the cultural environment in which the individual operates. Therefore, as well as identifying the right techniques, L&D teams should also seek to ensure the wider culture is conducive to learning. This is applicable for employees of any age, but is particularly crucial for those at the start of their career who may not yet have the confidence to accept that learning from mistakes is often a necessary part of development.

A blended approach

While we have identified a range of specific techniques, it is important to note that all of the organisations featured use a blended approach, mixing development methods to best meet the needs of the learner and of the business. Achieving the right blend depends on the skills you need to build, the cultural environment and the resources you have available.

Top five recommendations for HR and L&D practitioners

1 Evaluate the blend of development methods in your organisation: are they meeting business and learner needs?

2 Ensure you have a robust induction process in place. This could even start before the employee joins the workplace through reading material, business exercises, websites or apps.

3 Consider whether you are making the most of on-the-job learning. Can you create a community of practice among line managers to share advice and hints and tips to maximise development opportunities?

4 Decide what place formal qualifications should have in your organisation. If introduced, how can they complement workplace learning?

5 Assess whether employees feel they have the 'space to fail'; if not, how can you start to shift the culture?
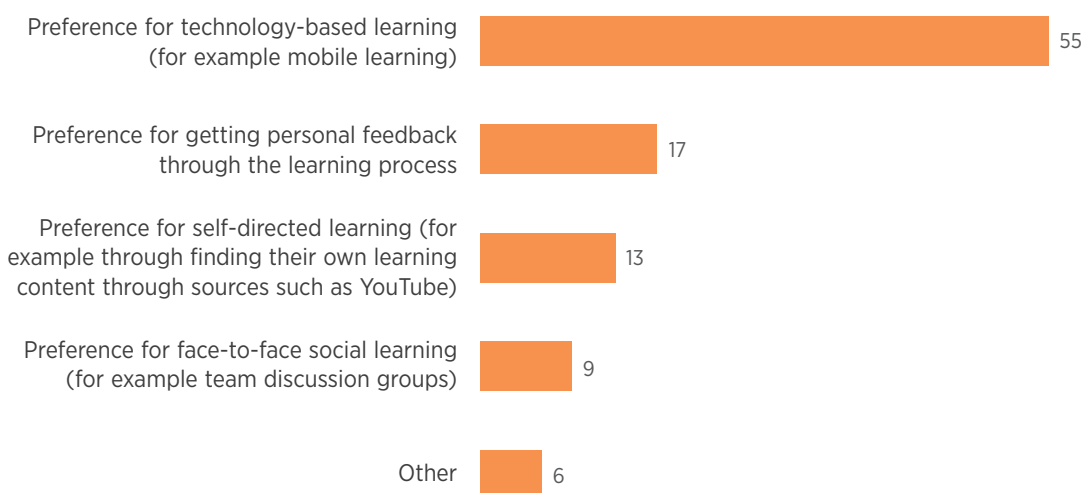
5 Generational learning preferences

As we highlighted in Section 1, there is a need for greater understanding of the learning preferences of Generation Y and Z, though many have sought to identify the attributes and attitudes of this group. Our research has focused on organisations that have developed programmes for young people, typically aged between 16 and 24, the population within the Generation Y group and on the cusp of Generation Z. Here we explore whether this generation has any particular learning preferences and highlight the implications for L&D practitioners. We also identify what's next for our case study organisations.

Are there any differences?
In our 2015 *Learning to Work* survey we asked HR professionals whether they had experienced any differences with how young people (aged 16–24) liked to learn, in comparison with other generations of workers. This data was not published in the main report and is displayed here for the first time. Fifty-three per cent agreed that they have seen differences, while 35% said no, and 12% were unsure. Of those who said yes, 55% said the main difference they had identified was a preference for technology-based learning (Figure 4). However, the findings of our literature review suggest that young people's relationship with technology may be more complicated than we might first think.

'The findings of our literature review suggest that young people's relationship with technology may be more complicated than we might first think.'

Figure 4: What is the primary difference you've seen in how young people like to learn? (%)

Preference	%
Preference for technology-based learning (for example mobile learning)	55
Preference for getting personal feedback through the learning process	17
Preference for self-directed learning (for example through finding their own learning content through sources such as YouTube)	13
Preference for face-to-face social learning (for example team discussion groups)	9
Other	6

Base: All HR professionals who employ young people and have identified differences in how they like to learn (n=364)

Mixed views on learning technology

Our case study research provides an interesting build on this data. As highlighted in Section 3, many young people are 'tech-savvy' and therefore typically use technology during their day-to-day lives, and make use of online tools to develop their knowledge:

'They are much more disposed to going onto the Internet to download Java seminars off YouTube.' **Rebecca Plant, Cap Gemini**

Many of the young people interviewed agreed with this perspective, and explained that they regularly use the Internet to access information – a form of self-directed learning.

Technology is also used as a networking tool:

'The use of technology between generations is probably the starkest difference. … We've got a very active thriving online community, but when you look at the profile of people using it, it does tend to skew more towards the younger generation.' **Mike Thompson, Barclays**

These findings reflect the preferences young people exhibit for using technology, and the 'tech-savvy' skills outlined in Section 3. However, there is a significant challenge when applying this information to learning methods. In Fujitsu, the young people shared their frustration with unwieldy learning technology and compliance e-learning. When asked if there were any learning methods they disliked, the answer was unanimously 'online training'.

'It's a generation thing, because I find older generations actually do read through everything and do it properly, whereas we just kind of flick through it. I think that's probably the worst way of learning.' **Claire Theijssen, Fujitsu**

'I think we probably don't like it because it's not modern.' **Dylan Valentine, Fujitsu**

While young people may be tech-savvy, their expectations are high. It's a problem that Rebecca Plant, Capgemini, has recognised:

'How are we going to redevelop our learning tools to make sure they fit that generation?'

This represents a genuine challenge for the L&D profession, as we continue to embed the use of technology for learning.

Preference for learning from doing

Many of the young people interviewed expressed a desire to learn from experience and for working collaboratively with others:

'I like to learn by doing. If we get a project, I just like to dive in basically, and get a grasp for it. Particularly if you're working with someone who has experience you can learn a lot very quickly.' **James Millar, Capgemini**

Shajjad Ali, ActionAid, agrees:

'If I read about it I wouldn't be able to just go in and do it the next day. I'd have to watch someone do it, or at least have some sort of guidance or someone explain the best way to do it.'

For Dylan Valentine, Fujitsu, a combination of hands-on experience and support is important:

'I think it's easy to learn in a classroom and pick up the knowledge and easily forget about it, but when you're actually chucked into the situation then you have to learn it straight away. Then by having support you don't get stuck.'

Nigel Spencer, Reed Smith, reflects on the value of on-the-job experiences on the wider transition young people face:

'What really makes the difference in going from the world of study to the world of work is the outside-the-classroom experiences. That's why I was so passionate about putting in place things like the client intelligence projects and the reverse mentoring as they were workplace-based, real situations in which to apply their learning.'

Bite-sized learning

Some of the interviewees highlighted that long documents or traditional classroom training may not always suit young people's preferences – particularly if they have only recently left school.

Rebecca Plant, Capgemini, has identified this challenge and finds that *'short bursts of learning, quick to pick up and put down'* are more effective to *'avoid going back to classroom mentality'*.

Claire Theijssen, Fujitsu, agrees:

'I think any kind of general 20-page document is just too much. You don't have time to sit through it and read it and so it isn't a good way of learning.'

Making a difference and getting feedback

The young people interviewed frequently expressed a preference for being *'stuck in the deep end'*, being given responsibility early and getting feedback for how they're doing. This reflects the findings of our literature review:

'The responsibility is insane – but in a good way. It's brilliant really, because it's helped my personal development.' **Dan Snowdon, Fujitsu**

Nick White, Fujitsu, shares his take on this:

'I think with the Gen Y learning style, they want less theory and they want to apply that theory to make it different and add value to the organisation more quickly than learning about it.'

This sense of having responsibility and making a difference is also connected to the desire for feedback:

'It's great to get immediate feedback when you're working on projects – especially when you can see it contributing.' **James Millar, Capgemini**

Gaining feedback, not just from senior managers but also from peers, was viewed as a great way to understand the difference that you're making and how you can learn and develop.

Applying these insights
Our research suggests that making learning as practical as possible is best and that user experience is king when implementing learning technologies, as expectations among 'digital natives' are so high. This is not surprising given research emanating from behavioural science about how we process and take on new information and knowledge (Stuart 2014).

While these insights are directly applicable to young people, they cannot be classified as Generation Y or Z specific, as they may also resonate with other generations of workers. For example, those in Generation X may also prefer

learning from doing. Therefore it's best to gain a full appreciation of learner views in your own organisation, while keeping in mind the key preferences we have identified here.

It's also helpful to build up your own knowledge of the field. As Nigel Spencer explains, many of the initiatives he has put together are formed out of an appreciation of generational needs:

'We looked at all of the research about Generation Y and thought about how to make learning fit all the motivational drivers that we hear about to engage students. For example, research tells us that removing hierarchy is helpful, so doing the reverse mentoring, where you make the graduates feel responsible and put them in charge of something, is a good thing. I think that connects really well.'

In engaging with research and evidence you can interpret how the findings translate to your own organisation, in order to best meet learner and business needs.

'The young people interviewed frequently expressed a preference for being "stuck in the deep end", being given responsibility early and getting feedback for how they're doing.'

'What's clear is that each organisation has experienced substantial benefits from investing in developing people at the start of their careers.'

Looking ahead

What's clear is that each organisation has experienced substantial benefits from investing in developing people at the start of their careers. The impact they have on the organisation is substantial, both culturally and at the bottom line.

Largely due to these benefits, all of the organisations are planning to continue their programmes and, in many cases, expand activity. For example, ActionAid are aiming to create a not-for-profit, third-sector-specific apprenticeship programme, while Barclays are considering how they can progress young people into more senior roles over time. Reed Smith have gone further back down the educational pipeline and have designed and launched a new, practical undergraduate law degree (the LLB 'Law in Practice') with Queen Mary University of London, embedding more commercial workplace learning in a Reed Smith placement throughout the third year.

Top five recommendations for HR and L&D practitioners

1   Conduct research in your own organisation. Gather evidence to help you understand learner preferences and how successful current initiatives are.

2   Think about how you can maximise learning from experience. Can you involve young people in cross-functional projects or business challenges?

3   When introducing learning technology, use digital experts to test usability. Get their feedback and, ultimately, their advocacy.

4   Capture the desire for responsibility by introducing techniques such as reverse mentoring or pro bono client work, which can engage a young person and super-charge their learning.

5   Even if young people in your organisation are not on a formal development programme, consider how you can give them the tools to create their own network and the means to learn from each other.

Conclusion

This report explores how best to develop the next generation to meet business and learner needs. It highlights a range of considerations, both for HR and L&D professionals and business leaders.

Drivers for change

We've identified that there are clear drivers for establishing development programmes for young people. Whether prompted by skills shortages, a need to build future talent or shift organisational demographics, the imperative for taking action moves beyond that of being a responsible employer. Though the act of investing in young talent can be considered part of CSR activity, our case study organisations were clear that the real driver was business need.

Recognising strengths

By exploring the skills young people have, and those they need to build, we've also identified that they bring substantial strengths to an organisation. By taking a fresh perspective and different approach, they can often identify areas for efficiency or improvement and are frequently willing to take the initiative to find solutions themselves. Everyone within the organisation will bring their own specific skills and strengths – the value of identifying what young people bring is in ensuring that they have an opportunity to impact the organisation at an early stage.

Plugging skill gaps

However, there are a number of key skills and capabilities that employers need to focus on building. Making the transition between education and employment can be a struggle for some, and employers need to take account of this when thinking about induction periods and time to competence. Alongside these general skills, building confidence, communication skills and commercial capability are all essential. Many of these competencies can be challenging to build. It's therefore crucial to ensure that young people go into appropriate roles, with the right level of responsibility to have the opportunity to make a difference, but also with support from the wider team. It might also be helpful for policy-makers and educational leaders to consider how some of these skills, and particularly self-awareness and confidence, can be built at an earlier stage.

Choosing the right development methods

When identifying the best development methods to plug these gaps, employers should take into account the need for a blended approach. While a significant proportion of development will be gained from on-the-job experience, innovative methods such as business problem exercises or upward mentoring can be complementary. The skill is in identifying which methods will help fast-track learning, and then performance, to substantially meet the needs of the business. Our research *L&D: Evolving roles, enhancing skills* (Stuart and Overton 2015) identifies the increasing shift of L&D practitioners from training deliverers to performance consultants. Our findings here compound the need for this change, as the skills required to develop young people require the analytical capability to interpret evidence and insight, and recommend the right solution to meet both business and learner needs.

Understanding the next generation

In determining the right approaches, having an awareness of generational learning preferences is essential. Our research finds that young people are keen to learn from practical, hands-on experiences, combined with having the right support in place. While formal learning and qualifications have a place, they need to incorporate the opportunity to translate theory into practice. It's also clear that young people have high expectations of technology. While many are digitally proficient and regularly use technology as a communication tool and to learn in their personal lives, they may be reluctant to use learning technologies which don't meet their expectations of simplicity and ease of use. It's therefore best not to assume that technology will always be the right learning solution for young people.

Our role

It's clear that the business benefits of developing young people are substantial. Our case study organisations have highlighted that their programmes have helped drive engagement, increase productivity, efficiency and retention and helped foster greater positivity. That's why getting development right is so important. Young people have enormous potential to contribute to an organisation's success, if their strengths and skills are enhanced. Therefore, as HR and L&D professionals, we need to work together, to share the benefits and explore how we can best develop the next generation to enhance organisational performance.

I'd love to hear your views – you can contact me at **r.stuart@cipd.co.uk**

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CIPD | Learning to Work

The **Learning to Work** programme is led by the CIPD to promote the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment. The CIPD's purpose is to **champion better work and working lives**, which starts with young people being able to access the labour market.

The overall aim of the programme is to promote the business case for investing in the future workforce. We encourage HR professionals to offer a wide range of access routes into their organisations and ensure their recruitment and management practices are youth-friendly. We also promote direct contact with young people via two youth volunteering programmes, **Steps Ahead Mentoring** and **Inspiring the Future.**

cipd.co.uk/learningtowork