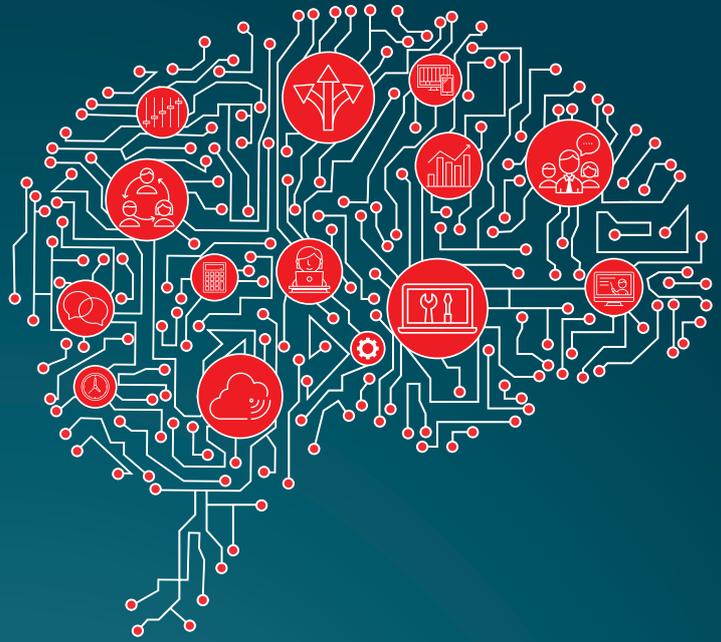


Learning for the future



Accountancy professionals will be increasingly required to broaden their skill-set and take ownership of their personal development if they are to succeed in an ever-changing, dynamic world.

The accountancy profession faces significant challenges arising from social and technological change. Careers are longer and our paths are increasingly less linear. Digital innovations in finance and accounting present both an opportunity for accountants to move up to more value-adding roles and responsibilities, but could also mean others are at risk of getting marginalised if they are not open to change.

FOUR DYNAMICS OF CHANGE:

- Technology in accounting
- Evolving workplace
- Flexible careers
- Self-curated learning

Technologies are having an impact on accounting processes and are changing the ways of working. Tasks are being automated and roles are being squeezed. Businesses have different expectations of new entrants and interpretation of data, communication, vision and strategy are now top responsibilities for future accountancy professionals.

Business models are also evolving, giving way to more flexible and dynamic team based structures, and many organisations are choosing to obtain resources on shorter periods of time. In addition to recruiting and training they 'borrow' talent over a specific period of time to cover a certain phase in growth.

We are moving away from the conventional 'ladder' path to a journey where we make

career choices aligned to our personal growth agenda. Concepts such as fixed careers are long gone and for those generations already in the workplace, adapting to this model is challenging.

The transition to more flexible, lattice career paths resulting from these evolutions can create challenges for those trying to progress and, as individuals we are increasingly responsible for our own career choices and growth. The traditional reliance on the employer to support us is decreasing and we are seeking more diverse learning opportunities from the roles that we choose and the experiences that we gain. Nowadays, to assume there is one clear path that can be rolled out at organisational level is outdated.

While employers must embrace the variability of content and providers now available, learners must become more educated as to what activities they can undertake to achieve the performance level they are aiming at.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

As individuals, employers and education providers, we need to think how we ensure that we develop the professional skills needed in the changing world.

1. For individuals

The successful accountant of the future is one who recognises the need to develop their skills continuously. They take responsibility for their own development but accept that while they need to keep

technically proficient, they also need to ensure that they have the softer skills needed to interact in the desired way.

The range of interventions continues to expand and as individuals we need to consider which are right for us, given the performance level that we want to achieve.

2. For employers

In the workplace, learning and development is becoming much more of a personalised journey in which individuals achieve the required level of performance through a blend of learning interventions, supported by on-the-job reflection and mentoring.

Whilst aligning organisation's learning strategy to company-wide objectives, employers should endeavour to create, lead and maintain an effective culture that supports continuous learning as a long-term project, recognising and rewarding learning as an investment essential for growth.

3. For L&D professionals

The Learning & Development community must also evolve if they are to become valued strategic partners able to deliver learning experiences that drive performance.

They should see leaders and learners as 'consumers' of learning and move from being providers to curators of learning content, improving design and focusing on the personal journey.