



Mad Max or the Wild West - what is the future  
of lifelong and executive education?

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# The **future** of **lifelong** and **executive** education



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**Linked in**

“Rather than spending 50K sending two people to a Harvard programme, we can now try to send 50 people to Harvard content for the same cost.”



# The big picture

- COVID accelerates digital adoption
- Flexibility and personalisation will be at the heart of future learning
- The death of geography
- Brand will be ever more important for learning providers
- New business models are already emerging among alternative providers
- Collaboration becomes the new normal





# What Learners Want

“But the biggest news in corporate learning is the ability to create curated courses, predict and recommend what learners might go on and do. I can marry up that data and say ‘if you’re aspiring to be a director, here’s the courses directors are taking.’”



- 65% of employees expect this year to return to working in largely the same way as before the pandemic
- 69% want to work flexibly in the future, blending work from home with time in the office
- But if I'm going to learn, it needs to be on my terms:
  - 41% are not prepared to undertake learning outside of work hours
  - 58% expect their employer to pay any costs associated with lifelong learning



“You're getting to a place where you have the monolithic degree, but you also have these other elements that you can swap in and out from different providers, which perhaps are more closely tailored to what you might call more vocational skills.”

- Two-thirds of employees expect to undertake more learning in the future
- Two-thirds of employees will increasingly use online to develop themselves and their careers
- And they will want ...
  - 23% prefer diplomas/certificates
  - 21% choose a traditional Masters
  - 19% seek digital badges
  - 14% both selected an MBA or Executive MBA
  - 13% are interested in a stackable degree
  - 10% are interested in microcredentials



- Leadership and Communication Skills are the top choices
- More than 1 in 10 choose skills that reflect changing needs at work:
  - Digital Transformation
  - Strategy
  - Marketing
  - Innovation
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Business Development
- Creativity and Design Thinking
- Data Analytics
- Productivity
- Risk Management
- Social Impact
- Decision Making in Complex and Uncertain Times, and
- Responsible Management



- For employees, cost and value are also issues:
  - 52% consider business schools too expensive for their learning needs
- Just over four out of ten (44%) say colleagues have not realised benefits after investing in a business school programme

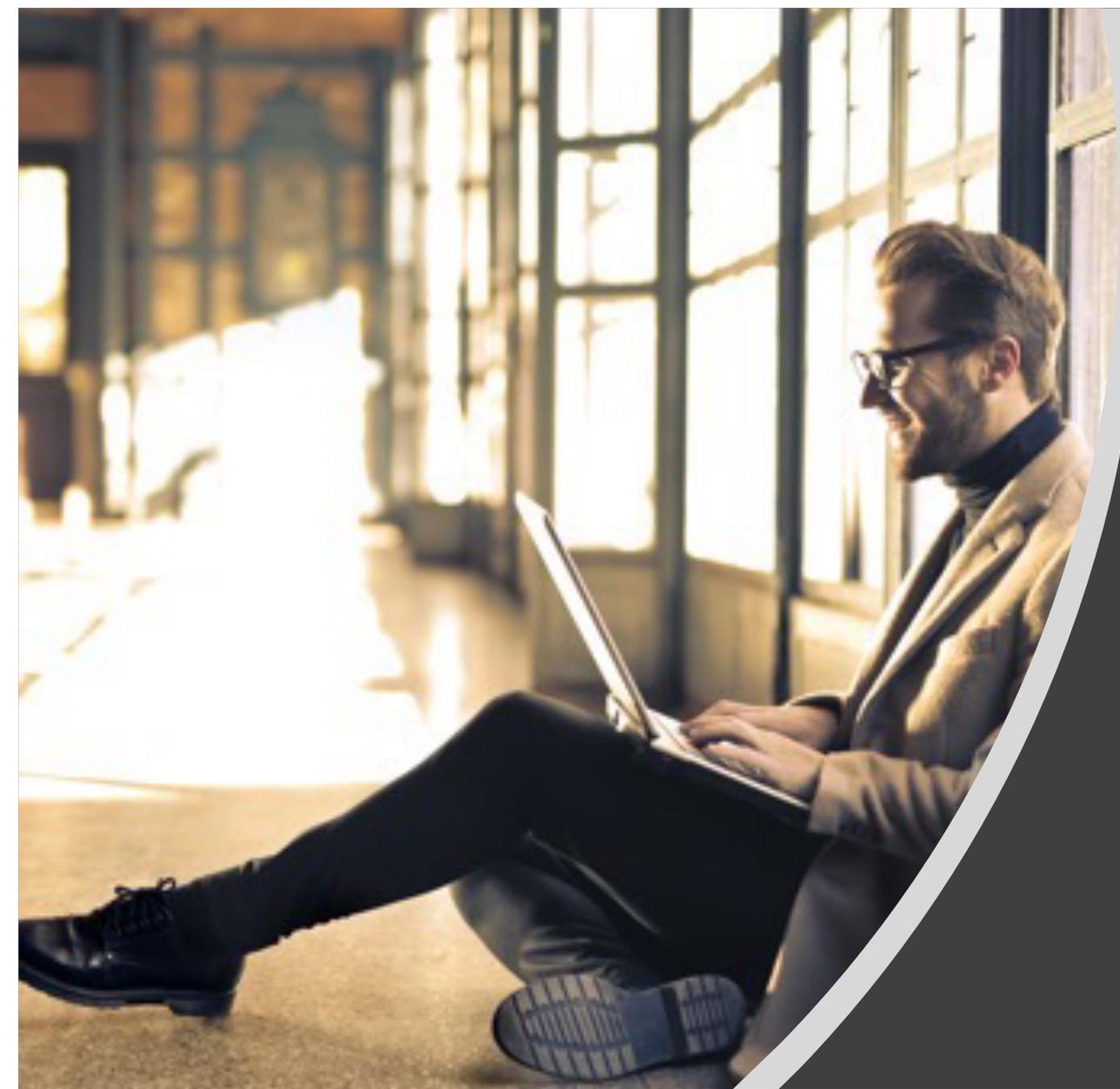


- LinkedIn Learning has already been used by 1 in 5 learners
- While at least 20% would consider a host of others including FutureLearn, eduCBA, Coursera, ServiceSkills.com, Open Sesame, General Assembly, 2U and edX



- 62% of learners agree it is important that any future learning they undertake is with a provider with an international brand reputation
- 65% agree that location of their provider will become less important as online provision becomes more sophisticated





# What Employers Want

“Online is here to stay and a lot of Chief Learning Officers have caught up with the fact that online providers can do it well and deliver it at much cheaper prices.”

- In the past two years, 51% have seen spending frozen, 28% have had increases
- In the next two years, 41% still anticipate no change, but 48% expect growth



- Almost 9 out of 10 employers (85%) anticipate their organization will embed flexible working as part of their future operations
- Over three-quarters (79%) of employers anticipate online learning becoming the standard approach to developing people in their organisations
- Three quarters (74%) of employers will, or already do, recognise qualifications gained online in the same way as those completed in a traditional face-to-face setting





“Corporate needs are evolving very quickly in turbulence, needs are not clear yet, but just like a tango, they are moving forward.”

- Five particular skills identified as key but in short supply:
  - Change management
  - Resilience/mindfulness
  - Global mindset
  - Ethics and ethical behaviour
  - Managing across cultures
- Spend earmarked for ongoing improvements in productivity and efficiency as well as the demands of the new normal, particularly introducing new technology and building a workforce fit for future needs



- Almost eight out of ten (78%) employers agree that short bursts of learning, delivered flexibly and providing microcredentials are valuable in meeting their development needs; 17% have already used microcredentials in the past two years
- 86% of employers agree that short programmes leading to a certificate with academic credit that can be banked and added to further study to create a degree are useful development options



“For universities, it will be increasingly difficult to be in the middle, if you’re not top 10, then you will get pulled into a price war because of new technology or new providers, differentiation will be lost. So brand is key - how do you develop that?”



- 81% agree that their organization will seek to build long-term relationships with learning providers to build understanding of our business and maximise impact from learning
- 67% agree that location of a learning provider will become less important as online provision becomes more sophisticated



- Employers would like a closer relationship with business schools to develop programmes relevant to the future of work:
  - 79% are interested in co-creation of content
  - 79% would like short, inexpensive programmes that deliver relevant skills for employees
  - 77% believe the MBA degree needs to evolve to be relevant for the future
  - Just over three-quarters of employers (76%) suggest that business schools need to be clear about how their offer positively impacts wider society, not just business and industry





“As with all large organisations, we decided we wanted to treat this as though we know in advance what it's going to look like, and how it's going to work. And so we just need to set up the proper processes in place to manage it, rather than looking at it saying, ‘We have no, absolutely no clue what's going to happen, so let's start running some experiments.’”

- Only 35% of employers use business schools for their learning and development, placing schools fourth behind professional industry/trade bodies, consulting firms and in-house services
- Ask employers why not and they say:
  - Other providers offer programmes which better meet our development needs (24%)
  - Business schools are too expensive (24%)
  - Our organisation only uses in-house provision (21%)
  - Business schools are too theoretical and not sufficiently abreast of the real-world business challenges we face





# What it all means for business schools

“I do think that change will be driven by demand – students will shop around more and they will want what they want, when they want it, and where. So perhaps you do one thing at one business school – then another programme at a different one, and then something else at a different place again, and then you package it up and that’s your degree – and then it gets approved after you’ve finished.”

- 68% of employees indicating that their main reason for choosing a school is the opportunity to build personal networks
- For 52% previous study with a business school would be key to their future choice of provider





“My biggest concern is that somebody comes in, they do a programme for eight or 10 weeks, whatever that is, and then we never have any contact with them again. And yet, the opportunity is if these people agree to have a relationship, they will have ongoing training and development needs.”

- 34% are very interested in a degree they can earn in a series of modules over an extended time period as and when it suits them
- 28% are very interested in a degree that can be topped up at a low cost over the next ten years with updated or new skills
- More than half (58%) of employees agree that the growing provision of learning and development content on platforms outside higher education makes them question the value of formal university programmes



Consider new ways to deliver new learning:

- 30% of learners are very interested in the idea of a Netflix-style learning platform allowing an individual to choose from a variety of providers to build their own course
- 25% are very interested in communities of learners that enable continued peer learning beyond formal studies



“Do the people who are selling these programmes and the universities have the right skill sets to do that? If you're talking to employees, it's very different from talking to a 16 year old. And the second part of it is, is do universities actually have the right people to deliver these programmes? And if so, is it easy to manage that with an existing workload? Or do they have to be different business models that reward people for additional contribution?”





How do you see the future?  
Any questions?  
Share your experience  
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