

2024

State of the Training Industry Benchmark Report.

Contents

Introduction	3
About the survey respondents	4
Key findings	5
Types of courses offered	6
Training delivery methods	7
Learners' preferred delivery methods	8-9
Learners' thoughts on digital training	10
Training services offered	11
Booking methods	12
Training administration	13
Software trends	14
Sales and marketing	15
Top sources of industry news	16
Measuring success	17
Biggest challenges for 2024	18
Biggest opportunities for 2024	19
Training industry outlook	20
Conclusion	21



Introduction

We are thrilled to share accessplanit's 2024 State of the Training Industry Benchmark Report.

This is our 8th year taking the pulse of the training industry. Our research helps training providers to understand key trends in training delivery, technology, sales and marketing, as well as the challenges of the industry which change year on year. We may be far removed from COVID-19 lockdown measures, but effects of the pandemic are still being felt, as is the impact of the cost of living crisis.

This is our 3rd year additionally surveying learners, to further understand the training industry from their perspective and evaluate how learner demands are being addressed.

This annual report has been designed to inform decision-making and provide an understanding of how other professionals perceive the industry, how this compares to previous years, and the opportunities to be anticipated.

I hope you enjoy this year's edition of the State of the Training Industry Benchmark Report.

Dave Evans

Managing Director



About the survey respondents

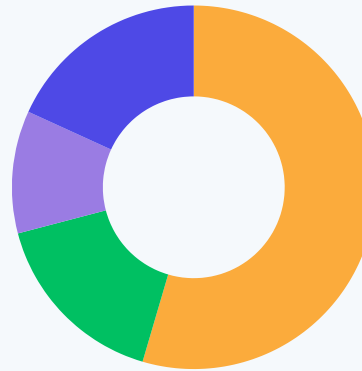
The State of the Training Industry Benchmark Report aims to provide a well-rounded analysis of the training industry by surveying a wide demographic of training professionals and learners, from a variety of sectors.

The data we collect helps us to provide a comprehensive overview of the patterns and changes within the industry each year to help training providers understand and get ahead of trends.

Following a pattern from last year, smaller training companies are the most represented in this year's report; just over 50% of respondents said that their training company trains 0-2500 delegates per year. Large training companies with more than 10000 delegates are the second most represented.

All training providers are different and all training professionals perform unique roles. We categorise them into 4 key personas we know to exist within the industry in order to help us analyse the data more accurately. The distribution of job roles is fairly evenly split this year. The most common identified primary objective, by just 2%, is business profitability with almost one-third (29.31%) of respondents choosing this. This is the persona in which we expect to see decision-makers, such as Managing Directors and CEOs.

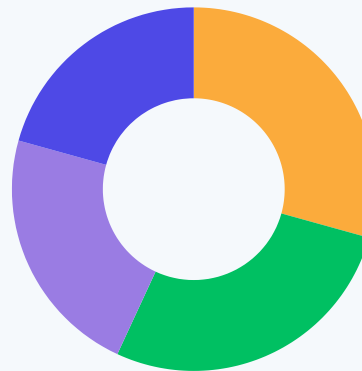
Respondent company size



Number of delegates trained annually

51.72%	0-2500
15.52%	2501-5000
10.34%	5001-10000
17.24%	10001+

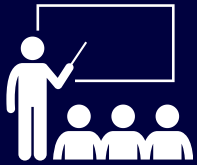
The primary objective of respondents



What is the primary objective of your job role?

29.31%	Business profitability
27.59%	Customer experience
22.41%	Manage certification/compliance
20.69%	Manage IT/learning platforms

Key findings



In-person classroom training remains the top training delivery method, offered by 86% of providers



38% of training providers say that they take the majority (75-100%) of their course bookings **online**



Almost half of learners say they would find a training course using a **search engine**



The increase in popularity of online learning and **digital innovation** were both touted as the top opportunities this year



In person classroom training has jumped in popularity with learners this year (+44%), while **live virtual** has fallen by 24%



Creating course material is the **most time consuming administrative task** for the majority of training professionals (53%)



Reputation and word of mouth remains the most effective marketing channel for the fifth consecutive year, chosen by 41% of training providers



Lack of resources was named the biggest challenge for training providers in 2024, with **the cost of living crisis** also jumping straight into the top 3

Types of courses offered

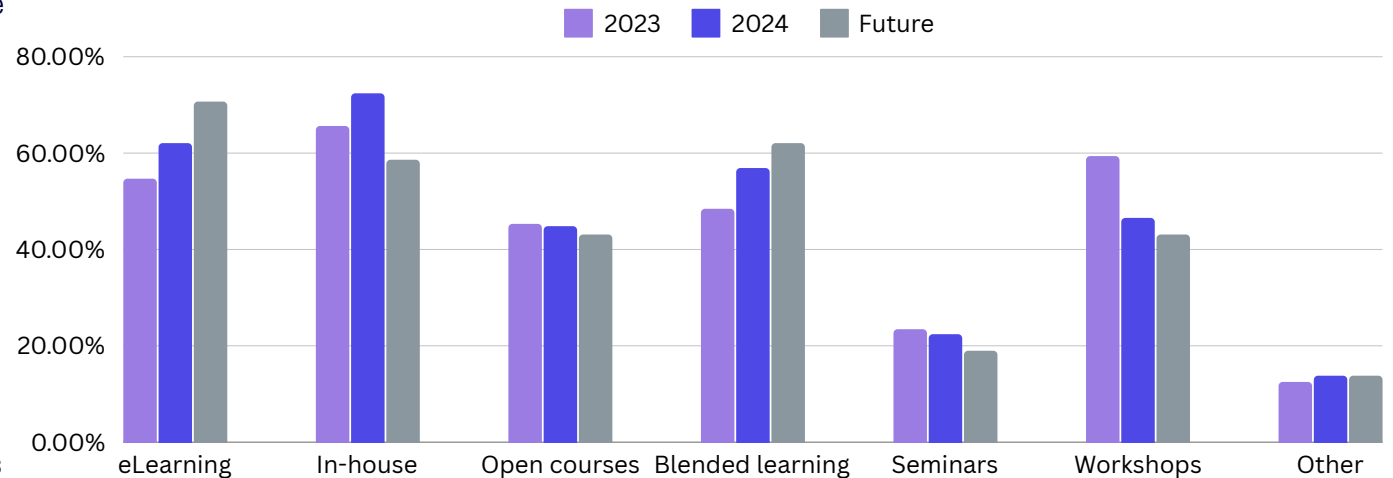
Flexibility

Since the pandemic, we have seen an increase in the popularity of online training solutions, such as **eLearning** and **blended learning**. This trend is reflected in this year's research, with the offering of eLearning courses up by **8%** from last year, outperforming last year's predictions for 2024 and named as a future focus by **70%** of respondents.

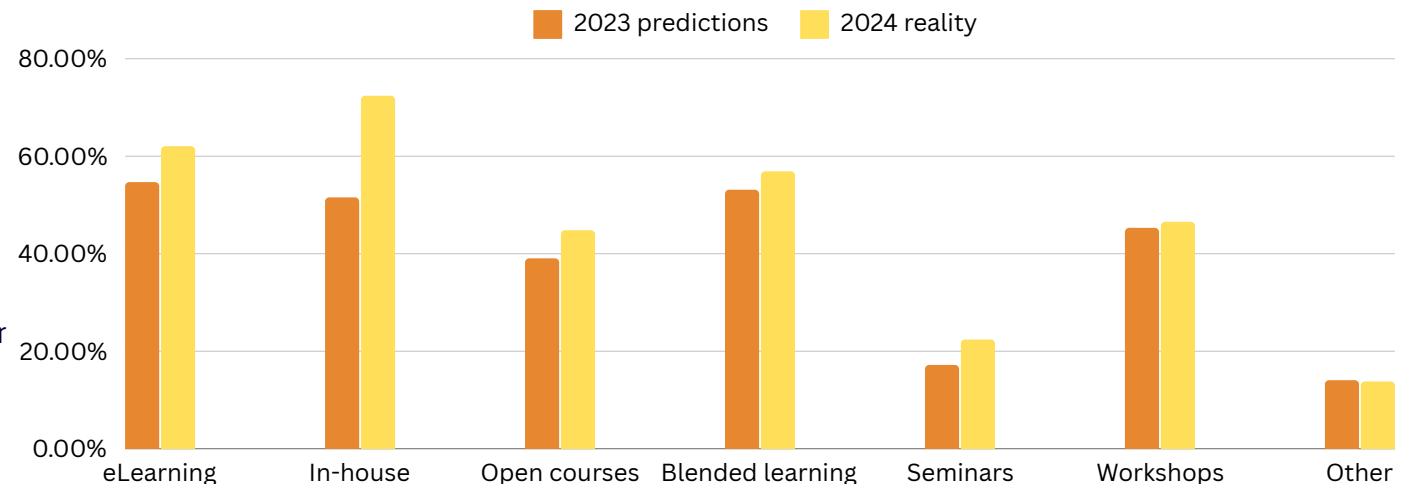
Interestingly, **in-house training** courses also exceeded last year's predictions by an impressive **21%**. It was also **up by 7%** this year from last, but is still below eLearning in terms of focus for the future. It may be that providers are looking to offer a mix of both, as **59%** said they offer **blended learning** (up **3%** from 2023 predictions) and **62%** expect to focus on it in the future. This suggests a desire to offer flexibility for learners, affording them the chance to learn face-to-face as well as online.

Workshops have fallen in popularity by **13%** compared to 2023. **Seminars** were the least popular type of course this year with **just over one-fifth (22%)** of providers offering it, followed not so closely by **open courses**, offered by **44%** of providers.

Types of courses offered by training providers in the past, present and future



Expected course types vs. reality



Training delivery methods

We are looking to work smarter as opposed to harder, via the use of better advertising, promotions and flexibility of delivery techniques. 📊

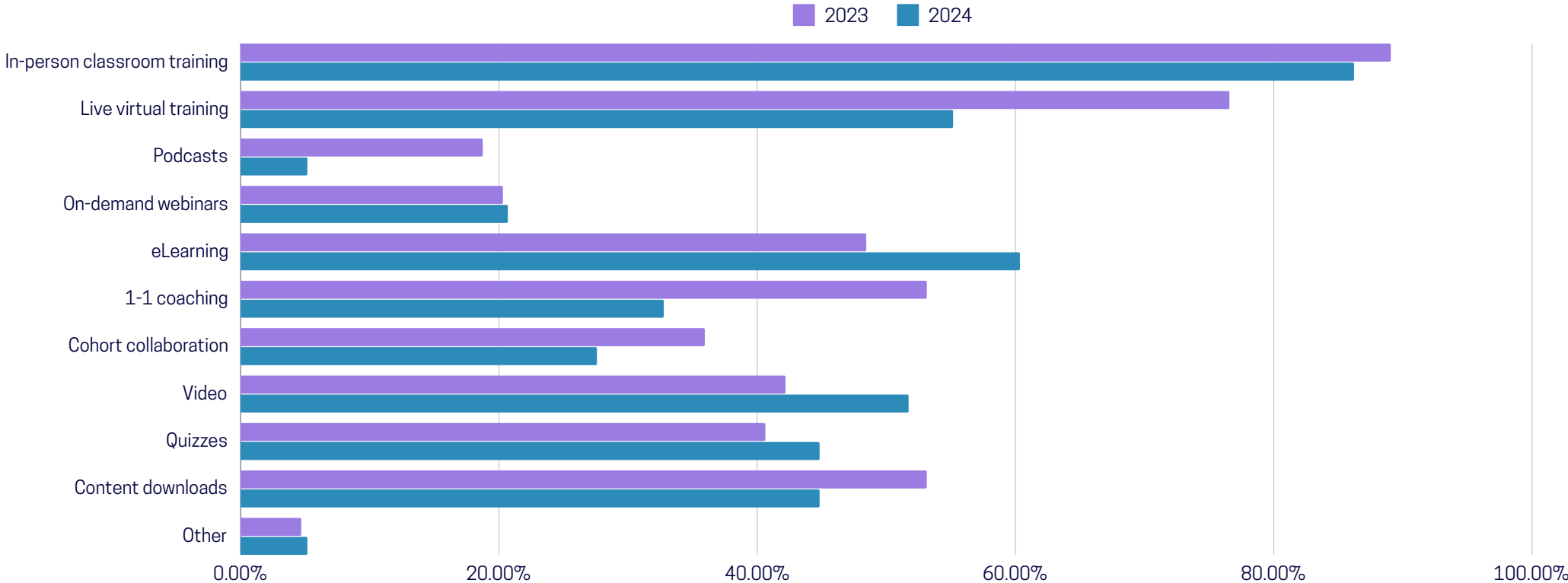
-Training provider response

The fall of live virtual?

But how are these courses delivered? Like last year, the most popular method is **in-person training** again, offered by **86%** of respondents. This is alongside a **steep drop of live virtual training (-21%)** offerings from last year. Perhaps, as we move further away from COVID-19, the benefits of in-person learning have outweighed the need for online training. **On-demand webinars** have

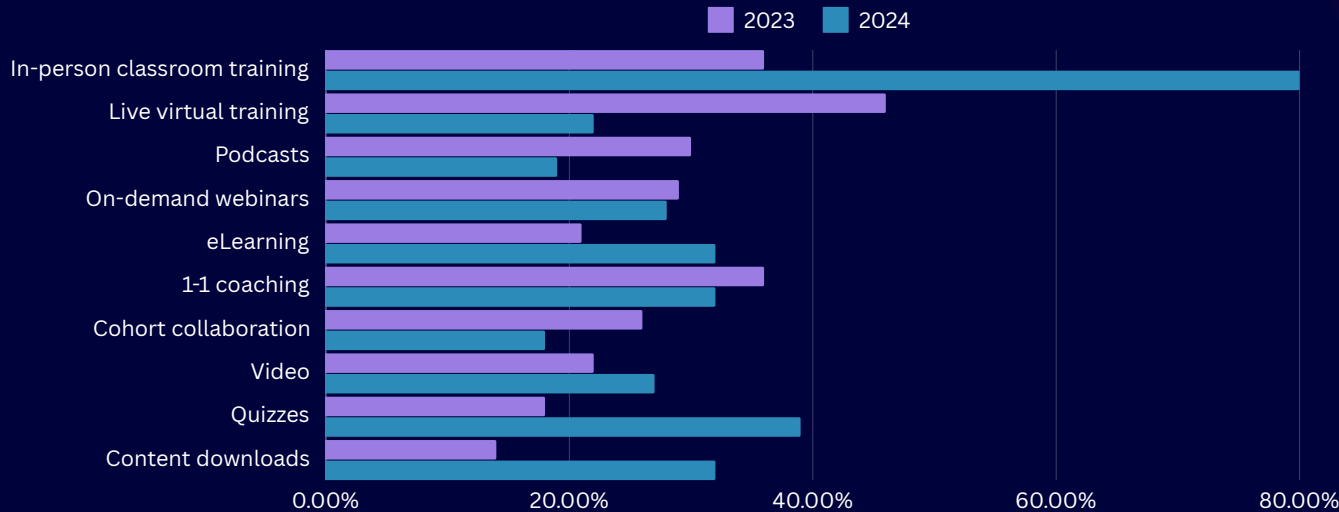
stayed stagnant at around the **20%** mark, although **eLearning has increased by 12%**, **video by 9%** and **quizzes by 4%**. This perhaps reflects the pattern outlined previously - that flexible, self-paced learning is being championed. Despite this, podcasts are again the least popular delivery method and have experienced a big drop **(-13%)**, **down to just 5%** of training providers using this method.

Training delivery methods last year vs. this year



Learners' preferred delivery methods

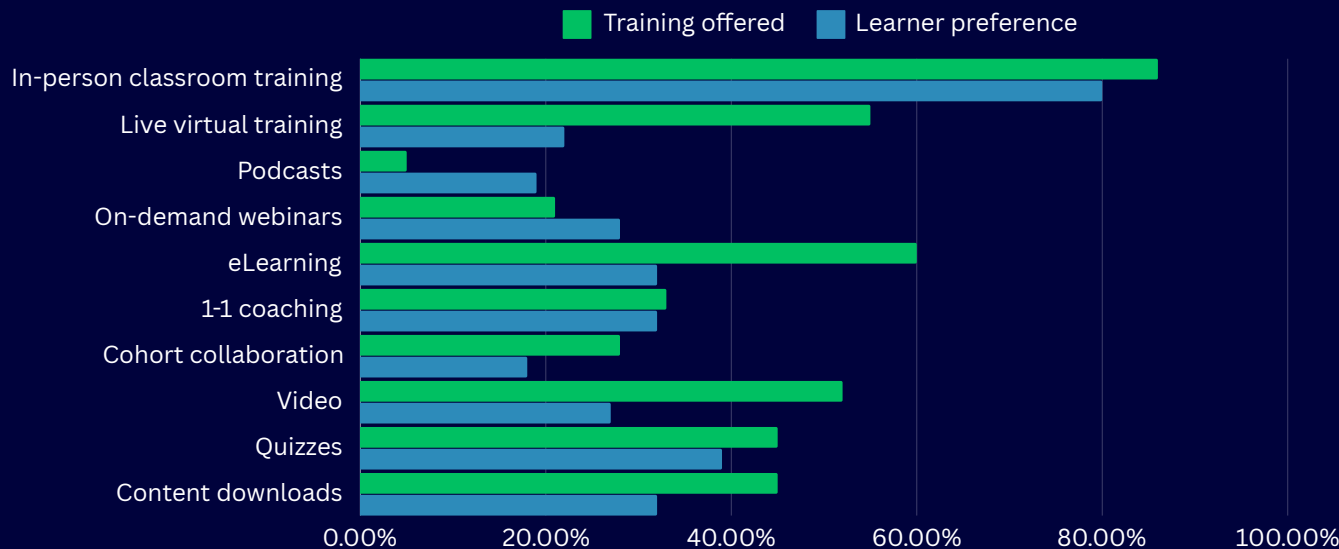
Learners' preferred training delivery methods: 2023 vs 2024



Live in person, digital on demand

We survey learners as well as training professionals to gain understanding of the needs and wants of people who undertake training. **In-person classroom training** is the most popular delivery method as chosen by learners this year, with **80%** selecting it – a **massive 44% increase** from last year. This is a big difference from 2023 when **live virtual training** was the most popular method, which has **fallen by 24%** this year. This follows the pattern outlined in the previous page and further suggests that there is an expectation for training to be in person where possible in 2024. 3 years on from lockdown, learners seem to be craving face-to-face interaction.

Training delivered by providers vs learner preferences



Comparing learner and training professional responses, **learner demand is being met in most areas**, apart from **on-demand webinars** and **podcasts**. This is a pattern continued from last year, showing that there is potential for training providers to more effectively use these digital channels to meet demand.

In addition, **eLearning, quizzes and content downloads have all jumped in popularity**. This suggests that while in-person training is preferred for live training, there is an expectation for on-demand digital material to aid learning which training providers could explore to diversify their offerings and improve the learner experience.

Learners' preferred delivery methods

Changes to preferred timescales

There have been major shifts in learner preference when it comes to the timescales that they like to learn. **On-demand (-13%)** and **bitesize (-19%)** have both fallen, while **intensive (+14%)** and **combination (+16%)** have gone up. Intensive full day courses are the **most popular (39%)** but combination isn't far behind (**36%**), again suggesting that learners desire flexibility.

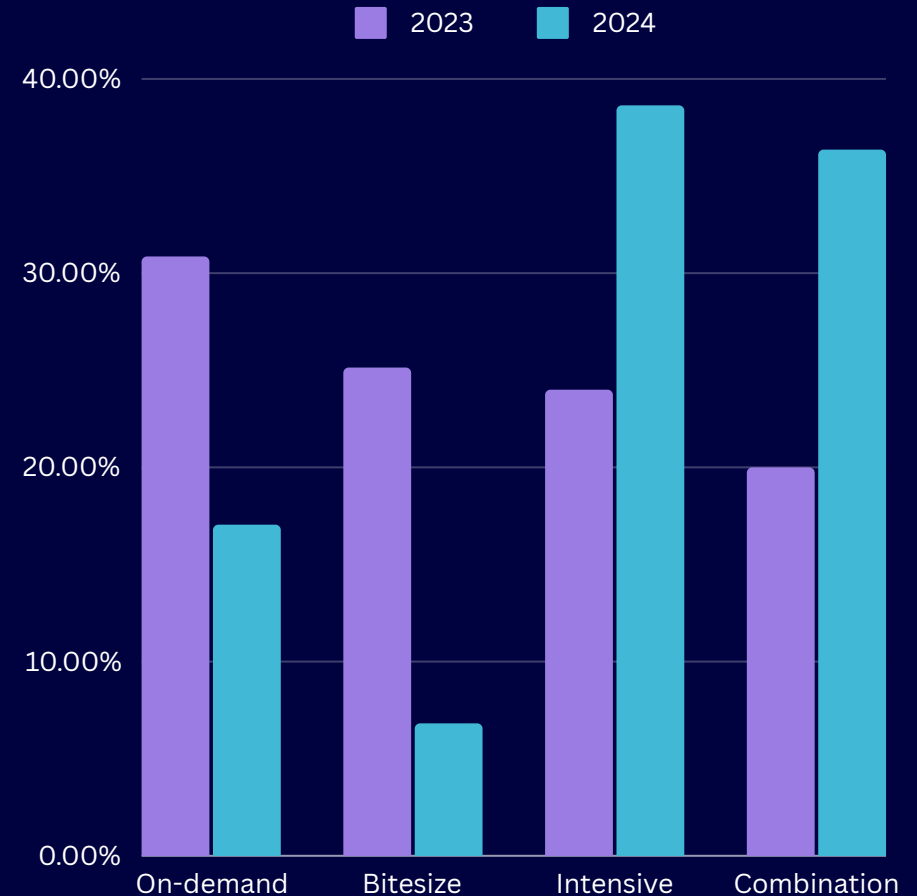
Opinions about digital advancements

We also asked participants about their thoughts on the impact that advancements in digital technology are having on the training industry. The **majority (39%)** of learners said that they think the impact is **positive**, while a further **20% chose very positive**. Only **5% answered somewhat negative**, and there were **no negative** or **very negative responses**. We asked participants to explain their answers and had some fascinating responses which are shared on the next page.

The overwhelming gist was that while digital advancements have improved the accessibility of courses, enabling more people to undertake training, it shouldn't replace in-person training for more immersive and engaging learning.

[Understand what delegates want: Training feedback survey templates](#)

On what timescales or schedule do you prefer to learn?



- **On-demand** - self paced online learning over many weeks
- **Bitesize** - shorter, typically live virtual sessions over a few weeks
- **Intensive** - full day short course
- A **combination** of all the above

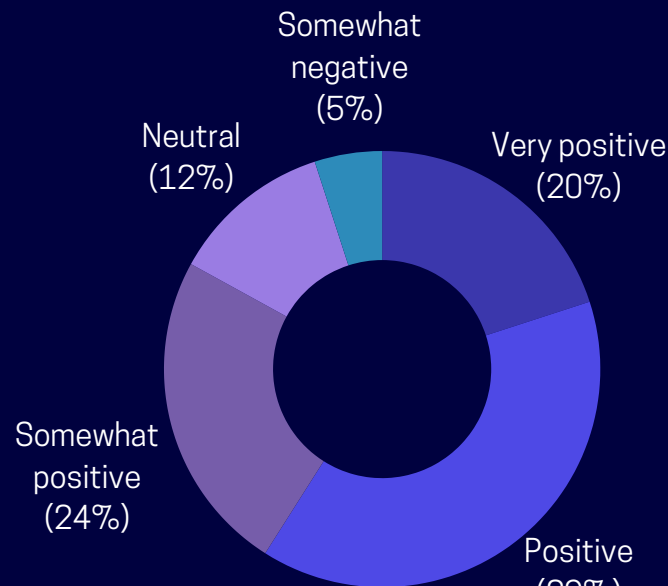
Learners' thoughts on digital training

"The need for balance with in-person delivery needs to be recognised and emphasised; fully digital learning isn't good enough."

"Not everything, especially training, should be virtual 100% of the time. I know I learn better in person."

"Online webinars are good but miss the collaboration with learners. eLearning misses any inter-personal connection at all."

"Although this is sometimes beneficial (can do it at home, no transport or hotel costs etc.) in terms of the learning it is not very interactive or engaging."



"More opportunities for personalized learning are provided, as digital technologies can be tailored to the needs and levels of learners."

"Provides more opportunities for real-time feedback and assessment to help students better understand their progress."

"Training can be accessed and purchased globally allowing accessibility and additional options that may previously have not been accessible."

"Technology allows for cost-effective alternatives such as virtual classrooms, webinars, and digital learning materials, reducing overall expenses for both learners and organizations."

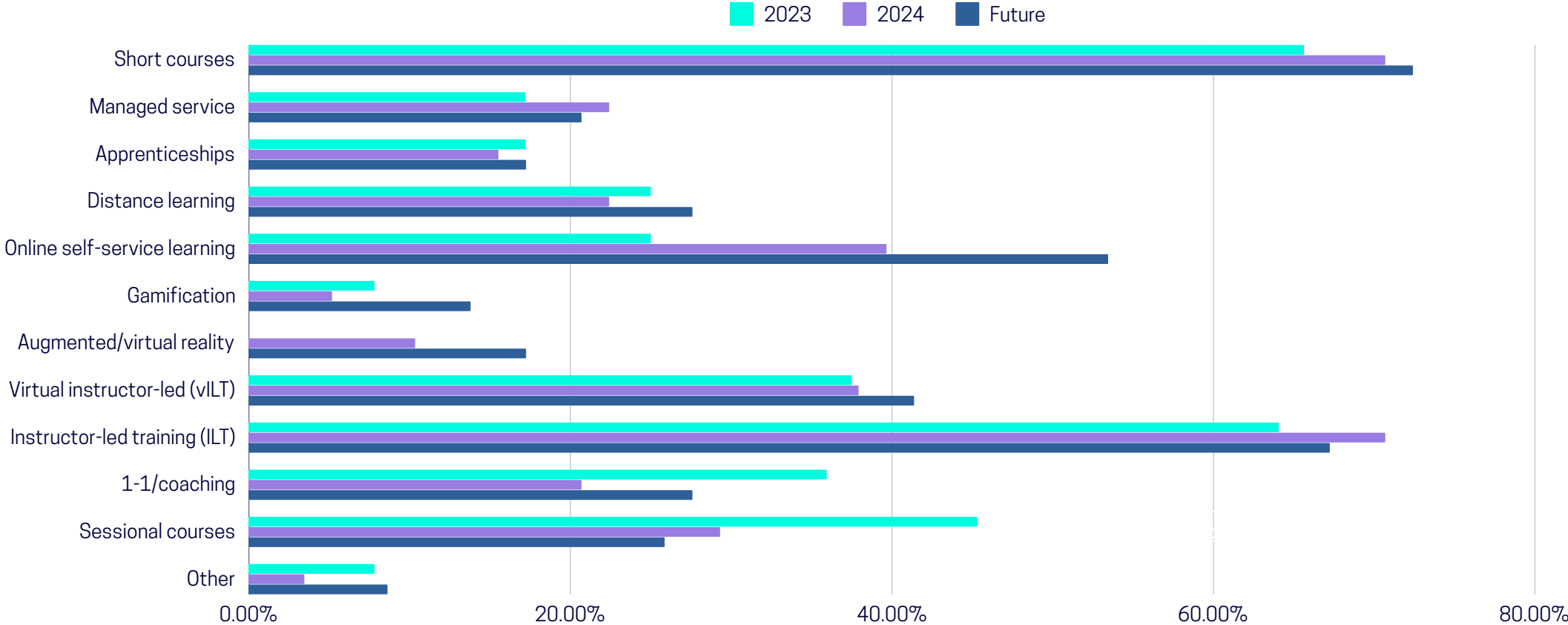
Training services offered

Digital continues to rise

In terms of training services, there appears to be an increase of the use of digital solutions for training delivery. **Online self-service learning, augmented/virtual reality** and **virtual instructor led** have all risen in popularity this year.

The most interesting of these is augmented/virtual reality, as **no one** we surveyed was offering it last year, but **10%** said they were this year and a further **17%** identified it as a focus for the future. As technology continues to improve, the use of these alternative methods is increasing.

Online self-service learning has gone up by **14%** and **over half** of respondents identified it as a focus for the future - showing that demand for flexible digital solutions is recognised. **Short courses** and **instructor led training** are neck and neck for the most popular training services in 2024, but instructor led has had a bigger increase from 2023.



Booking methods

A slow but steady increase

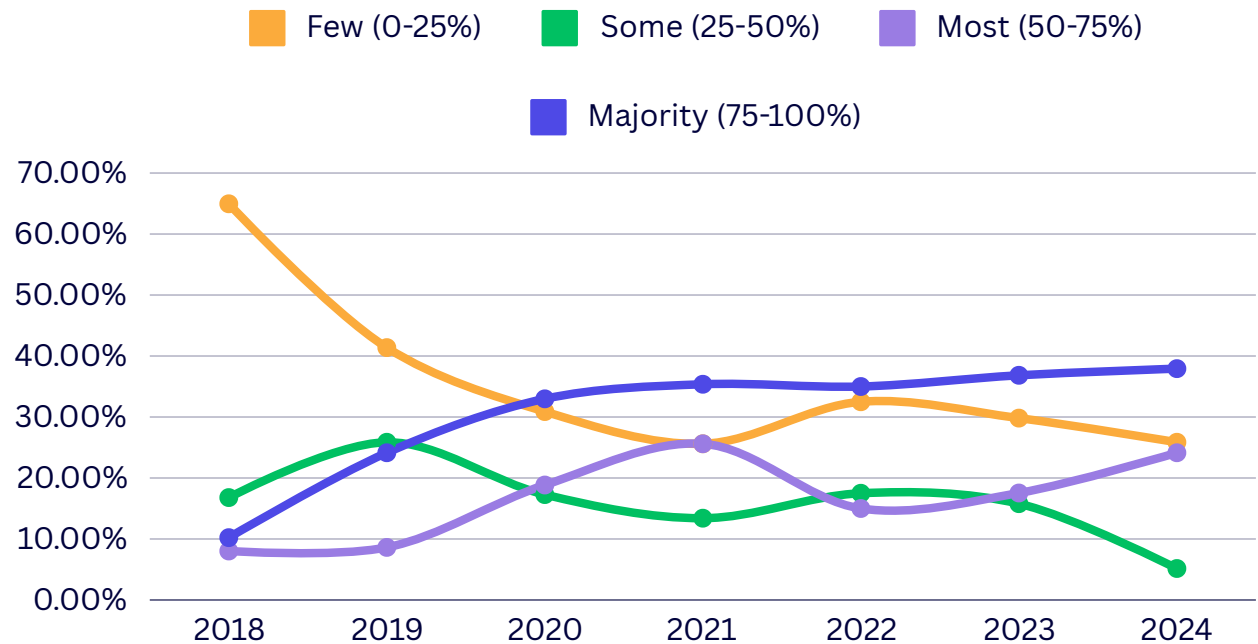
Almost **40%** of respondents said that they take the majority of their course bookings online. We have seen this increase steadily over the years, with this only a **slight increase of 1%** compared to 2023.

Since 2020, most training providers have taken the majority of their bookings online and this figure has increased every year, indicating that it is now more the norm for online booking to be available; **62%** of all training providers are now taking **at least half** of their bookings online.

It's important to note that some training providers will most likely never offer online booking due to the nature of the courses they run, or the type of customers they serve. So, as more and more training providers transition to online bookings, the trends may well be softened by those providers who will never have an online booking option.

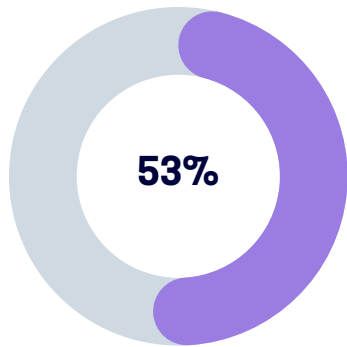
'Some' was the **least popular** option this year - perhaps showing that online booking is popular when it is offered, with delegates choosing it over other methods where possible.

Amount of bookings and enquiries made online by year

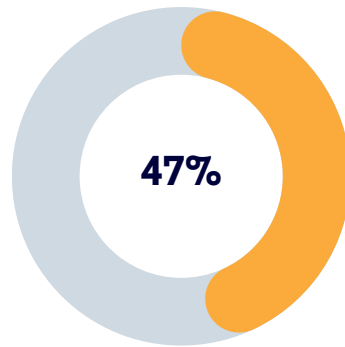


Training administration

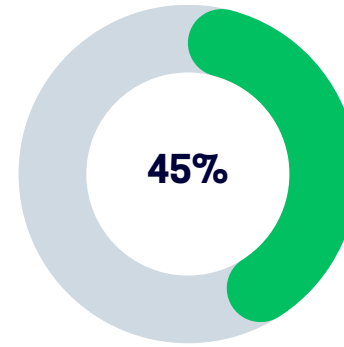
Top administrative pains for training professionals in 2024



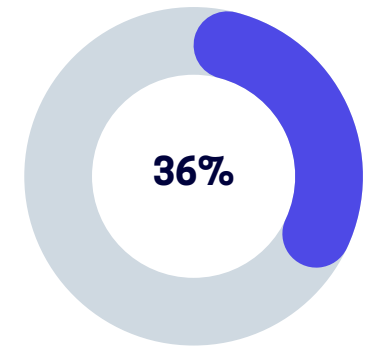
Creating course material



Processing course bookings



Course promotion



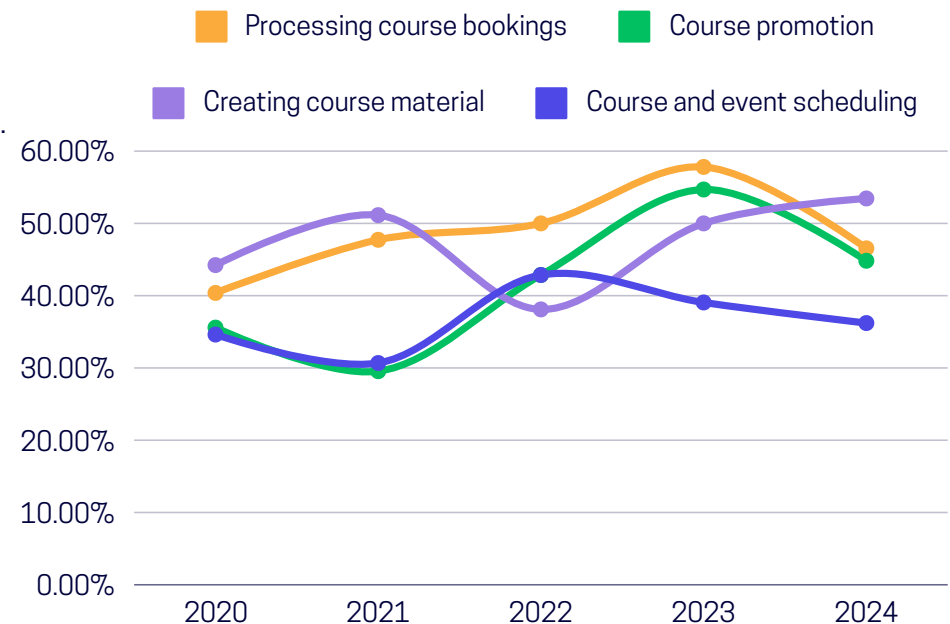
Course and event scheduling

Admin never ends

These are the same top four administrative pains as last year. Interestingly, after being the top pain for 2020 and 2021, dipping out in 2022 and coming back at third in 2023, **creating course material** has made it back to the top, at a **3% increase** from last year. This could be due to an increased pressure to create engaging course material when there is so much technology and varied delivery methods available.

Last year's winner, **processing course bookings**, is **down 11%** to second, maybe due to the rise of online booking we observed on the previous page. **Course promotion** and **course and event scheduling** are also down from last years pain figures. Is this perhaps due to the **increase of the use of training management software (64% of training providers are now using it)** which can automate and streamline much of this admin work?

Administrative pains by year



[Learn more: The ultimate guide to training management software](#)

Software trends

The use of software in training management

Alongside the **increase of the use of training management software (+16%)** is a **fall in the use of spreadsheets by 18%**. Clearly, more and more training providers are realising that manually processing data is not a good use of anyone's time or money, and the **ROI of training management software** is becoming more apparent.

Despite this, year on year we see more variety of software and systems being used to manage training operations. This year, almost a **quarter** of



24%

of training providers use an LMS for delivering training material online



21%

of training providers still use spreadsheets to manage some areas of their training business



17%

of training providers use a CRM system to manage customer relationships

[Learn more: LMS vs TMS: Which is better?](#)

providers said they use a learning management system, a **14% increase** from last year, perhaps reflecting the increase of on-demand, online learning solutions.

A new type of software also entered the fray this year: **apprenticeship management software (5%)**. As apprenticeships grow in popularity, software specially designed to facilitate the delivery of them is becoming more widely available.

Other software used by training providers

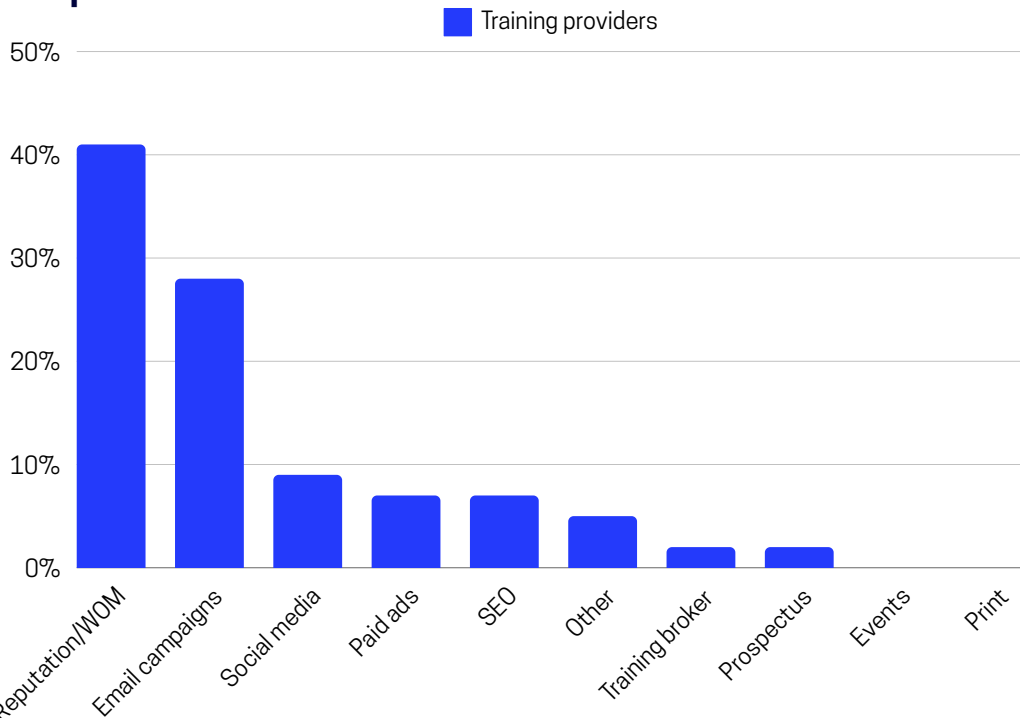
Office 365	79%
Email marketing software	45%
Web conferencing software	41%
Google Analytics	40%
Finance system	29%
Moodle	26%
Survey Monkey	22%
Adobe Creative Cloud	17%
Bespoke software	17%
Marketing platform	14%
SalesForce	14%
Hubspot	12%
Eventbrite	12%
Training event app	5%
Google Suite	5%
Apprenticeship management software	5%

Sales & marketing

How effective is training course marketing?

We have compiled data from both of our surveys to find out how effective training course marketing is and how it could be improved. Interestingly, **almost half (48%)** of learners said they would find courses via **search engines**, but **only 7%** of providers said this was their most effective channel. This emphasises the importance of good SEO to meet learners where they are looking for courses. The second most popular answer, with **one fifth** of learners choosing it, was **recommendations from colleagues**. This highlights the importance of ensuring

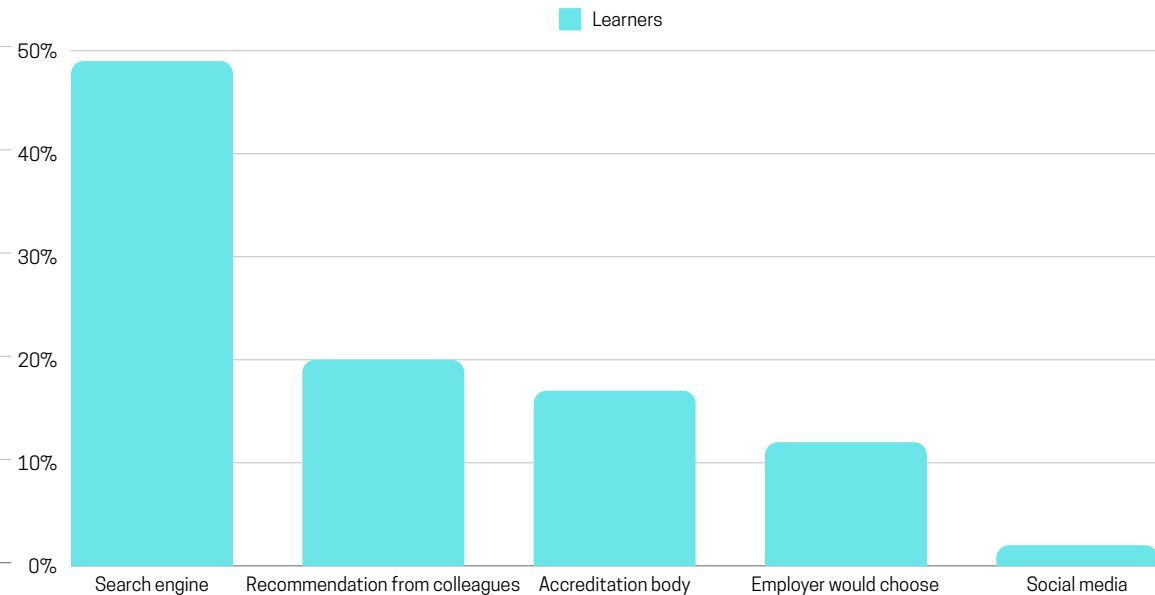
Most effective marketing methods used by training providers in 2024



LinkedIn remains the most popular social media platform for promoting training courses (78%), with Facebook trailing behind at second with 40%.
[Learn more: How to promote training courses on social media](#)

customer satisfaction, and is in line with **word of mouth and reputation** being the most effective marketing technique for training providers, with **41%** highlighting it. This has taken the top spot for the past **5 years**. **62%** of training providers said they use social media to market their courses, but only **9%** said it was their most effective channel and **less than 3%** of learners said they would find a course this way. Again, it's clear that this channel could be used more effectively - or should marketing teams refocus their efforts?

Where learners find training courses



Top sources of industry news

Where do training providers find key industry updates and trends?



LinkedIn

Our winner for keeping up to date with industry trends is **LinkedIn** with **3 quarters** of respondents choosing it. It retains it's top spot from last year, although it has fallen by **14%**.



X

X (formerly known as Twitter) has continued it's downward trend from last year, with many alternative apps such as Threads growing in mainstream use (although none appeared in the survey). Just **5%** of training providers said they use X for industry news in 2024.



TrainingJournal.com

The fastest-growing news resource this year is **TrainingJournal.com**, up **6%** from last year. **10%** of respondents this year said they use this site for training industry news.



TrainingZone.co.uk

While TrainingJournal.com was a clear winner this year, there was also a clear loser. The most dramatic fall this year was **TrainingZone.co.uk**, with no respondents choosing it.

22% of respondents answered 'Other'. Some responses included:

"Speaking to customers"

"Trade shows"

"Discussions with other providers"

"Through evolution within the industry itself"

"Industry committees/bodies"

Measuring success



76%
of training providers see **customer and delegate satisfaction** as a key metric for success



59%
of training providers see **course completion/success rate** as a key metric for success

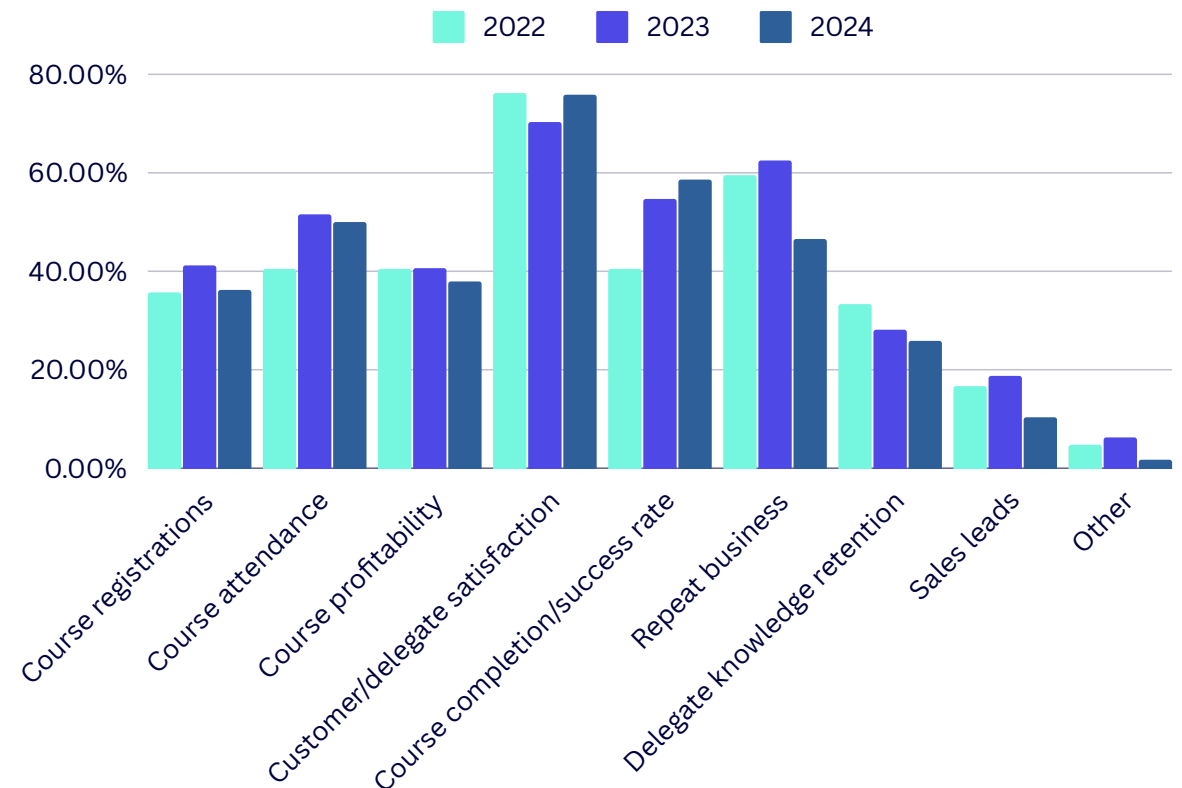


50%
of training providers see **course attendance** as a key metric for success

Delegate-focused KPIs are still most important to training providers

When it comes to measuring success, it's clear that delegate-focused KPIs are even more important now than ever before, with **customer and delegate satisfaction** and **course completion/success rate** remaining in the top three while **course attendance** replaces **repeat business** from last year. This shows the true value in providing high quality training that delegates want to attend and learn from. This is perhaps linked to word of mouth being the most effective marketing technique used by training providers; for people to recommend courses to their peers, they have to have a stellar experience.

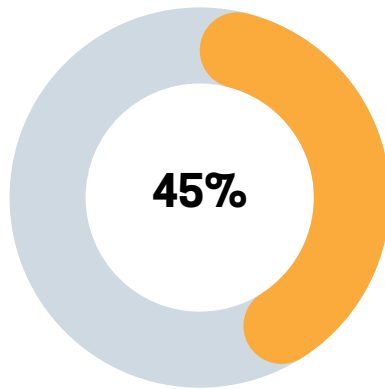
The metrics used to measure success: 2022 - 2024



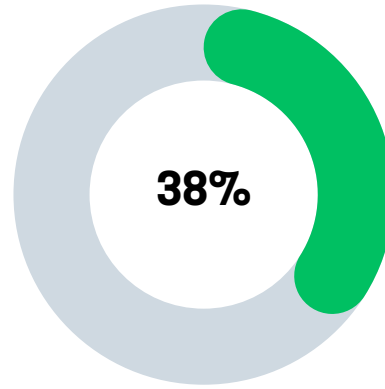
Biggest challenges for 2024

We work in a industry that is falling flat as it is hard to get people to book courses even though we are priced well in the market. 🇺🇰

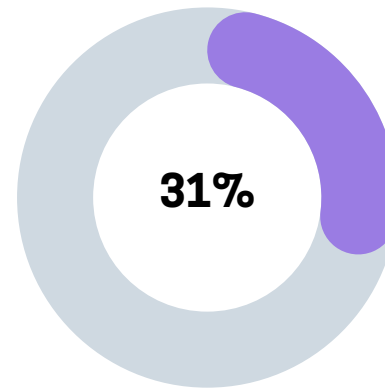
-Training provider response



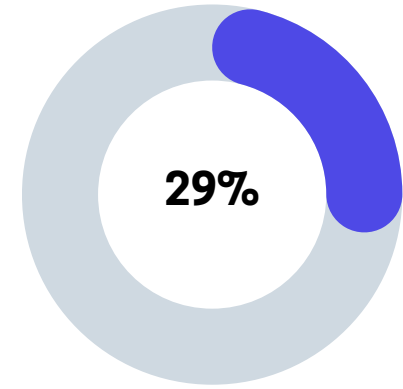
Lack of resources



Increasing costs



Cost of living crisis



Lack of time to complete tasks

Cost of living is hitting us all

The top two challenges identified in 2024 are the same as last year but they have swapped places. **Lack of resources** is number one this time with a **4%** increase.

Closely related to **increasing costs** is a new challenge that we'd be amiss to leave out this year - the **cost of living crisis**. This launched straight to third place with **31%** of training providers naming it as a challenge. Not only are prices rising, but purse-strings are tighter, reducing people's willingness to part with cash for training courses and increasing strain on training providers.

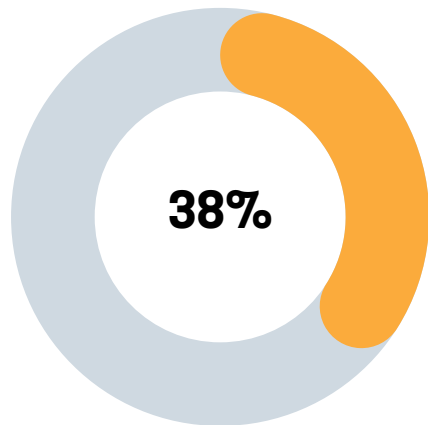
Lack of time to complete tasks appears in the top four this year, but remains stagnant at **29%**.

2023's third and fourth places, **lack of business visibility (-14%)** and **effective course promotion (-5%)** are both down, perhaps due to improvements in technology and wider use of training management software. An honourable mention goes to **increased competition** at 5th, up **5%** from last year. This indicates the industry is growing - which can be a good or bad thing depending on your perspective.

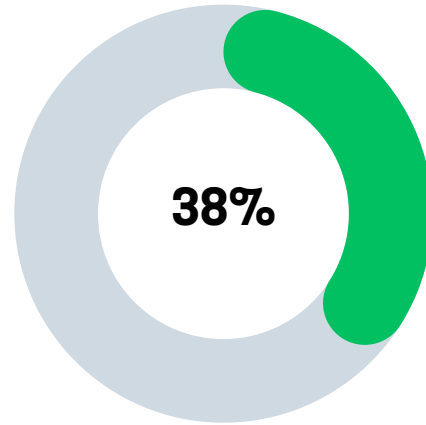
Biggest opportunities for 2024

Virtual opportunities

We have joint winners for biggest opportunities this year, which go hand in hand with one another. **Digital innovation** has had the most impressive growth, going from 5th to 1st place on our list, perhaps reflected in the growth of technology like **AR** and **VR**. **Increase in popularity of online learning** retains the top spot from last year, showing that online learning and its various methods aren't going anywhere.



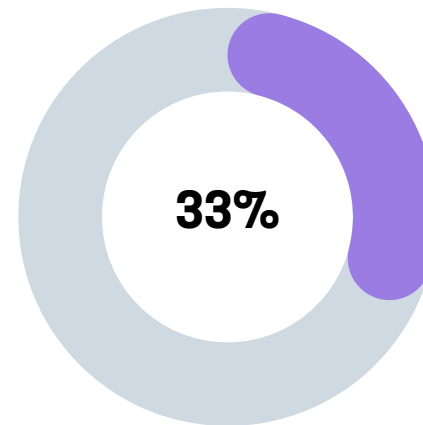
Digital innovation



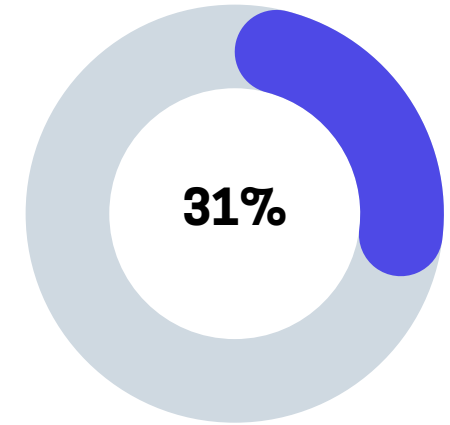
Increase in popularity of online learning

Increase in professional training

Increase in organisational culture around learning remains in the top four this year, up **2%**. Interestingly, talent development is up **3%** from last year, rising 2 places on the list. We have seen **managed training services** consistently rise over the years, so it seems that providers are looking to capitalise on this opportunity with corporate training.



Increase in organisational culture around learning



Talent development

Talent development has become a strategic priority for many organizations, presenting opportunities for customized training programs. ■■

-Training provider response

The training industry outlook

On average, training providers scored the outlook of the training industry this year at 6.3/10, down only slightly from 2023's rating of 6.7. Here's what they had to say:



Conclusion

So, what have we learnt?



Learners prefer live in-person training to live virtual

Live virtual training has experienced a huge drop in learner popularity this year, while in-person training has gone up significantly and remains the most popular method delivered by training providers.



Training providers are meeting most learner preferences, but there's digital opportunities

Providers are meeting learner needs for in-person training, but it appears they could do better when it comes to combining this with self-paced learning solutions for a flexible learner experience.



Striking the balance is key for running a successful training company in 2024

Whether it's for boosting bookings, monitoring and increasing delegate satisfaction or improving training delivery, effective use of technology is essential for the best customer experience. However, the human touch is still needed for a truly customer-centric operation.

About accessplanit

At accessplanit, training is in our DNA. We know running a training business is tough.

Our training management software is configured to plan, manage and sell your training courses and resources, all in one place. Helping you to get organised, be more productive and scale your training business.

[View our case studies](#)



Plan

Improve forecasting and business visibility



Manage

Streamline operations with automation



Sell

Grow with intention and boost course bookings

enquiries@accessplanit.com
+44 (0)1524 389 841
accessplannit.com

Key contacts

Louis Parsloe

Head of New Business
louis.parsloe@accessplanit.com



Lucy Bennett

Marketing Manager (Maternity Cover)
lucy.bennett@accessplanit.com

