



PwC Australia's 2nd Annual Not-for-profit CEO Survey

Upskilling for the digital world and preparing for the future of work

PwC Australia's 2nd annual Not-for-profit CEO Survey shows a sector striving to achieve balance between future readiness and coping with the daily disruptions of COVID-19.

In a climate where demand for service is largely up, and revenue and volunteering is typically down, NFPs are deriving tangible value from upskilling as a growth enabler – 76% cite greater organisational growth as one of the top outcomes of upskilling programs. Yet despite its obvious benefits, investing in developing the skills of the NFP workforce is a challenge for the sector. Increasing so-called overhead costs could be frowned upon by donors who may not recognise that these costs enable NFPs to more effectively deliver services and maximise impact.

The survey reinforces once again the extent to which size matters in accessing upskilling programs. Smaller NFPs – which constitute the majority of the sector – are at a distinct disadvantage and missing out on the opportunity of accelerated growth. Solving these two challenges would unlock significant opportunities across the sector.

The opportunity to offer employees a richer experience by automating low value tasks and allowing them to concentrate on skilled tasks is something NFP leaders could embrace, particularly as resource constraints have intensified. Limited budgets, people, time and knowledge is the top issue hobbling NFP's upskilling programs, with 77% of NFP CEOs saying this is impeding progress. This has grown 16% since last year and is expected to intensify alongside the war for critical skills.



Digital upskilling in a COVID-19 context

The need for digital upskilling of employees has become a higher priority in the context of COVID-19



Employees provided with skills and training in the last 12 months to help them adjust to the impact of the new technology



Source: PwC Australia's 2nd Annual Not-for-profit CEO Survey compared with PwC Australia's 1st Annual Not-for-profit CEO Survey.

However, COVID-19 has emboldened NFPs to think creatively about collaborating externally and internally to unlock opportunities and overcome pain points. Half of NFP CEOs say they have made progress in collaborating with academic and government institutions on future skills, a 12% increase on last year and one of the biggest uplifts in this year's survey.

More potential exists here if NFPs develop a better understanding of how they can collaborate and influence partnership decision making with corporates.

The need for digital upskilling continues to rise. While the awareness of some critical skills, such as data analysis/analytics, has sky-rocketed, others like cyber security are not getting the attention and forward planning they deserve. If NFPs are not acknowledging these critical skills as a training need, they are at risk of operational impacts due to cyber incidents.

Overall, the single greatest benefit derived from upskilling programs by NFPs is stronger organisational culture and engagement. Eighty-five per cent of NFP CEOs say this is the case. This points to an untapped opportunity for NFPs to strengthen their value proposition and offer a different experience through connecting with purpose.

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