

## Press release

Zurich/Geneva, 14 February 2018

### Swiss workers are grossly underestimating the need for lifelong learning

- Digital change in the world of work along with the expected increased length of working life require employees to be retraining throughout their lives.
- 30% of Swiss workers did not participate to any training or upskilling activity in the past year. And over half of them do not see the need to do so.
- Employers should do more to support and promote continuing training, but ultimately, employees have to take responsibility for actively shape their working life.
- This and more in the [new Deloitte study gauging the attitudes of the workforce](#), based on a survey of 15,000 people across Europe, including 1,000 respondents in Switzerland.

The digitisation of the business world and the world of work is changing the skills needed at the workplace. Also, as the average life expectancy rises, the length of our working lives is likely to increase in the long term. Workers must adapt, retrain and upskill to keep pace. Lifelong learning has become imperative.

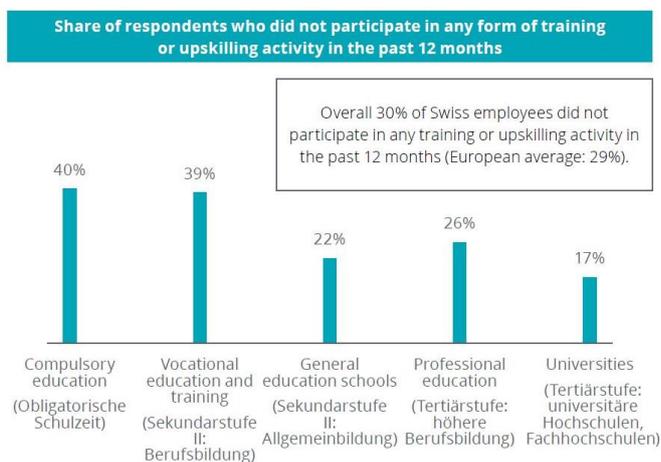
Myriam Denk, who leads Deloitte Switzerland’s Future of Work practice, says, “Jobs are becoming more varied, more interactive and more complex, so those in the labour market now need new skills. Demand is growing for employees with highly developed skills in the areas of creativity, social intelligence and digital technology. This renders continuing training and upskilling crucial to everyone in today’s and tomorrow’s workforce. We also see that employers – for example in the Swiss ICT and health sectors – are struggling to find people with the right skills, but also to recruit enough people to meet future staffing demands.”

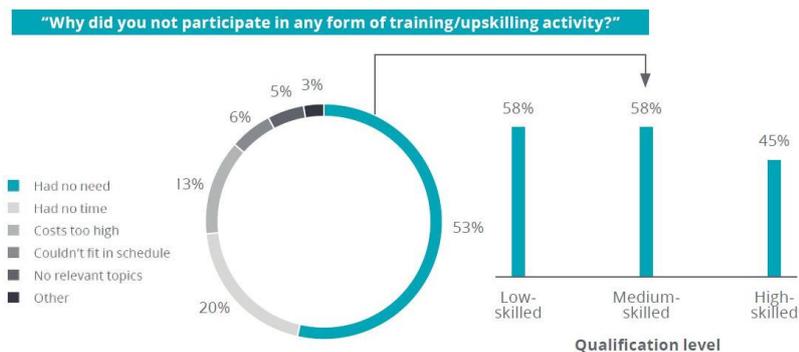
She asserts, “Lifelong learning has become more important than ever. The skills required today in the labour market could already be out of date in a couple of years. It is important for both employees and employers to come to grips with the fact that most careers no longer follow a linear path throughout an individual’s working life. Instead, they are increasingly dynamic, multilevel and multidimensional.”

#### A third of employees do not undergo training – higher proportion amongst lower-skilled people

The reality though paints a picture of a different story: According to the [Deloitte study gauging the attitudes of the workforce](#), nearly a third (30%) of the surveyed Swiss employees have not undergone any training or upskilling in the past 12 months. More alarmingly, more than half (53%) of those who have not participated in continuing training say they see no need to do so.

The study also reveals a correlation with educational level: employees with higher-level school qualifications are more likely to undergo continuing training than workers who attended compulsory education. Only 17% of the employees with a university degree did not attend any



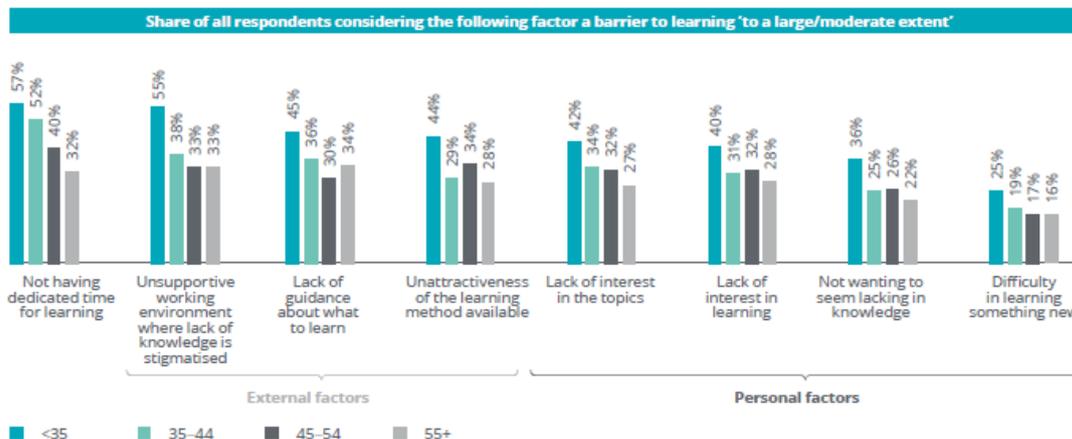


continuing education over the last 12 months – compared with 40% of those with a compulsory school degree and 39% with a vocational education and training degree.

What's more, 58% of both low-skilled and medium-skilled workers stated that they see no need to participate in any form of training or upskilling activity – a much higher number than high-skilled workers (45%).

**Barriers to lifelong learning: Lack of time, lack of self-accountability?**

Next to the 'no need' answer to why workers have not attended any training over the last 12 months, a further third of those surveyed cite no time (20%) or too high costs (13%) as a barrier. When asked in more detail about the obstacles to learning, the lack of time is again cited the most. Overall, external factors – including the absence of a supportive working environment and unattractive learning methods – are generally seen as a more significant barrier than personal factors.



"Our study shows that employees are more likely to perceive obstacles to learning as being created by their employer," says Michael Grampp, Head of Research at Deloitte Switzerland and author of the study. "What is striking is that this perception is more pronounced among younger workers. Older workers tend to perceive fewer barriers to learning or reasons not to learn than younger ones."

**Who should finance trainings: the state, the employer or the employee?**

Asked about who *is* currently bearing the costs for training and upskilling, 50% of the surveyed Swiss employees cited their employers, 26% the state and 24% themselves. This is in marked contrast with the findings as to who *should* ideally bear the main responsibility: 42% of respondents believe it should be the state, 46% think the employer, and only 11% the individual employee him/herself.

"The survey results indicate that the call for the state and employers to take responsibility for the increased need of continuing training is very pronounced in Switzerland – more so than in other European countries. Employees urgently need to grasp the fact that lifelong learning is essential if they want to maintain or improve their employability. And that they need to take this matter in their own hands," says Michael Grampp. "On the flip side, the decline in employees' sense of responsibility makes it even more important that employers raise their workers' awareness and support them."

Myriam Denk agrees, "Next to helping employees understand the importance of lifelong learning, we need to see more and more companies supporting their people in their upskilling endeavours – for example by incorporating learning within standard working time or by helping employees draw up and pursue a personal development plan. The state education system also plays a crucial role in ensuring that employees are prepared for future trends. At the end of the day, it comes down to the employees, employers and the state all individually taking responsibility for this shift in the world of work, and working together to keep pace with the changes."

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#### About this report

To gauge the attitudes of employees, Deloitte surveyed 15,000 people from ten European countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) in August 2018. In Switzerland, 1000 people were surveyed. Participants were all members of the active working population and were either in employment or seeking work. All were aged 25 or over.

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