

The B2W Group

THE RAPID RISE OF E-LEARNING IN 2021



Distance Learning

At The B2W Group, we offer fully-funded online distance learning courses, accessible to all eligible residents across the West Midlands. As part of our ongoing commitment to this provision, we recently surveyed our previous learners to get their thoughts on the changing landscape of business. What skills do they want to learn? What impact has Covid-19 has on their work-day? Is e-learning the future of continued professional development?

We also reached out to the West Midlands business community for their management and leadership demands for 2021.



You Get Out What You Put In

When asked, all of our learners saw value in an online distance learning course. But why? A commendable 92% were interested in personal growth, while 69% wanted to add a recognised qualification to their CV and perform stronger in their current role.

In 2021's more remote world, many employees find themselves isolated from their business and their team, whether they're working from home five days a week, or simply more spaced out in an open-plan office.

It's clear from our findings that employees are eager to demonstrate their worth and skills to their managers, and a recognised qualification is a great way to do that.



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The Challenges of Remote Working



With the government encouraging remote working wherever possible, it's no surprise that workers are crying out for skills to support them while working from home.

According to an analysis of the most useful post-Covid skills by career website Reed.co.uk¹, “digital skills have always been increasingly important, but coronavirus has given them a serious boost to the top.”

Amongst our findings, 38% of our surveyed learners desired training in data protection and IT security – clearly a commentary on the more remote way of working 2020 gave us.

We found that 46% of learners wanted advanced Microsoft Office support, while 38% were eager for official training in video call and collaboration software such as MS Teams, Zoom, GoogleDocs and SharePoint.

Desired topics of learning

38%

Data Protection and IT Security

38%

Video Call and Collaboration Software

46%

Advanced Microsoft Office

Reed.co.uk noticed that “without employees who have a tech savvy attitude, a willingness to learn, and a plethora of digital skills – businesses wouldn't have the tools they needed to survive this difficult time.”

While some businesses will have been using such platforms for years, many will have had to scramble to put tools in place when the first lockdown hit back in March 2020. Formal training in the IT programs that employers have rolled out is in high demand!



Looking After Your Mental Health



46% of the learners we surveyed were eager for more training in mental health awareness and management.

There's no disputing the impact the past year has had on the nation's mental health. Home working "guilt" and isolation all play a part. 46% of the learners we surveyed were eager for more training in mental health awareness and management.

With more parents at home, we also found that the most in-demand topic was the mental health of children and young people. Parents who are challenged with working a full-time job while looking after (and sometimes tutoring) their children, are clearly on the lookout for any undue pressures or stress their children are under.

With the education of young people being tested, now is the time to ensure that parents are equipped to support their children through this challenging time.





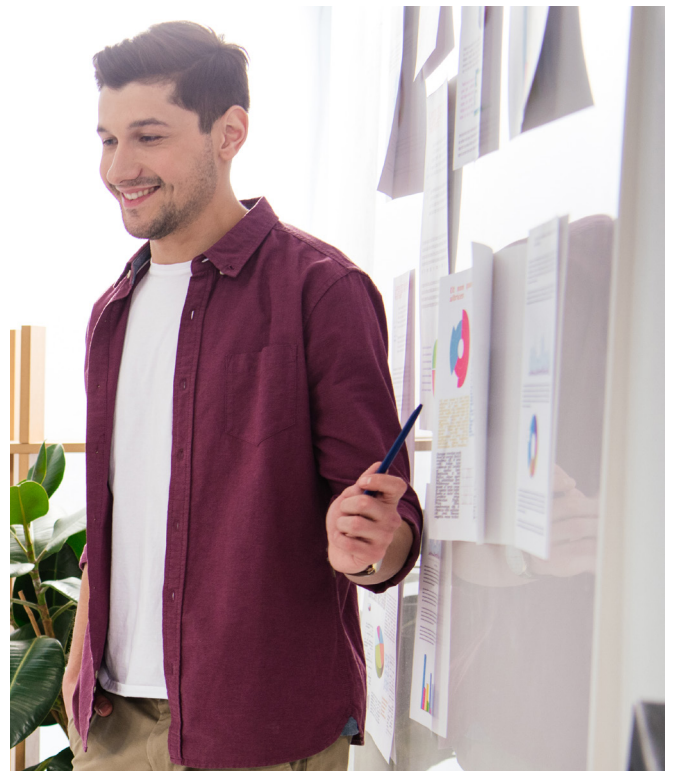
Be Your Own Marketing Team

The days of marketing being a luxury are over. In today's digital world, almost every customer's interaction with a brand starts with marketing of some kind. So it's no surprise that these skills are in high demand.

Of our surveyed learners, 71% expressed an interest in learning digital marketing skills. And of those who had already dipped their toes in the water with a course from The B2W Group, 75% were eager for more. Social media was the biggest draw.

These findings support what we see in the business community. People no longer want to communicate with a faceless company with no personality. They want to speak to real people who speak plainly and clearly.

Company "values" carry less clout in today's world. Far more important is how employees demonstrate those values on a daily basis on social media or while interacting with a customer. More and more, businesses are looking to their employees to be the spokespeople and cheerleaders for the brand.



So it's vital for workers to be able to navigate the latest social media platforms and know the intricacies of self-promotion on each of them. With the name of their employer carrying less clout, an individual's public behaviour and performance are pushed to the forefront.

Employees who are tech-savvy and know their way around digital marketing and IT know the value of these skills and want to formally add it into their CV and make it part of their USP as a worker.

But it's not just the "soft" marketing skills that are in demand. Coding and website management were both sought after. Clearly employees are looking to diversify and expand their skillsets to add as many strings to their bows in 2021.



The Managers of Tomorrow

Despite the ongoing challenges, all businesses and employees are in it together. Leadership skills have always been in demand, but “because of the increase in digital ways of working, good leadership now requires a whole new host of skills and abilities. Managing workers remotely is a much harder feat, especially during difficult times².



We surveyed learners who have previously completed a management course with us and found that all of them would like to further their skills with subsequent training and qualifications. Team leading, coaching, and mentoring proved popular across the board.

A staggering 71% of our learners wanted to pursue a Level 4 (Higher Education level) CMI course, while 57% wanted to go even further with a Level 5 (Diploma level) management qualification.

We also reached out to the West Midlands business community, asking team leaders about their team’s management and leadership demands for 2021. Unsurprisingly, the demands of team leaders matched the demands of employees.



“As a Chamber the skills gap has long been an area of focus, as is highlighted by our upcoming Growth Through People Campaign, a month long series of events aimed at improving productivity through improved leadership and people management skills.

The results of The B2W Group survey really supports the ongoing need for this and outlines some of the key leadership and management demands from employees. The B2W Group, have been working with the residents of the West Midlands Combined Authority since 2019, partnering with employees and businesses from across the region to provide valuable upskilling in key areas such as Management, Leadership, Digital and Marketing, and we applaud them for their efforts.”

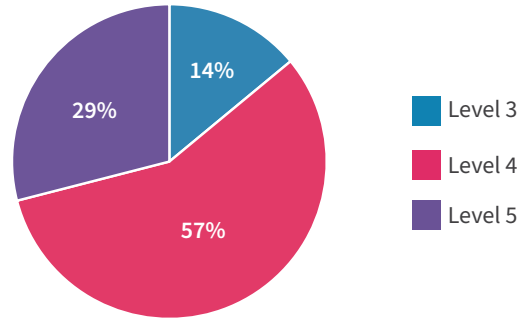
- Paul Faulkner (CEO, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce)





The Managers of Tomorrow

14% of those surveyed were interested in upskilling their teams in a Level 3 (A-Level) management course, while 57% sought Level 4 (Higher Education level) for their teams and a further 29% thought someone within their team was ready for a Level 5 (Diploma level) qualification.



Whether it's aspiring managers looking to take a leap into a leadership role, or an established manager seeking further formal training, there's something for everyone.

At The B2W Group, we offer management courses in partnership with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). The CMI is the only organisation to offer Chartered Manager status, which is recognised throughout the public, private and third sectors across all managerial disciplines. With Chartered Manager status, learners join an elite group who prove they have the skills and knowledge to deliver results.



“We know from our research that employers are keen to have their teams led by people who have the management and leadership skills required to drive their business forward and contribute to building back better effort post-pandemic. Partnerships like the one we have with The B2W Group are really fantastic because it provides staff with the training and support that they need through upskilling or reskilling. It shows employees that their organisations value and are invested in them.”

- Steve Heapey (Director of Service Delivery, Chartered Management Institute)





About The B2W Group



Professional Training and Coaching

The B2W Group provide professional training and coaching services to suit a range of employer and learner needs. Founded in 2012, The B2W Group has trained and supported thousands of people into work and help them to develop within a range of industry sectors.



Developing Your Careers

The B2W Group provide pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship, distance learning and digital marketing apprenticeship programmes designed to make it easy and convenient for learners to find employment, upskill and develop their careers.

Contact Us



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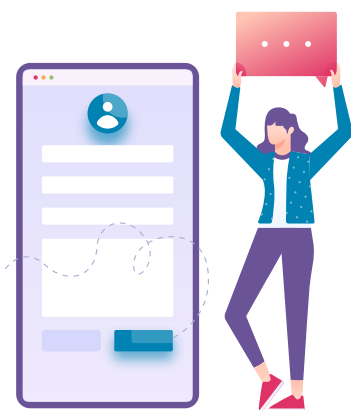
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Document References

¹ Reed.co.uk (<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/five-of-the-most-useful-skills-to-learn-post-covid-19/>)

² Reed.co.uk (<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/five-of-the-most-useful-skills-to-learn-post-covid-19/>)



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