



IMPACT OF **UPSKILLING** ON **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS**

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FOREWORD



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India's workforce is undergoing a silent but significant shift. Amidst evolving expectations and anxiety around performance appraisal outcome and career advancement, a new trend has emerged: The working Indian professional is no longer waiting for opportunities - they are upskilling themselves to create them!

This report captures the pulse of this transformation through a focused survey of about 14000 professionals across various functions and industries. The findings reveal that learning isn't just about qualifications anymore - it's about timing, intent, and impact.

As organizations grapple with retention, productivity, and future-readiness, insights from this report offer a timely roadmap. Whether you are in a leadership role, a HR leader, or a learner yourself, this study will equip you with the insights from these professionals thriving in a performance-driven world.

The future is uncertain, unpredictable and fast moving; upskilling, reskilling and new-skilling initiatives help prepare for the unforeseen challenges.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a hyper-competitive work environment, performance management has taken center stage. Organizations are no longer asking just what employees know - but how quickly they can learn, apply, and grow.

TeamLease EdTech undertook this survey to decode the link between **upskilling and performance outcomes**. Through the voices of 14316 professionals across functions like Sales, Tech, HR, Finance, and Operations, this study explores the motivations behind upskilling, its funding patterns, and - most importantly - its **impact on appraisals, promotions, and role enhancements**.

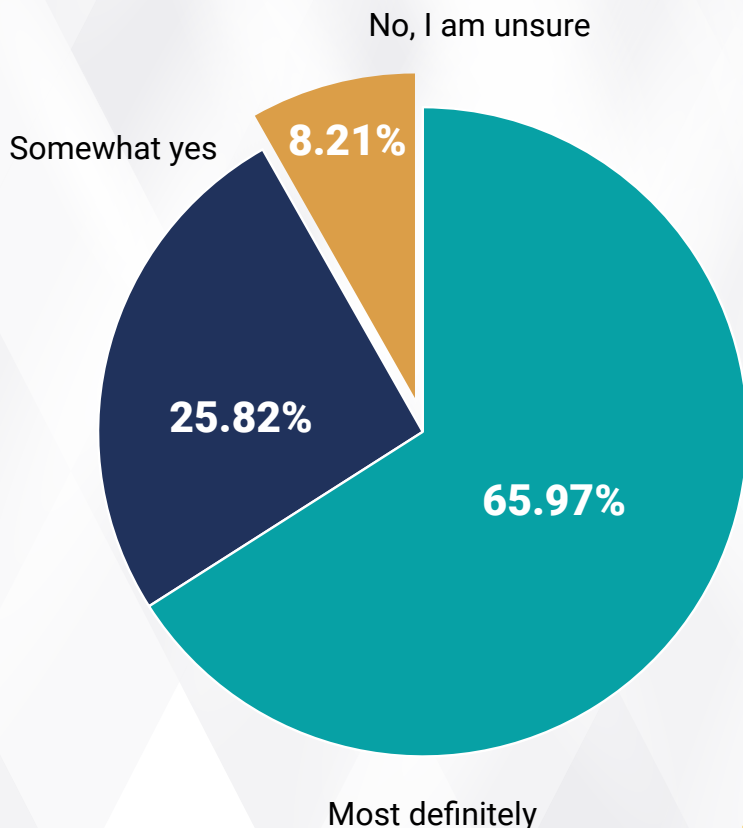
Key questions explored include:

- ▶ Does timing of upskilling influence appraisal outcomes?
- ▶ Are self-funded learners seeing better results than those funded by employers?
- ▶ What kind of learning formats are gaining ground?
- ▶ Is short-term, just-in-time learning good enough?
- ▶ Are long formats of learning already dead?

This report offers data-backed insights into the role of **Career Enhancement & Learning** and shares compelling takeaways for individuals, corporates, and policymakers. As we redefine what makes talent future-ready, understanding these dynamics is not just important - it is imperative.

KEY FINDINGS

Over **92%** of professionals Still Believe in the Power of Degrees



65.9%

definitively believe that long-term upskilling via degrees/diplomas has a strong career signaling value. Most respondents are sure that formal education still holds its weight in promotions and performance discussions. Only 8.2% were unsure of its worth!



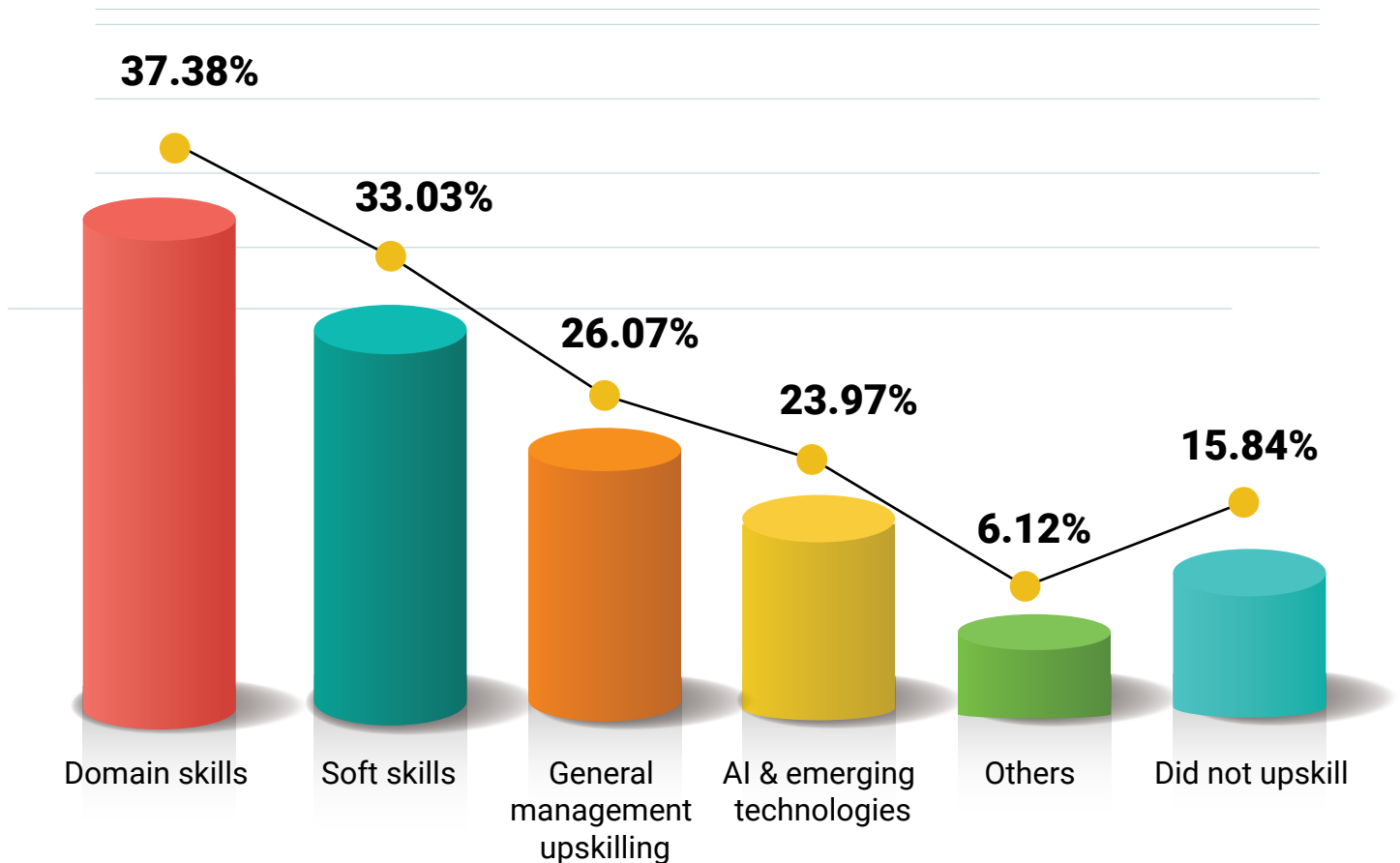
Did You Know?

Even in the age of short term/duration courses, nearly **2 in 3 professionals believe in long-form programs**, helping best position them for career growth.

Only **33%** of professionals chose to upskill their Soft Skills

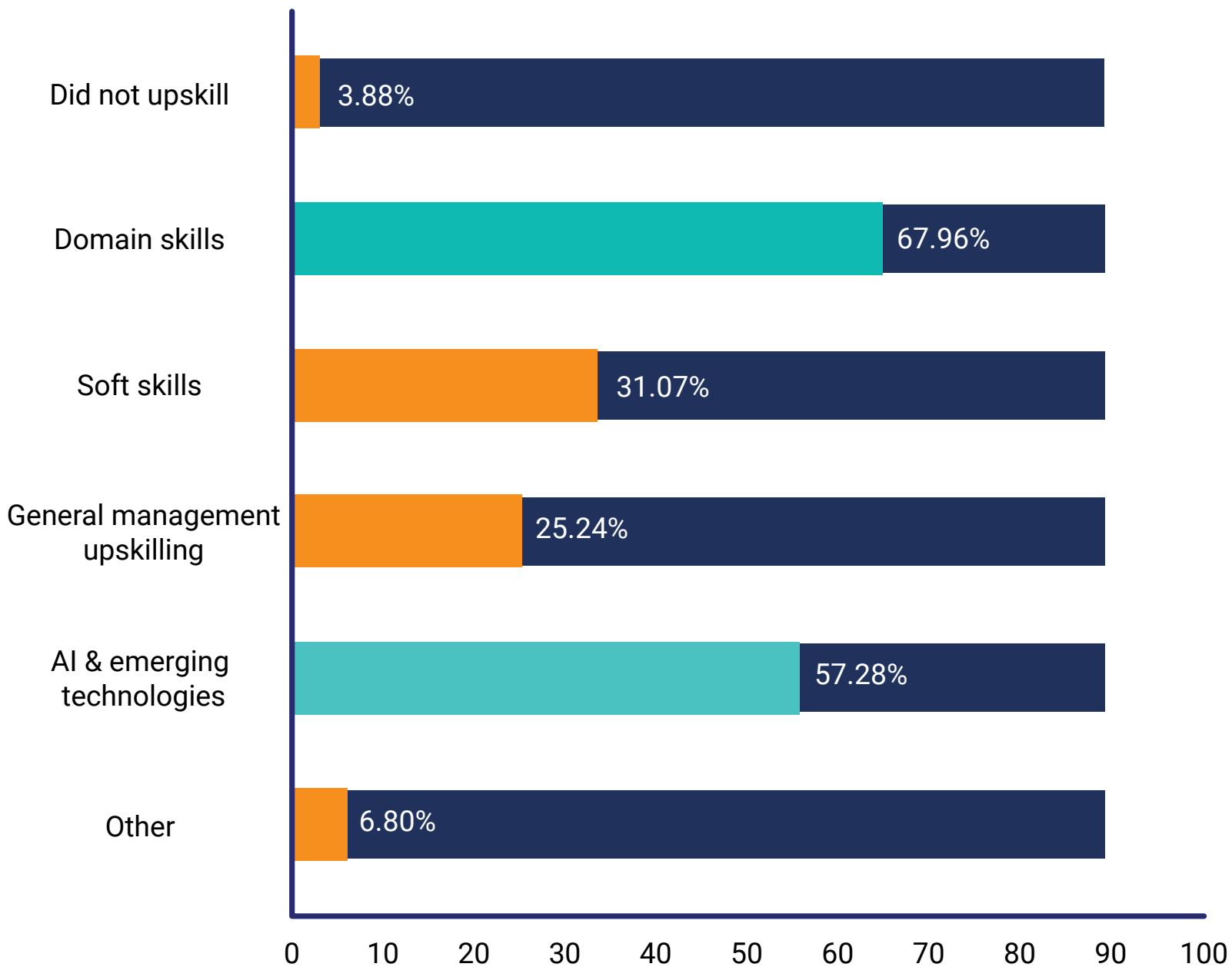
Over **84%** of all respondents took up some form of upskilling in the past 12 months

Over **37%** of the surveyed professionals **upskilled themselves in their current job domain**, far exceeding those who chose soft skills or general management programs. Upskilling is still considered as a tool to improve job-specific competence. AI and Emerging Tech also saw significant interest, especially from younger professionals. Soft skills may be getting all the buzz; but domain skills are the ones that professionals are doubling down on to boost their everyday performance.

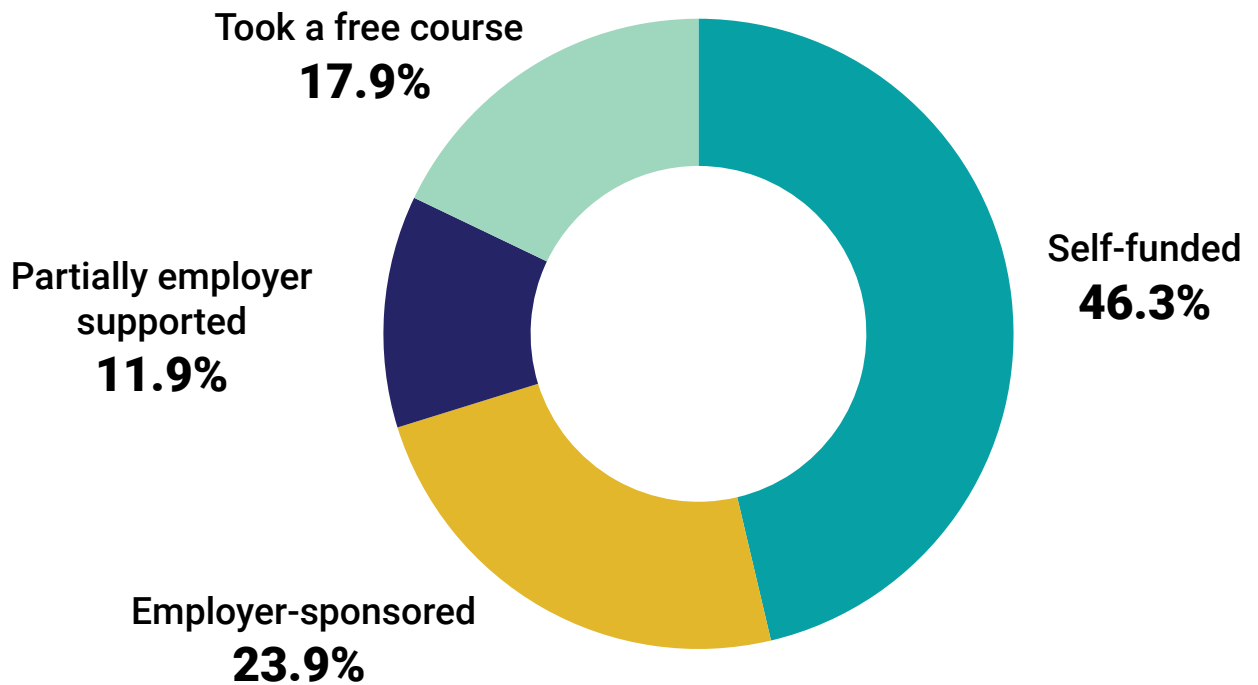


Interestingly - Over **86%** of Tech professionals upskilled their Domain Skills or AI & Emerging Technologies.

Preferring domain pertinent upskilling over soft skills or management preparedness.



Who Pays for Upskilling? Mostly, the Learners themselves - Only **23.9%** had full Employer sponsorship



46%

of professionals **self-funded** their latest upskilling. This reveals a strong sense of motivation and conviction amongst today's professionals! This also hints at a lack of structured learning support in organisations.

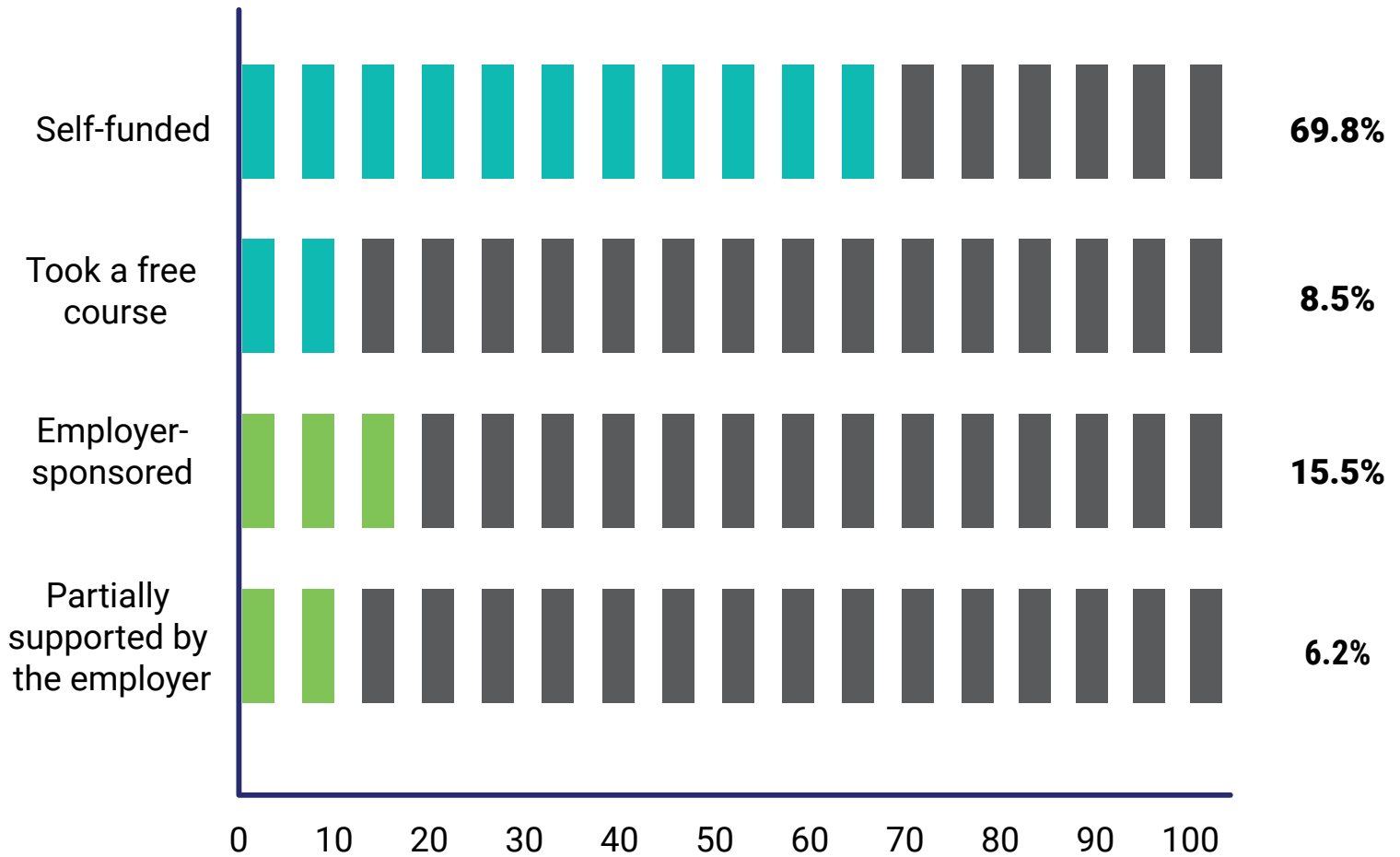


Observation

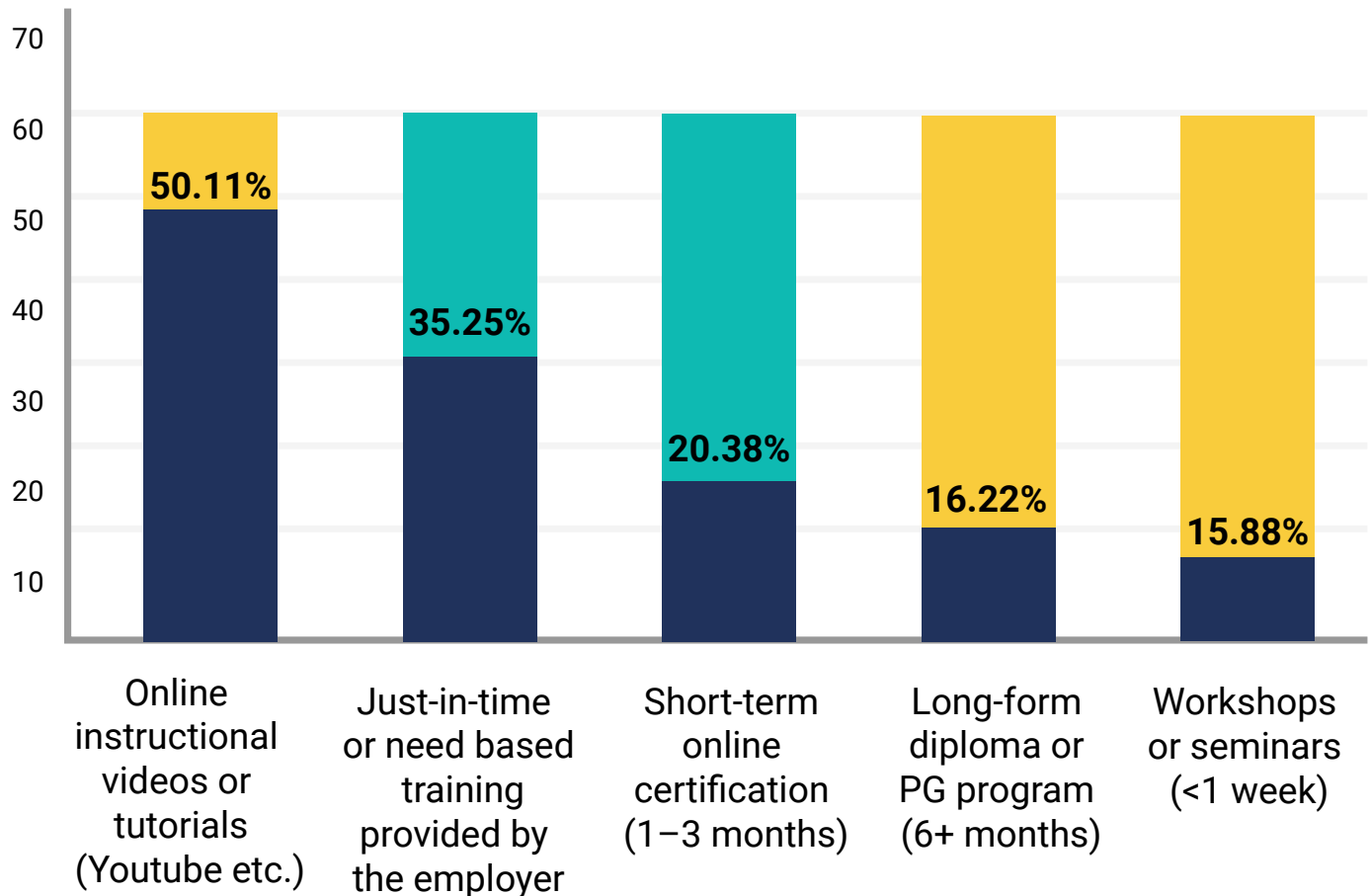
We may see a significant rise in the percentage of employed learners opting for more formalised/long-term upskilling if they receive funding support from their employers.

A whopping **78.3%** of Technology & Finance professionals self funded their upskilling

These upskillers are probably more likely to leave their organisation due to no tie-back or any sense of loyalty to an employer that does not invest in their growth.



Short and Snappy is Popular - Over **50%** of professionals chose online tutorials or short-term certifications over longer programs



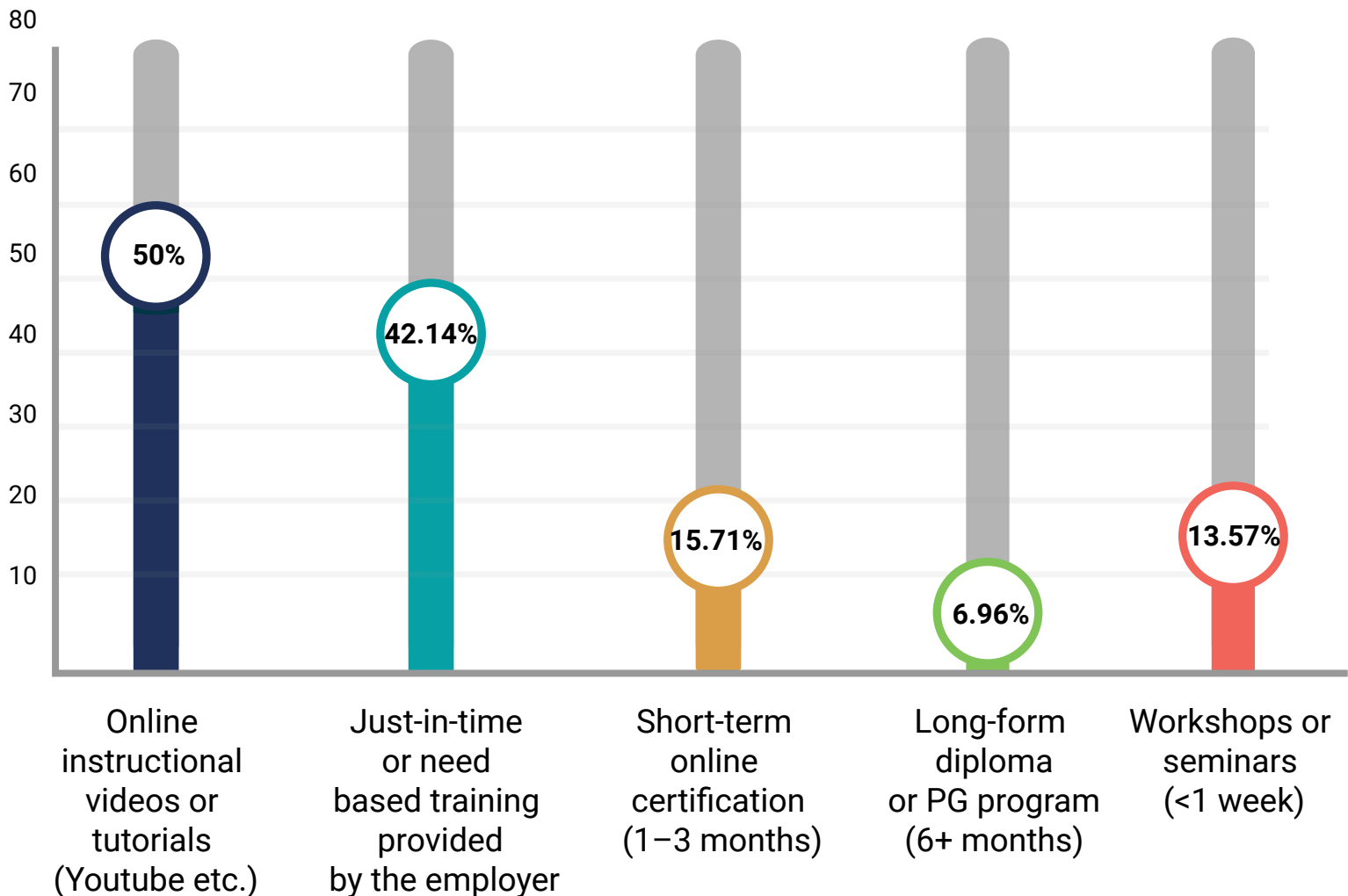
Just-in-time and on-demand learning formats are on the rise. Long-form diploma/PG courses still matter those seeking career pivots. This is an interesting reveal - Owing to inadequate employer funding towards training and upskilling, professionals take control of their destiny and commit to some format of learning with their own resources.



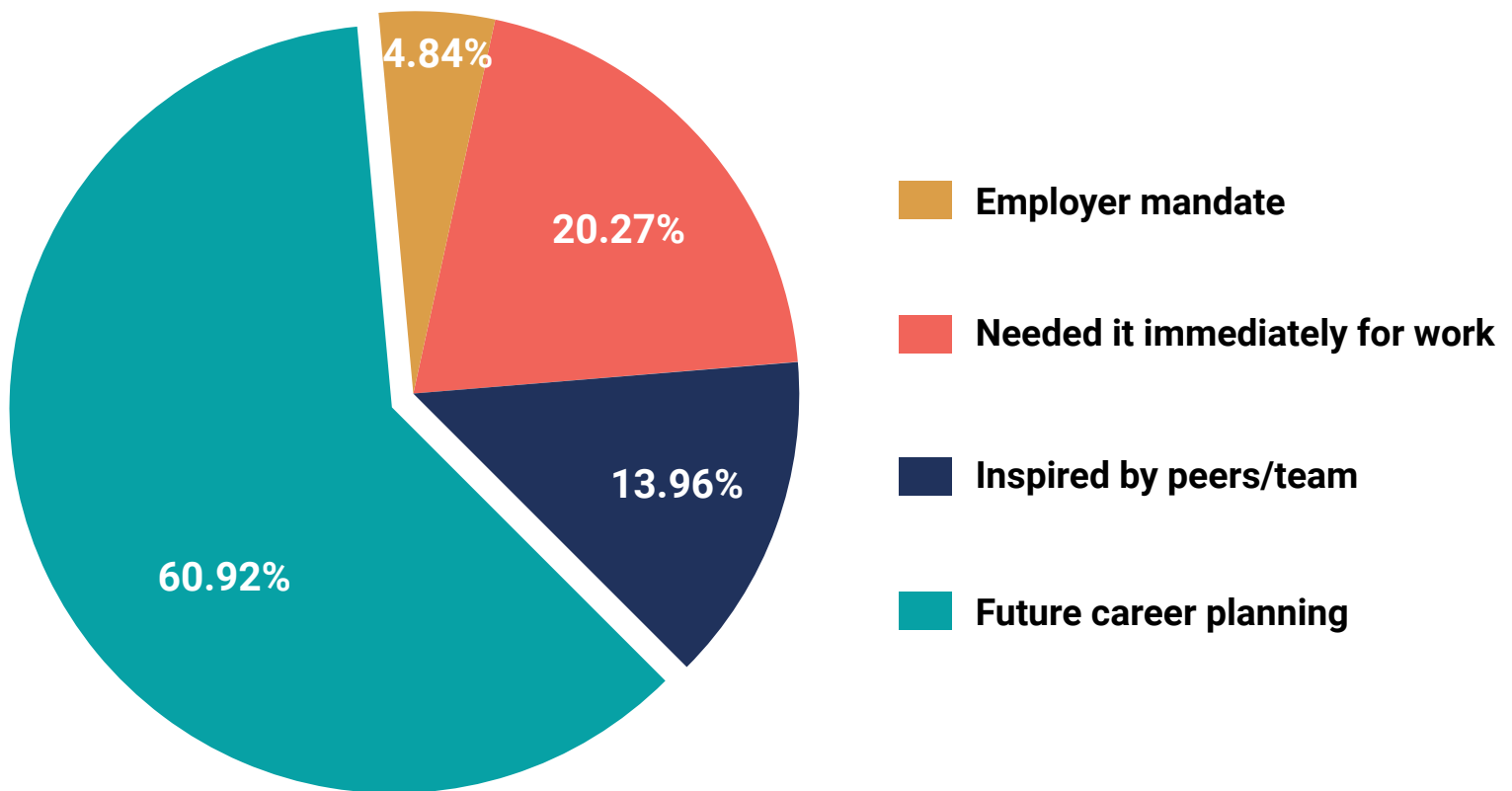
Did You Know?

YouTube and Online Tutorials are very popular learning formats with professionals seeking quick solutions to current tasks or issues faced at work.

Surprisingly **80%** of Sales & Marketing rely on online tutorials, short need based training or short certification programs



Concerns about security & future proofing - **61%** seek upskilling for future career planning



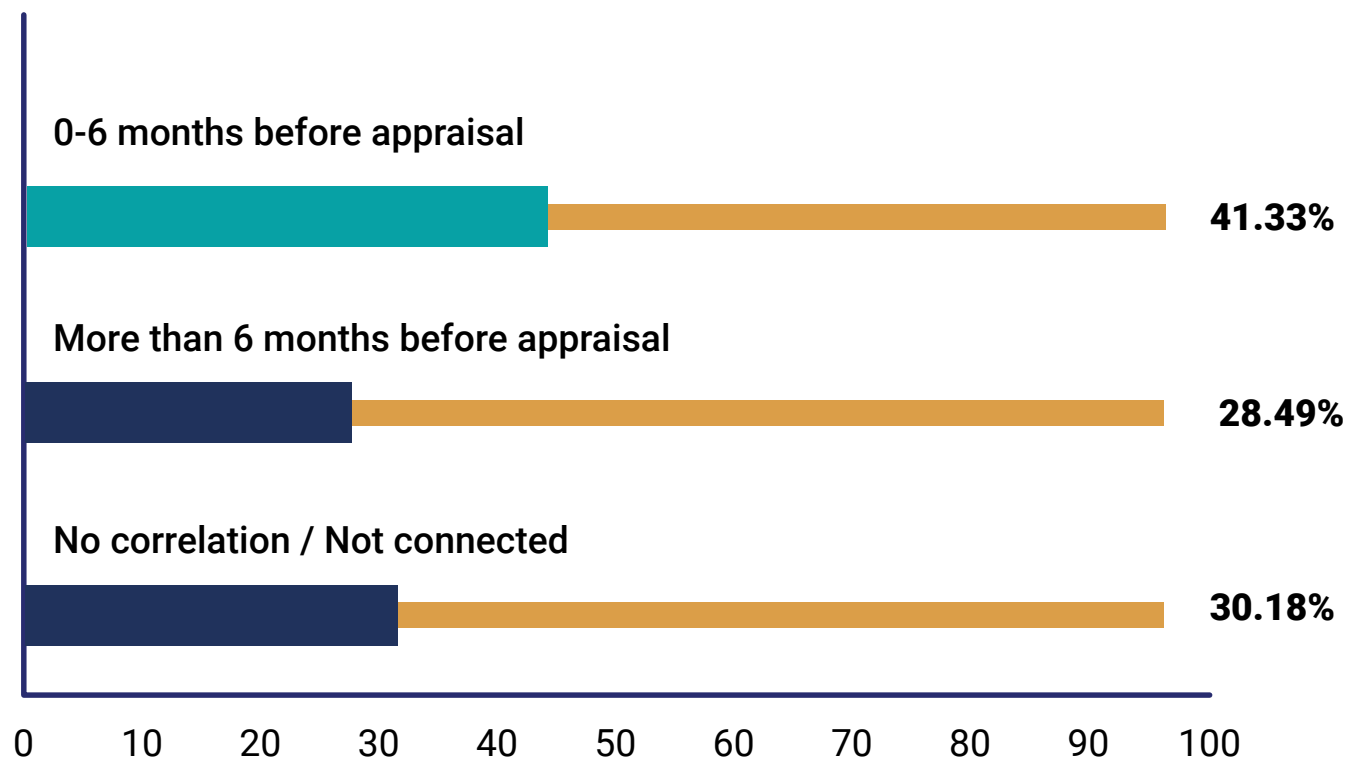
Our survey reveals that **long-term career planning (61%)** still remain the biggest motivator for employees. Professionals are worried for the **security of their jobs** in current market conditions and believe that upskilling build resilience.



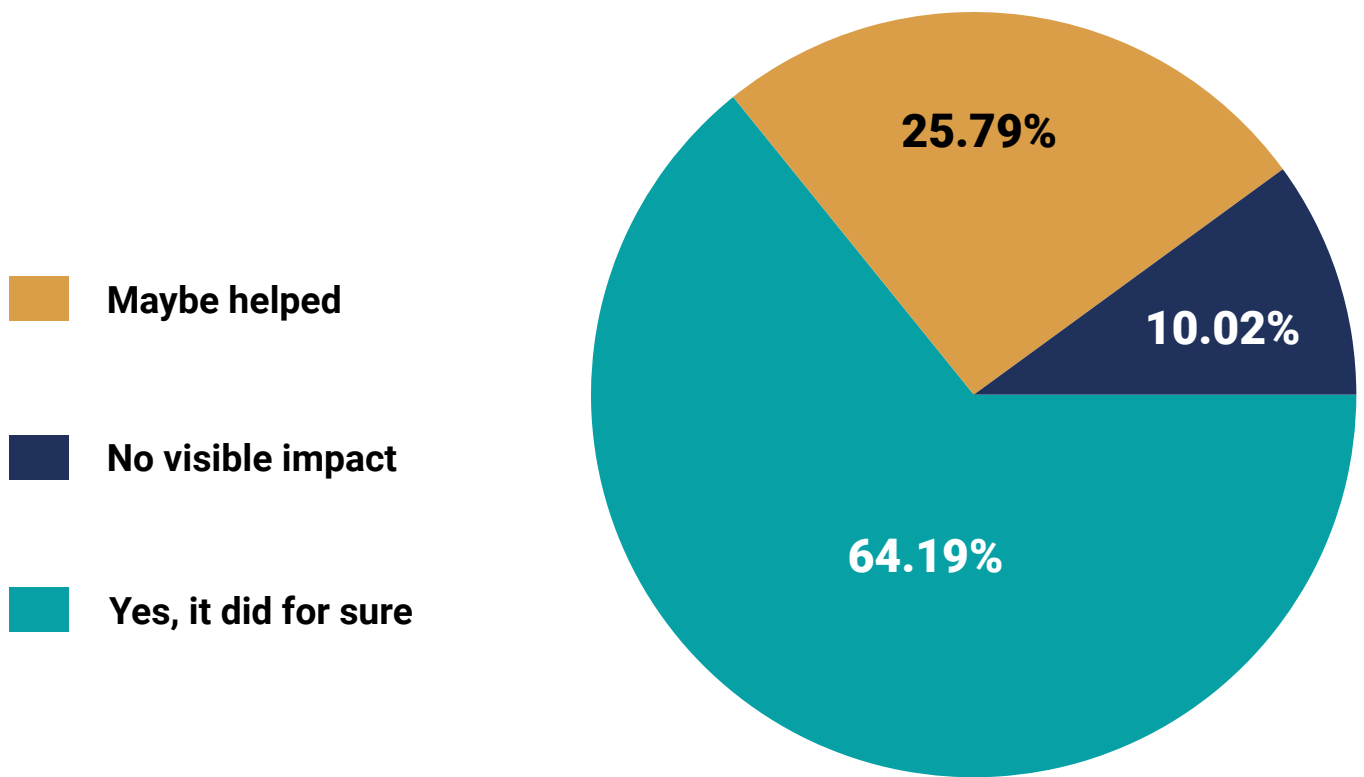
Surprise observation

Long-term thinkers were **3x more likely** to say that their upskilling gave them career clarity, even without immediate promotion.

Timing matters! More than **41%** choose to upskill close to appraisals



Close to **90%** report positive impact of upskilling on their appraisal



Those who upskilled closer to their appraisal cycles reported better outcomes, indicating that strategic timed learning initiatives can improve visibility with their reporting managers. Nearly **two-thirds** of employed professionals (64%) confidently stated that their **upskilling efforts positively influenced their performance appraisal** outcomes. An additional 26% felt it may have helped, indicating a strong perceived connection between learning and recognition - even if not always immediate or explicitly acknowledged by employers. This insight reinforces that upskilling is not just a long-term career bet but is also becoming a reliable short-term performance strategy for professionals.



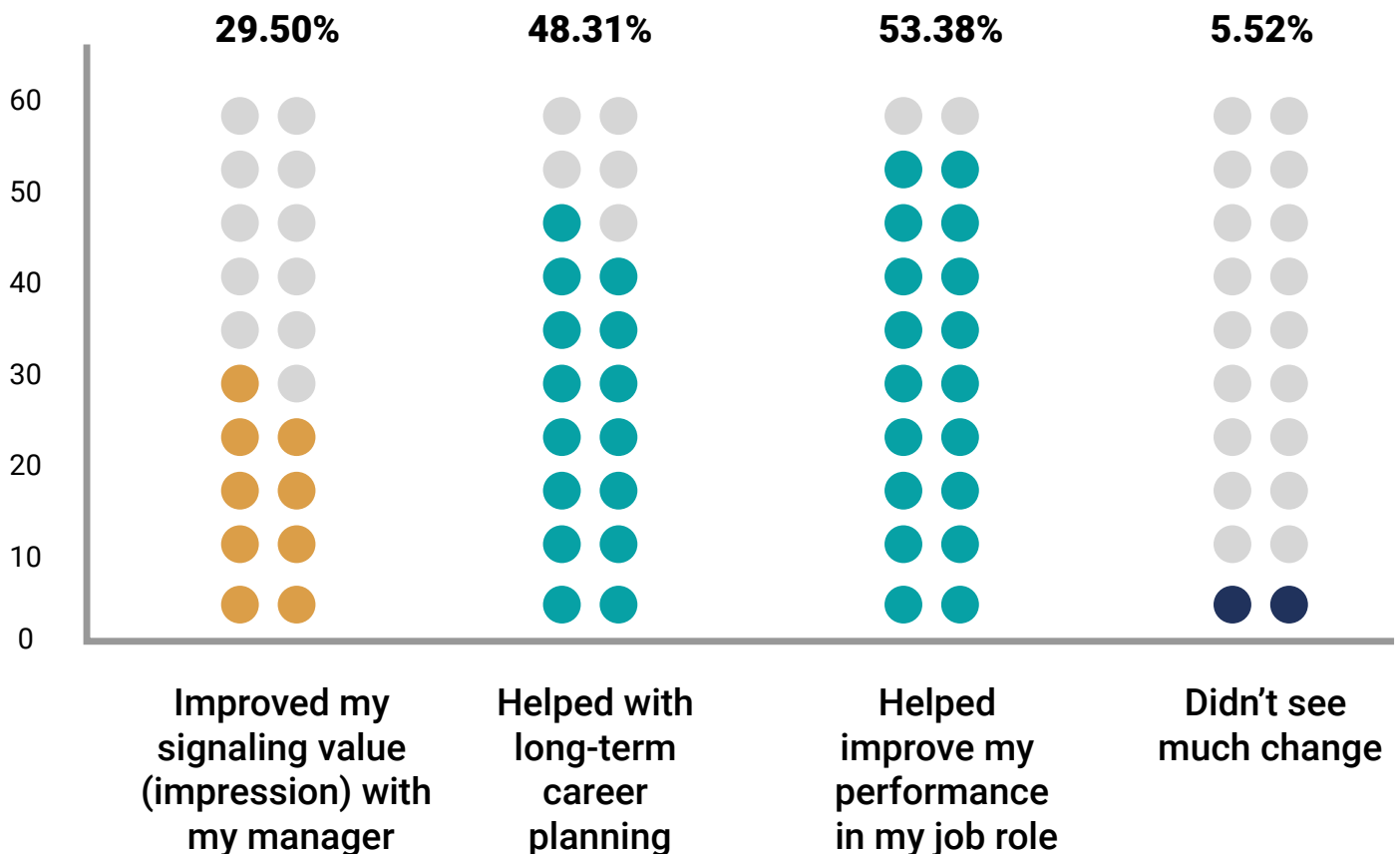
Interestingly

30% of learners who upskilled did so with no expectation or thought of appraisals and did so just to enhance their work productivity and for self-growth.

53% of respondents said upskilling helped improve real-time job performance

48% said it was vital for career planning

Performance Gains Trump Promotions for respondents who said their upskilling helped improve job performance; while **30% also thought it provided better signaling to their managers**. While promotions are the ultimate recognition, professionals also value performance improvement and career clarity.

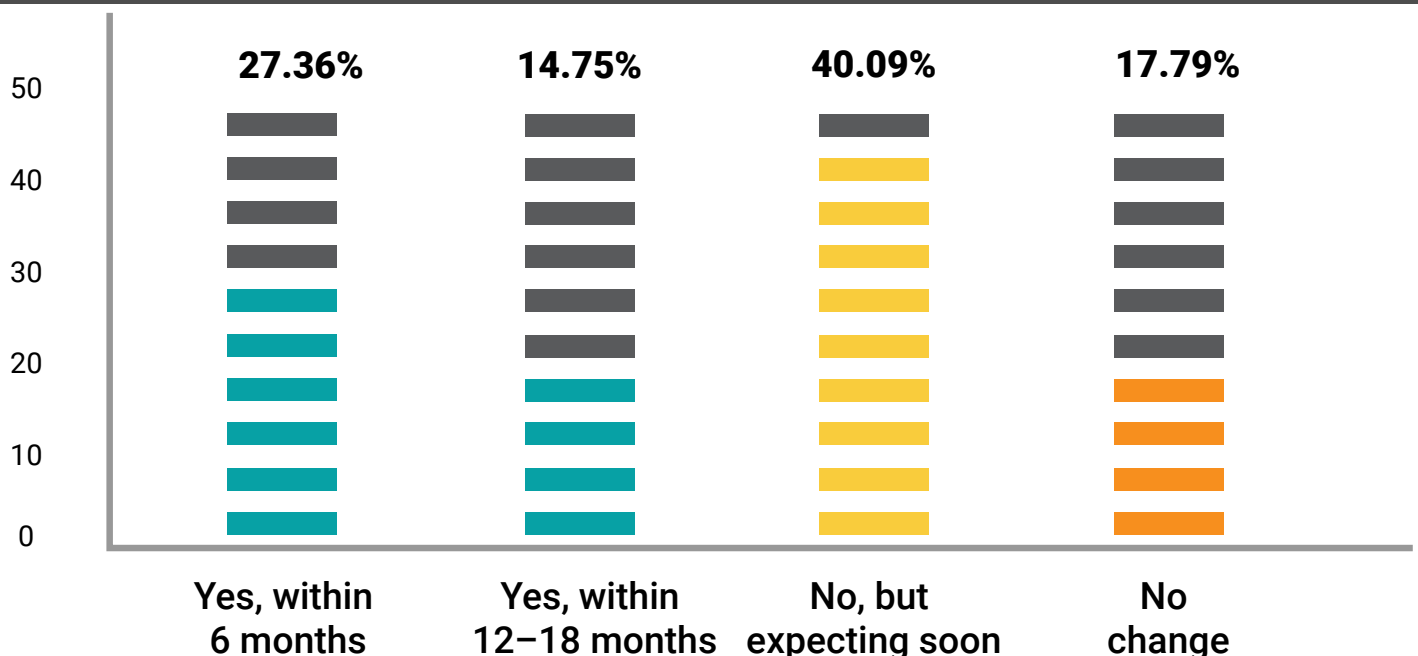


Over **42%** have seen a either promotion or enhancement or salary hike within 18 months of upskilling

40% believe it will happen soon



Promotions Do Follow, But They can take time, it does however have mostly a positive outcome with over **42%** seeing salary hikes, role enhancements or promotions within 18 months of upskilling. While upskilling may not result in immediate promotions in every case, it sets the stage for future growth.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations for Corporates & HR Leaders

➤ Invest in Degree-Driven Learning Paths:

65.9% of professionals say long-term degrees/diplomas have strong career signaling value - **formal education remains critical in performance and promotion conversations.**

➤ Shift Upskilling Budgets Closer to Appraisal Cycles:

Over 41% chose to upskill close to appraisals, and nearly 90% reported positive impact on appraisal outcomes - **differentiate genuine learning efforts from the well-timed ones.**

➤ Recognize Self-Funded Learning in Performance Reviews:

46% of learners self-funded their upskilling; these learners reported stronger appraisal outcomes than non-upskillers - **employers should reward initiative with recognition.**

➤ Support Tech & Finance Learners Strategically:

78.3% of Tech & Finance professionals self-upskill without employer support - **these high-impact roles deserve structured upskilling plans.**

Recommendations for Working Professionals

➤ Upskill, Upskill, Upskill:

Upskilling will never go out of fashion whether it is for a better job role or promotion. **Choose resilience over redundancy.**

➤ Don't Wait for Sponsorship - Act First:

Self-funded learners outperformed non-learners on performance outcomes - **learning initiative matters more than funding source, think about them as long term investments!**

➤ Think Long-Term, Act Now:

Learners with long-term career goals were 3x more likely to report clarity and career advancement - **vision drives outcomes.**





Recommendations for Educators & Learning Providers

➤ Design More Career-Pivot-Friendly Long Form Programs:

Long-form courses remain vital for career shifts and long-term planning, even as short-term formats rise - **blend formats and curriculum to align with the industry for deeper impact.**

➤ Build Just-in-Time Learning Libraries:

Over 50% used short certifications or online tutorials, especially in Sales & Marketing - **snackable content formats matter for real-time performance boosts; create them to drive traffic to your website.**

➤ Create Self-Paced Options with Low Time Burden:

Professionals consider non-working hour commitment and cost before enrolling - **flexibility is essential while designing curricula and learning schedules.**



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