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HR ELEMENTS[®]



AN HR & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter, delivering insights into timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

July 2025

- Employee Benefits | Upskilling as a Strategic Investment
- Workplace Culture | Building a Culture of Continuous Learning
- Dear HR Manager | Exploring a Four-Day Workweek

Employee Benefits | Upskilling as a Strategic Investment

[The conservative cost of replacing an employee ranges from 50% to 200% of their annual salary.](#) And when experienced talent walks out the door, productivity and culture take a hit.

More employers are shifting dollars from recruiting to development. The reason? Retention is the new growth strategy—and upskilling is at the heart of it.

Make Learning Part of the Job

Upskilling only works when it fits the way people work. Programs that feel optional, irrelevant, or overly time-consuming tend to flop. Development is most effective when:

- Learning is anchored to current business priorities
- Content is offered in fast, focused formats that fit the workday
- Employees see exactly how skills connect to improved outcomes

When employees can connect the dots between learning and impact, participation rises—and so does performance. A well-rounded program doesn't just build skills, it builds momentum.

[In a recent survey, 42% of employees said they're either actively looking for upskilling opportunities or are interested in them.](#)

That's nearly half of the workforce signaling a desire to grow. When employers make development accessible and relevant, they don't just meet that need; they turn it into a powerful driver of retention, engagement, and performance.

What to Ask Now

If you're refreshing your upskilling strategy, consider:

- What internal learning resources are available?
- Are managers actively talking about professional development?
- How can you measure upskilling outcomes and not just participation?

Upskilling isn't a perk. It plays a direct role in helping your employees grow, strengthening your workplace culture, and setting your business up for long-term success. The companies that prioritize it now are the ones most likely to retain top talent.

Workplace Culture | Building a Culture of Continuous Learning

Upskilling only works when employees have time, support, and clarity. Otherwise, it turns into one more thing on a growing to-do list. That's not a motivational problem. It's a capacity problem.

You want employees to view learning as an ongoing part of their work, not just a task to complete. When learning becomes a regular habit, it drives both personal growth and better results on the job.

[60% of employees say upskilling has helped them do their jobs more effectively.](#)

Managers Set the Tone

Make it clear that learning time is part of the job, not a distraction from it. If managers treat learning as optional, teams will too. Instead:

- Ask managers to share their personal upskilling activities.
- Share learning opportunities regularly.
- Encourage employees to link skill-building with current projects.

Build It In—Don't Bolt It On

When training is rushed or crammed into already-packed schedules, it loses its impact. Employees may go through the motions of clicking through modules or showing up for sessions, but the learning doesn't stick. Others might skip it entirely, not out of disinterest, but because they're juggling too much. It's not a lack of motivation; it's a lack of bandwidth. When learning feels like just another demand on their time, it becomes easy to deprioritize.

To make training meaningful, employees need space to absorb new information, reflect on it, and apply it. That only happens when learning is paced realistically and built into the rhythm of their day, not layered on top of an already overwhelming workload.

Training shouldn't feel like homework; it should help people get better at their jobs. When it's directly connected to their current role and delivered in a way that fits into their day, it leads to sharper skills, stronger performance, and noticeable growth. Ultimately, it's about helping employees evolve while positioning your company to attract and retain top talent.

Dear HR Manager | Exploring a Four-Day Workweek

How do I explore a four-day workweek without disrupting everything?

We've had a growing interest in a four-day workweek, and one team has offered to pilot it informally. Our leadership team is unsure how to scale this, and I'd like to volunteer my team for the next pilot, but I want to be smart in our approach.

—*Curious, Not Careless*

Dear Curious,

You're not the only one weighing this. What used to feel like a fringe benefit is now a real strategy conversation.

[According to a recent survey, 22% of employers offered a four-day workweek in 2024, an 8% increase from just two years ago.](#)

Start with a Small Test

Begin your pilot with either a 32-hour week or a "compressed" four-day schedule. Make goals crystal clear: Will success be measured by output? Client response time? Team sentiment? This keeps expectations realistic—and signals that you're learning, not locking in.

Document Learning

Encourage the pilot team to track what worked, what didn't, and how they managed handoffs or cross-functional work. Share their insights with the leadership team. These lessons can be compared with the first pilot group's learnings.

Set the Tone

Remind teams that this isn't about "doing more with less." It's about working smarter, not harder, and finding what fits your organization's culture. A four-day week doesn't have to be all or nothing. But even trying a pilot with your team signals you're listening and open to new ideas.

—*HR Manager*

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