

Green thinking. How can workers take ownership of sustainability?

A majority of the UK public has no understanding of “green jobs” or the difference between green jobs and green skills, according to research commissioned by Deloitte and IEMA. The study found that 56% of respondents had never heard of the term “green job”, 64% had no idea what “green skills” were and 65% said they did not have access to green skills training through their employer.

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The report suggests a blueprint for a green workforce offers practical steps, case studies and a toolkit for businesses to help them transition to a green economy. ([Deloitte](#))

Why does this matter?

It's not news that we need to retrain workers for green roles with green skills. This kind of upskilling will be invaluable in areas such as renewable energy which is a key stone in delivering an effective net-zero transition. But that

doesn't mean sustainability education should only be limited to people looking to work in green sectors. Providing workers on a wider scale with the knowledge and tools to understand and implement sustainability initiatives could offer societies a better chance of tackling sustainability as a global issue that needs to be embraced holistically.

Sustainability leadership

In 2021, Deloitte announced a climate learning scheme, alongside WWF, aimed at improving climate literacy among its 330,000-strong workforce worldwide. The initiative uses videos and interactive data visualisations to immerse employees in learning environments about climate change. While not all companies have the resources to deliver this level of education, it's important for them to be prioritising education about these global issues as strategic risks to corporates become increasingly entwined with sustainability. Managers and CEOs also have an opportunity here to be a driving force and lead by example. One method many companies are employing to encourage this is by linking executive pay to ESG goals. Accenture and Salesforce have also launched an ESG platform which specifically monitors sustainability metrics for c-suites to interact with.

Taking ownership

Some people can be inclined to ignore environmental responsibilities at work due to a lack of leadership interest or financial incentive while, at home, many are motivated by individual values and the influence of peers. Companies that have made progress in sustainability have created an environment in which stakeholders and employees take ownership of sustainability, as a value built into the company culture. This entails being transparent about the effects their sustainability efforts are having, while also creating incentives and targets. Factories have been known to use this method to compare improvements between divisions to cultivate motivation and a spirit of competition and pride to drive sustainability action.

Lateral thought from Curation

Technology could also be an answer for immersing employees in sustainability issues. Vantage Point uses VR training programmes to tackle workplace discrimination by placing individuals in different scenarios so that they become more engaged with the issues at hand. This approach could also be applied to environmental discussions to create a more engaged workforce.

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