A revolution in training: 'Netflix-style' learning, the Metaverse, and Artificial Intelligence

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Since the onset of COVID-19, businesses and professionals have adopted new hybrid and flexible working arrangements that, among other aspects, have impacted upon decisions and processes involving staff training and development. Within these decisions and processes, technologies are taking centre stage for the following reasons:

1. There has been a widespread acceptance of 'Netflix-style' learning —the customised and bespoke instructions of users. Platforms such as Alumn-e Infinity, Videocation, StoryLearning, Udemy, and Coorpacademy are some of the better known 'Netflix' styles of online training.

2. The metaverse —a multiuser environment that merges physical and virtual realities— caters for interactive and collaborative ways of working in digital spaces; this provides numerous opportunities for learning from and with others in the virtual world. Microsoft Metaverse and Meta Spark are two of the leading training initiatives in the virtual ecosystem.

3. Numerous businesses are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create and implement specific training schemes and itineraries that adapt to each employee's needs. AI allows identifying employees' level of knowledge with a view to recommending a learning process designed to achieve a specific target and identify those schemes with a greater impact on business units.

Yet besides technologies, which have transformed ways of learning, businesses are also paying particular attention not only to format, but also to content, where soft skills —i.e., teamwork, resilience, leadership, stress management, effective communication, and problem-solving— and languages are becoming ever more essential in a changing and competitive labour market. In relation to soft skills, in 2023 the Adecco Foundation has published a guide called *'20 competencias contra la exclusión en el nuevo mercado laboral'* [20 competencies for combating exclusion in today's labour market], advocating that the today's scenario of automation and robotics will attribute greater value than ever to human parameters that machines cannot emulate. In the words of Francisco Mesonero, the foundation's general manager, '*anything that cannot be performed by a machine is going to have exceptional value*' and '*the value of soft skills is set to increase*'. As regards languages, businesses have increased their demand for bilingual/multilingual employees to deal with increasingly more global strategies and their growing presence in international markets; which explains the importance of teaching their employees language skills.

The study '*Corporate Learning Benchmark*' conducted by MobieTrain based on a survey of 300 European companies has highlighted that 91% of businesses in 2023 will maintain or increase their investment in training, considering that it has a doubly positive impact: on the one hand, it enables staff to feel more competent, secure, and efficient in the performance of their tasks, and on the other, it shows that the company is engaged with its employees' career development, wellbeing, and sense of belonging, improving their levels of motivation and commitment. Such intentions to foster and support a learning culture are also consistent with those of the bulk of employees, as according to the report by PwC '*Workforce of the future*', which gathers the views of 10,000 employees, 74% are willing to learn new skills or refresh existing ones in order to advance their careers and become more employable in the future.

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Questions about the case

1. What are the advantages for employees of online training compared to offline alternatives?
2. What are the main obstacles to staff training?
3. Which soft skills do you think are most appreciated in the financial sector? And in the automobile industry?

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