

Training to protect the workforce

The Irish Institute of Training and Development's (IITD's) National Training Awards ceremony has become a key event in the business calendar over the past 21 years. The purpose of the awards is to promote excellence, best practice and innovation in training and to reward and encourage excellence in learning and development (L&D).

"Leading entries to the awards each year demonstrate the value that can be derived from putting a strong emphasis on a detailed learning analysis," says the IITD's chief executive Sinéad Heneghan. "A proper diagnosis leads to a more accurate prognosis. By spending time conducting a thorough review of the real issues or skill gaps, more targeted training can be specified when searching for appropriate providers."

This year's awards ceremony will take place on March 29 at Killashee hotel, in Naas, Co Kildare. Previous winners are in no doubt of the benefits of an IITD award. "It's really, really tough," said Eamonn Eaton, former head of group learning and engagement at Bank of Ireland. "But when you win it, you know you've done something spectacular."

Harvest Resources, which is regarded as one of Ireland's leading people development specialists, is in its second decade of supporting and sponsoring the awards. Nicola O'Neill, managing director of Harvest, says: "Learning and development is recognised as a core strategic pillar of progressive organisations. The companies that are taking the war for talent seriously are designing and delivering learning experiences that add to the performance of the organisation and the employer brand."

For Heneghan, "a need for alignment of L&D with business strategy and agility to respond to business strategy are ongoing priority areas for future-proofing."

According to the Central Statistics Office, unemployment dropped to 5.3% at the end of December 2018, down from 6.2% at the end of December 2017, and down from almost 16% at the height of the financial crash in 2012.

Beneficial as this is for jobseekers and the exchequer, for employers it does have a downside. With unemployment heading towards 4%, or what most economists regard as full employment, enterprises are locked in a war for talent. It is fast becoming an employee's market, with employers investing money and time to fill vacancies.

"Providing clear career paths and



The digital learning market is poised to grow at a compound rate of about 7.2% over the next eight years, with market value projected to reach €325bn by 2025

associated development opportunities is an essential strategy in the retention of existing staff and the management of churn in many organisations," says Heneghan. "Additional investment is necessary to future-proof workforce skills and underpin enterprise productivity and innovation. Greater investment in the development of workforce skills will improve workers' career prospects and employability."

Founded in 1969, the IITD is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Membership of the professional body has doubled over the past few years, a clear indication that L&D is central across many organisations. The IITD is the representative body of choice of L&D professionals and a centre of expertise and excellence supporting the L&D industry. IITD also offers a portfolio of highly



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focused, contemporary programmes, and funds research into L&D.

Recent research conducted by the IITD on investment in training, and the return on that investment, found that organisations here invest about 2.9% of payroll annually on L&D activities.

While this level of investment is significant, says Heneghan, it compares less favourably to the international benchmarks of 4.3% of payroll.

"L&D is arguably the critical success factor for future growth and competitiveness for many organisations," says Heneghan, "and if it is executed correctly, contributes significantly to the success of a business's overall strategy."

"The contributions that L&D can make to a business include developing a talent pool that is agile, flexible, adaptable and aligned with current

strategies, supporting change, creating a learning environment and creating value both within and external to the business."

In the last budget, minister for finance Paschal Donohoe, announced a further increase in the National Training Fund (NTF) levy of 0.1% both this year and next year, bringing the levy from 0.8% to 1% by 2020. Donohoe said he plans to use part of the surplus in the NTF to establish a multi-annual, ring-fenced human capital initiative of €300m from 2020 to 2024.

The IITD welcomed Donohoe's initiative as addressing the growing skills gaps in the Irish economy. "Globalisation is having an obvious effect on an organisation's business model. Greater economic uncertainty, increased volatility in the marketplace and increased

customer expectation will all influence the L&D strategy in organisations and will require a different approach to development opportunities, which will need to be tailored to the varying needs of their workforce," says Heneghan.

The increased mobility among what is now a global workforce has implications for the personalisation of L&D and career development, says the IITD.

A recent report from the McKinsey Global Institute estimated that by 2030, up to 375m workers, or 14% of the global workforce, will need to switch occupation categories. Moreover, the report adds that all workers will need to adapt as their occupations evolve alongside technological developments.

Demographic changes are also having a major impact. The IITD estimates that by 2021, there will be five generations in Irish workplaces.

"These different generations bring with them unique attitudes, behaviours and expectations in respect of learning and development," says Heneghan. "Crowd-learning, reverse mentoring and a continued emphasis on learning as part of the DNA of the organisation are emerging as concepts that can be delivered in a tangible manner to the benefit of strong organisations."

Harvest has seen significant change in the L&D landscape, with the introduction of technology facilitating the access of anytime, anywhere learning and the changing requirements of the learner, which include generational differences.

With demand for digital learning continuing to increase, Harvest has recently launched Flex Labs, a digital learning lab creating independence in learning design. The digital learning market is poised to grow at a compound annual growth rate of about 7.2% over the next eight years. It is projected that by 2025, market value will reach €325bn.

"Success is not about providing training programmes," says O'Neill. "We see success from the design, delivery and evaluation of holistic learning interventions that achieve results in performance, create edge and add value to the bottom line."

O'Neill is proud that Harvest is part of the recognition and celebration of success with the L&D profession and community. She says: "The awards provide organisations with an opportunity to showcase the contribution that this community of professionals is making to organisational effectiveness."

For further information on the National Training Awards and to book tickets, see iitdwards.ie



Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

Director of Corporate Services

The Marine Institute is the national agency responsible for Marine Research, Technology, Development and Innovation (RTDI). The Marine Institute seeks to assess and realise the economic potential of Ireland's 220-million-acre marine resource; promote the sustainable development of marine industry through strategic funding programmes and scientific services; and safeguard the marine environment through research and environmental monitoring.

The Institute works in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) and a network of other Government Departments, Semi-State Agencies, national and international marine partners. As part of its continued development, the Marine Institute now seeks to appoint a dynamic individual to the role of Director of Corporate Services to help oversee its future direction.

Role Overview

Reporting to the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services is a key member of the senior management team and is charged with a lead role on behalf of the Institute in safeguarding the Corporate Governance, Procurement, Compliance, Contract and Risk Management for the Organisation.

The Director represents the organisation on the Audit and Risk Committee and works closely with the Board to provide assurances for best practice with Governance and Compliance as well as taking responsibility for the annual delivery of the statutory financial statements.

In parallel, the Director is engaged at a senior level balancing organisation strategy with the operational needs of Corporate Services to ensure that a highly skilled and experienced team delivers key strategic programmes, outputs and advice – both internally and externally to our clients and stakeholders.

The Person

This is a senior leadership post which requires an outstanding individual with a proven track record of motivation and delivery at senior level in a multi-functional professional organisation. This experience may have been gained in either the public or private sectors. Remuneration for this role will be in line with public sector policy and will reflect the seniority of the post.

Further details on this significant opportunity, including remuneration, duties and responsibilities, are available upon request.

To pursue your interest, please email a comprehensive CV and supporting letter to: Seán McDonagh, Lansdowne Executive Search. Email: sean.mcdonagh@lansdownesearch.ie

For a confidential discussion, please contact Seán at +353 (0)87 796 1062.

Closing date for applications is Friday, 22nd February 2019.

Candidates for this role will be sourced through both advertising and executive search processes.

The Marine Institute is an equal opportunities employer.

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