

BUILD
EMPIRE

**TRAINING
INDUSTRY
BENCHMARK
REPORT**

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Intro

Training providers are facing mounting pressure. They need to scale and create more revenue while they manage rising operational costs, heightened competition, and ever more diverse learner needs.

At BuildEmpire, we work closely with training providers. We've seen first-hand how the right systems can transform challenges into opportunities.

By connecting learning to payment systems, standardising delivery, enabling multi-tenancy, and scaling operations seamlessly, you can remain agile and competitive in a fast-moving market. This benchmark report offers key insights and future-facing recommendations to help you stay ahead of the game.



Michael Wright
COO, BuildEmpire



Key findings

1

Providers face four critical challenges

Resource shortages, rising costs, increased competition, and ineffective course promotion are the biggest barriers holding training providers back.

2

Learners' discovery habits are shifting

Nearly 50% of learners find training through search engines. Visibility online is now essential for growth.

3

Investment in training is falling while demand is rising

Average investment in training per employee dropped by 19% but employers delivered 111 million training days, 3.6 days per employee.

4

Digital-first learning formats are taking the lead

Training providers are prioritising eLearning, microlearning, and blended learning over traditional formats.

Industry overview

In 2024, UK employers provided 111 million training days, averaging 3.6 days per employee per year.

The UK's corporate eLearning market had a revenue of approximately \$4.6 million in 2024 (about £3.6 billion), and it's projected to grow to USD 13,300 million (~£10.4 billion) by 2030, with a CAGR of 19.5%.

Growth Drivers

- ✓ Reskilling for green and digital skills gaps .
- ✓ Compliance requirements in regulated industries
- ✓ Hybrid work models increasing demand for flexible eLearning



Training providers scored the outlook of the training industry this year at 6.4 out of 10

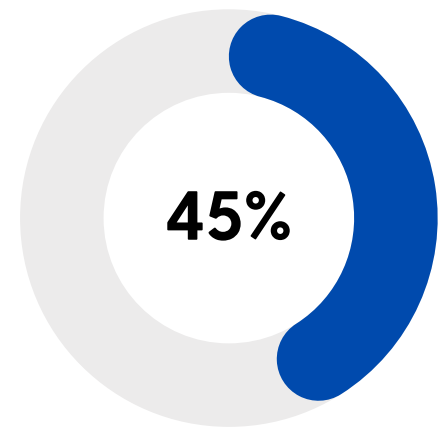


Between 2011 and 2022, average investment in training per employee dropped by 19%

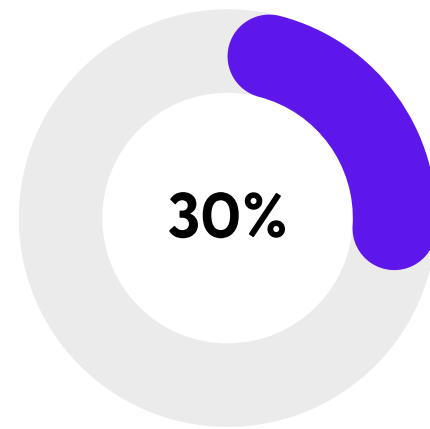


In 2024, UK employers provided 111 million training days, averaging 3.6 days per employee per year

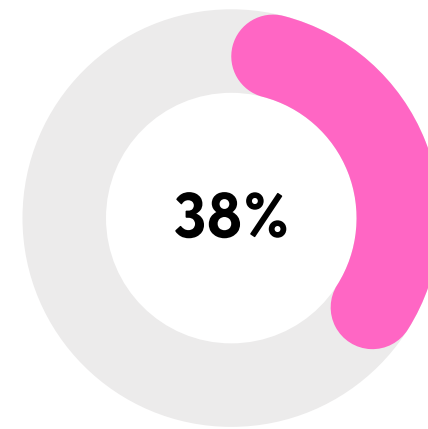
Key challenges



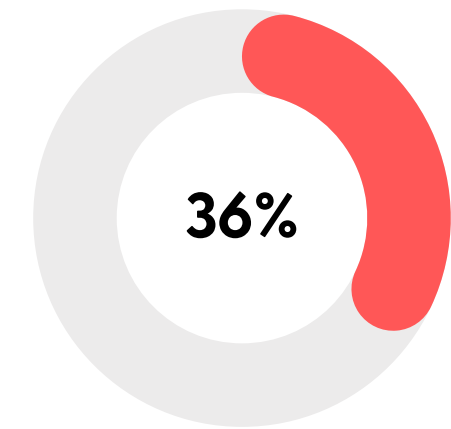
Resource shortage



Effective course promotion



Rising costs

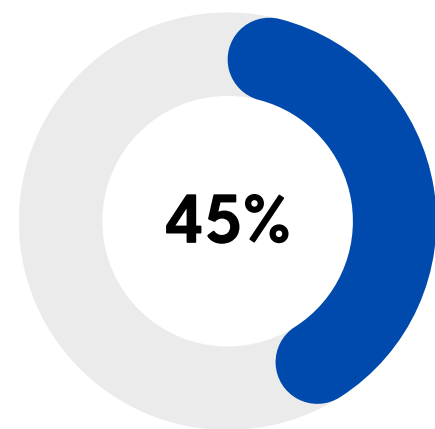


Competition in the space

The never-ending course admin

For training providers, their key problems come down to four key issues. Resource shortage, rising cost, increased competition and course promotion. Their ability to scale hinges on these four challenges.

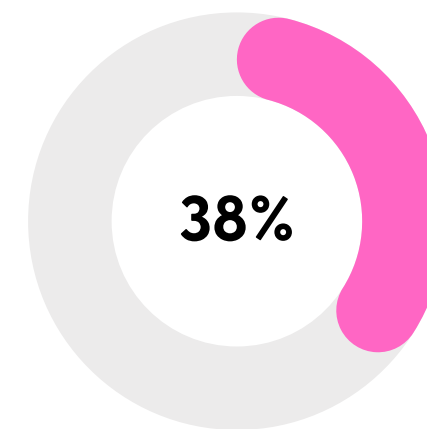
One key issue we've found is training providers using the wrong tool. And when they switch, issues with all four challenges dissipate. Connecting learning to a payment gateway for one, is a key resource shortage that's currently solved via workarounds which leads to a clunky shopping experience, and an admin error for your training team.



Resource shortage

With 45% of providers lacking staff and infrastructure, many can't deliver the volume or quality of training their learners expect.

Under-resourced teams face burnout, slower course development, and patchy learner support, which directly impacts growth.

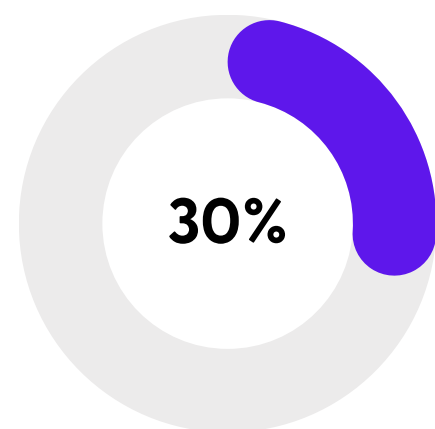


Rising costs

38% of providers say inflation is squeezing them.

Higher costs for venues, tech, and materials mean slimmer margins, while learners and clients are more price-sensitive than ever.

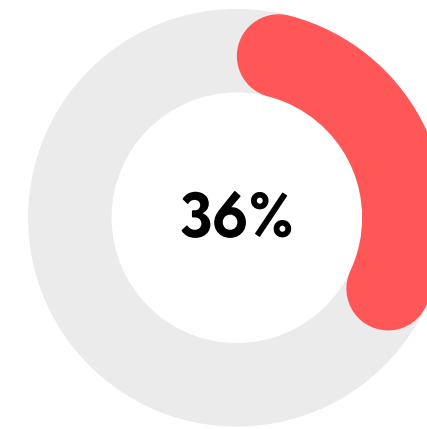
This makes balancing affordability with profitability a constant struggle.



Effective course promotion

Even the best courses can flop if no one knows about them. 30% of providers struggle with promotion, often due to weak digital marketing strategies or reliance on outdated word-of-mouth.

In a market where learners expect on-demand discovery, poor visibility means lost revenue.



Competition in the space

The market is more crowded than ever, with 36% reporting intense rivalry from other training providers.

Digital-first providers often offer cheaper, always-available courses, making it difficult for traditional or smaller providers to compete on both price and scale.

Key trends to watch out for



Microlearning



Green skills



Virtual reality



Artificial intelligence



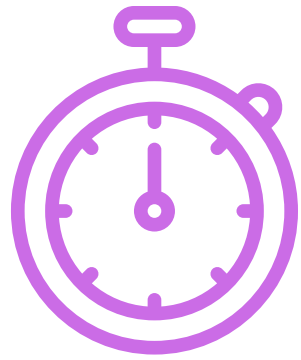
Hybrid learning

Which trends should you focus on?

It's not just the trends listed above you need to worry about. As you can see in our [L&D Trends blog](#), there's plenty of other trends including soft skills, gamification, personalised learning and so on.

So knowing where to focus your efforts is tricky.

Let's look at some of the biggest trends in learning, for the training provider industry.



Microlearning

Microlearning, alongside personalised learning is taking over as a preferred method of learning. (See overleaf).

You need to cut down existing content, and build in new microlearning focussed modules to engage learners and build their learning retention.



Green skills

Government has invested [£275m](#) in apprenticeships and technical training aligned with AI and sustainability.

And with businesses moving to be more sustainable, this is going to become a trending topic.



Virtual reality

If you're struggling with learner engagement, or you're looking at how you can take the success of on-the-job training and get that online, then immersive learning is the way forward.

You could use virtual reality to mimic real-life working conditions that may not be safe/achievable in real life training.

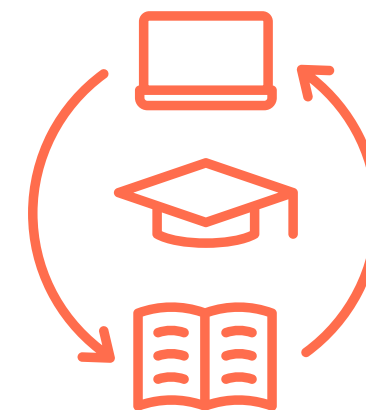


Artificial intelligence

we're yet to see truly impactful uses of AI within an LMS.

Some great ways to harness AI in L&D include:

- Writing aspects of learning content
- Composing email notifications to learners
- Pulling out short overviews of learning content for descriptions



Hybrid learning

Design learning paths that allow employees to choose their preferred format and pace.

Offer a mix of live webinars, self-paced eLearning, podcasts, and articles.

And make the most of your online channels. Encourage peer-to-peer learning through virtual communities of practice, discussion boards, and collaborative projects.

Benchmarking

In this section, we have pulled together key stats and figures from across sources to give you a well-rounded overview of the state on learning in the training provider sector.

From key learning formats, to how you're using AI, we've sourced a range of interesting tidbits that could help you improve your own training outputs.

Let's get started!



Learning formats

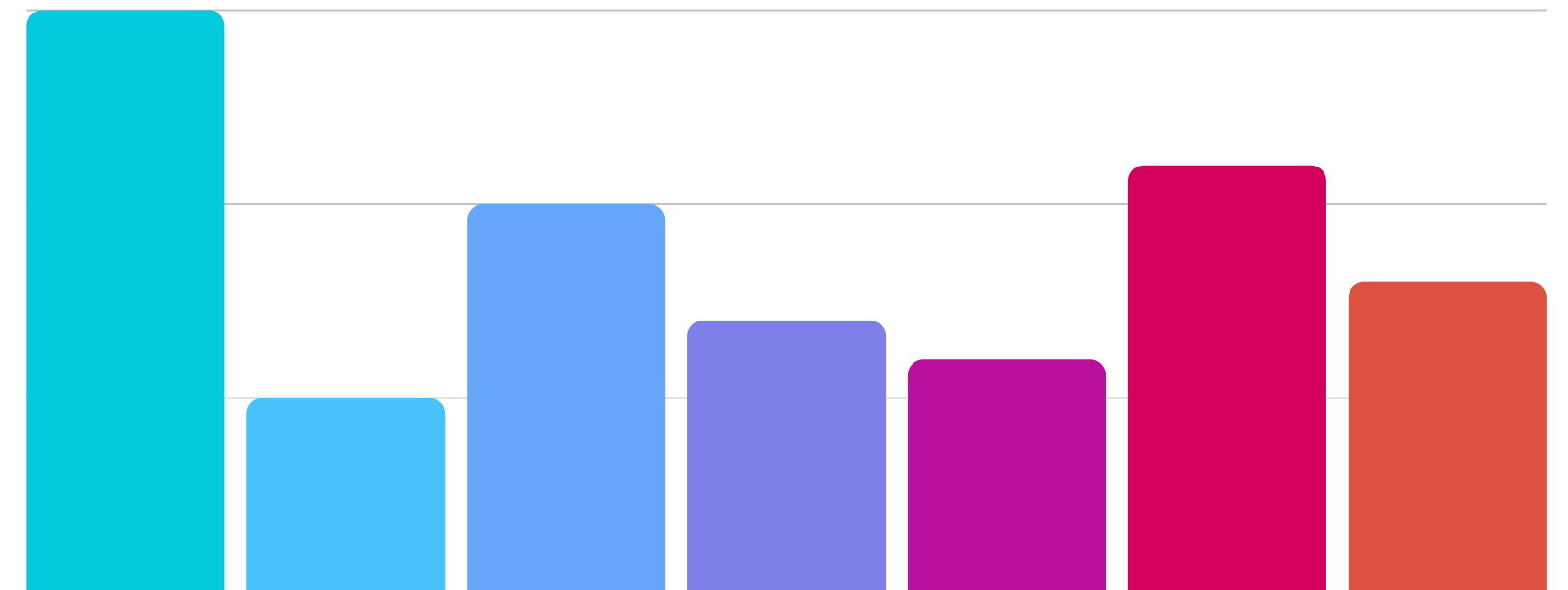
When asked which learning formats they plan to use more of, L&D professionals gave top marks to:

1. **eLearning**
2. **Microlearning**
3. **Blended learning**

Formats like in-person workshops, mentoring, and virtual classrooms still play a role, but the trend is clearly toward digital, flexible, and scalable delivery models.

What learning formats do you expect to use more of this year?

- eLearning
- Virtual classroom
- Blended learning
- In-person workshops
- Social learning
- Microlearning
- Mentoring



How do learners find training?

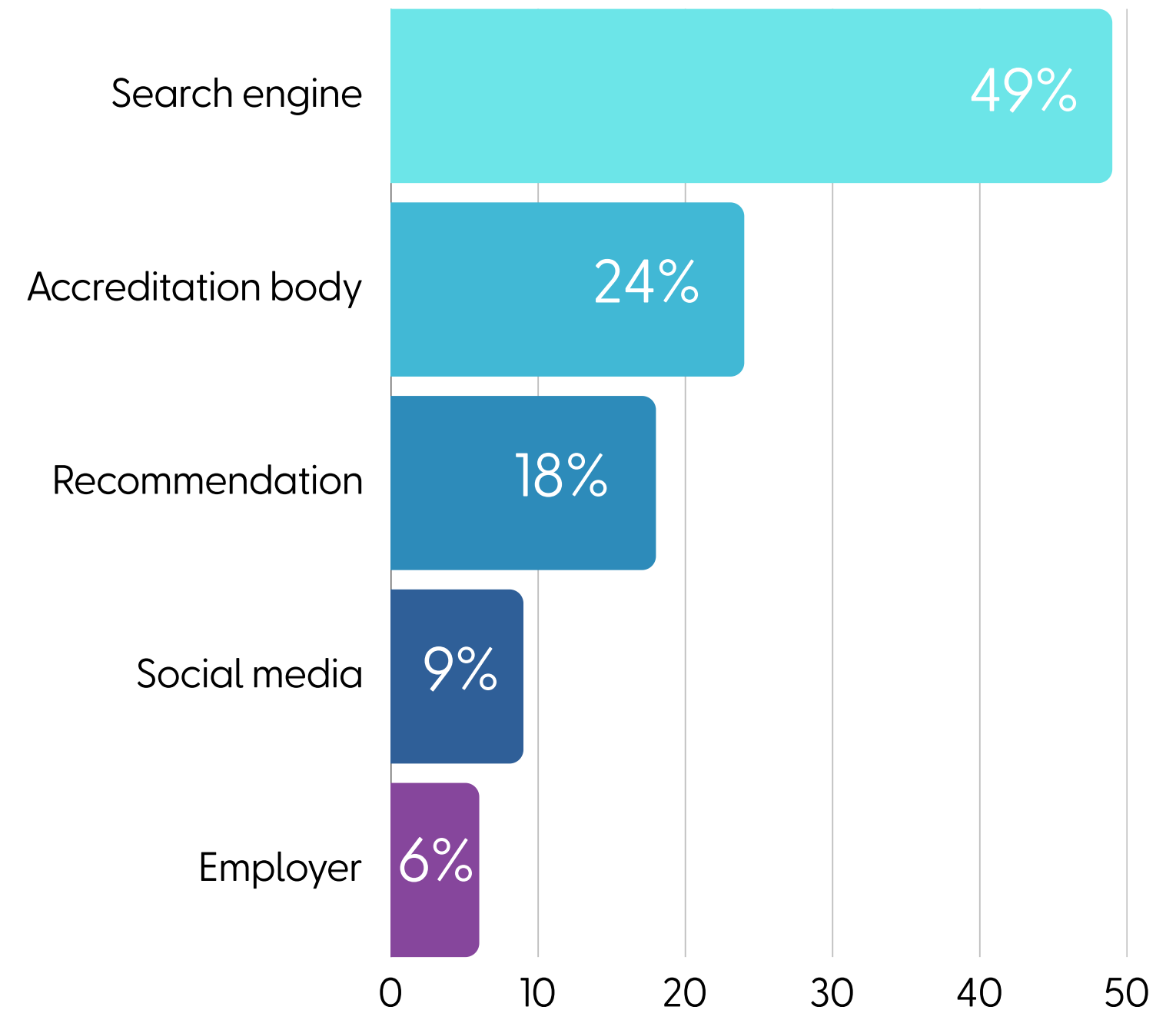
[Accessplanit](#) did research into where learners find training courses and here's what they discovered.

When it comes to discovering training opportunities, learners don't leave things to chance; they actively seek out providers in a handful of key ways.

Search engines remain the top channel, making visibility through SEO essential. **Accreditation bodies** also play a major role, as learners trust recognised authorities and often begin their search by checking which courses are officially endorsed.

Personal recommendations continue to carry weight too, with peer reviews, testimonials, and word-of-mouth referrals shaping decisions more than many providers realise.

For training providers, the takeaway is clear: focus on the digital front door. Optimise your courses for search engines, showcase your accreditations, encourage reviews, share authentic learner stories on social platforms, and build strong partnerships with employers.



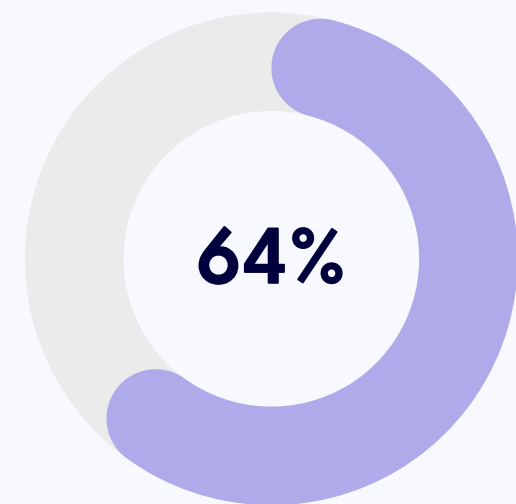
Booking methods

Less than 20% of training providers take 25% or less of their bookings online.

This shift to online booking systems for training providers has persisted over the years.

Not all training providers can offer online booking due to their need to provide customised enrolments, or more bespoke approval or contract-based enrolments, so we will likely never see online bookings hit 100%.

79% of consumers expect a streamlined checkout process. And in our experience, we've seen very clunky workarounds to allow customers to purchase courses online thanks to outdated LMSs and tools.



64% of training providers take most or majority of their bookings online

When do learners log in most?

As part of our [State of L&D report](#), we looked at how the learners of our clients used their learning platform. And the results were very interesting.

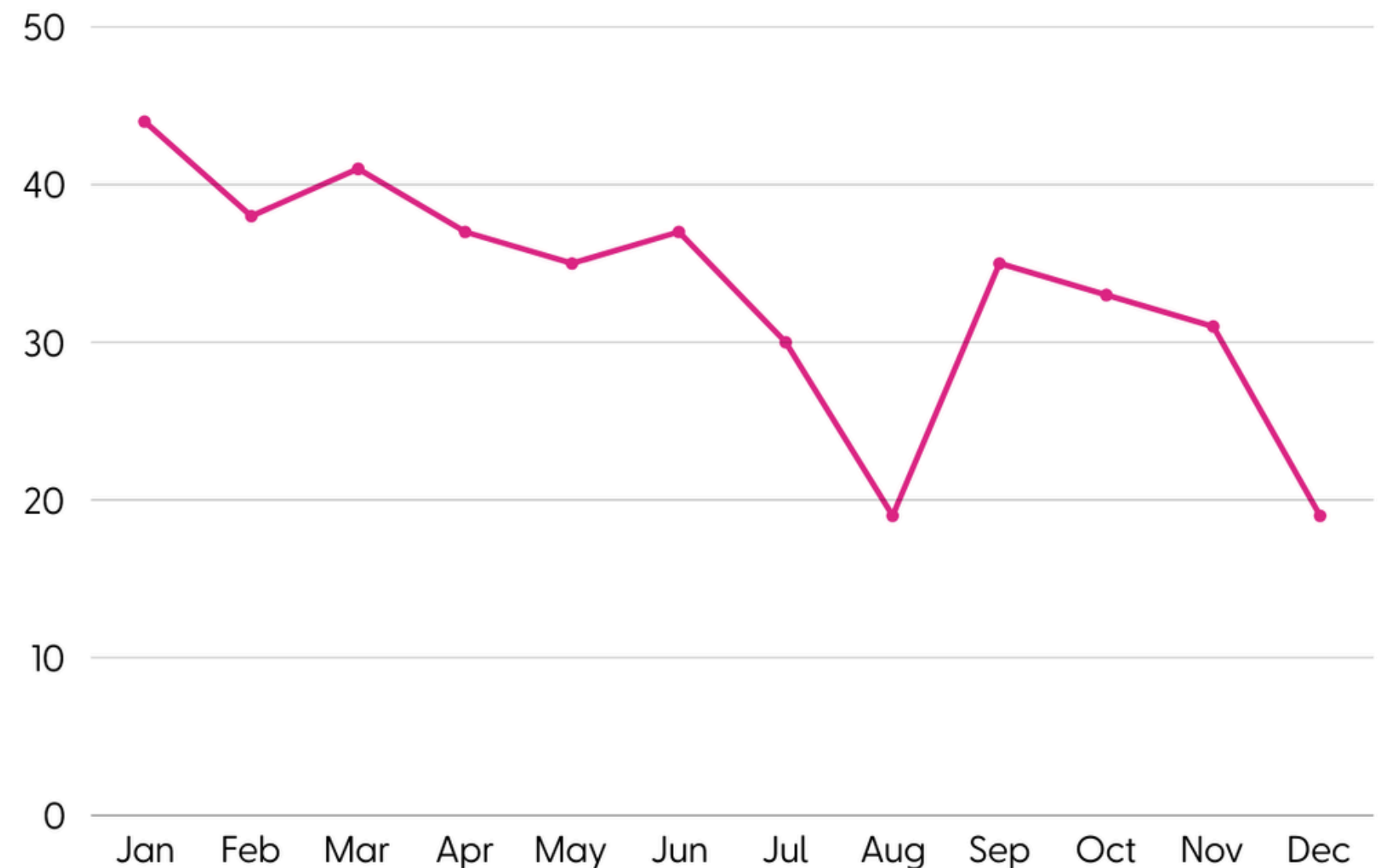
Q1 sees the biggest rate of logins compared to the rest of the year. January had the highest numbers.

This makes sense when you consider people coming back from holidays, and goals being at the forefront of our minds.

August and December were tied for the worst month of LMS engagement at just 19% of users.

But there's a reason for this too. August is the summer holidays. Your learners might be distracted, or simply out of office. And the same is true for December.

% of users logging into the LMS



When do learners enroll most?

For customer data privacy, this has been calculated as an average. Course enrollments, if there was no fluctuation, would be **8.3%** of the total each month.

In July, the amount of course enrollments sits at **14%**. That is 6 percentage points higher than the average.

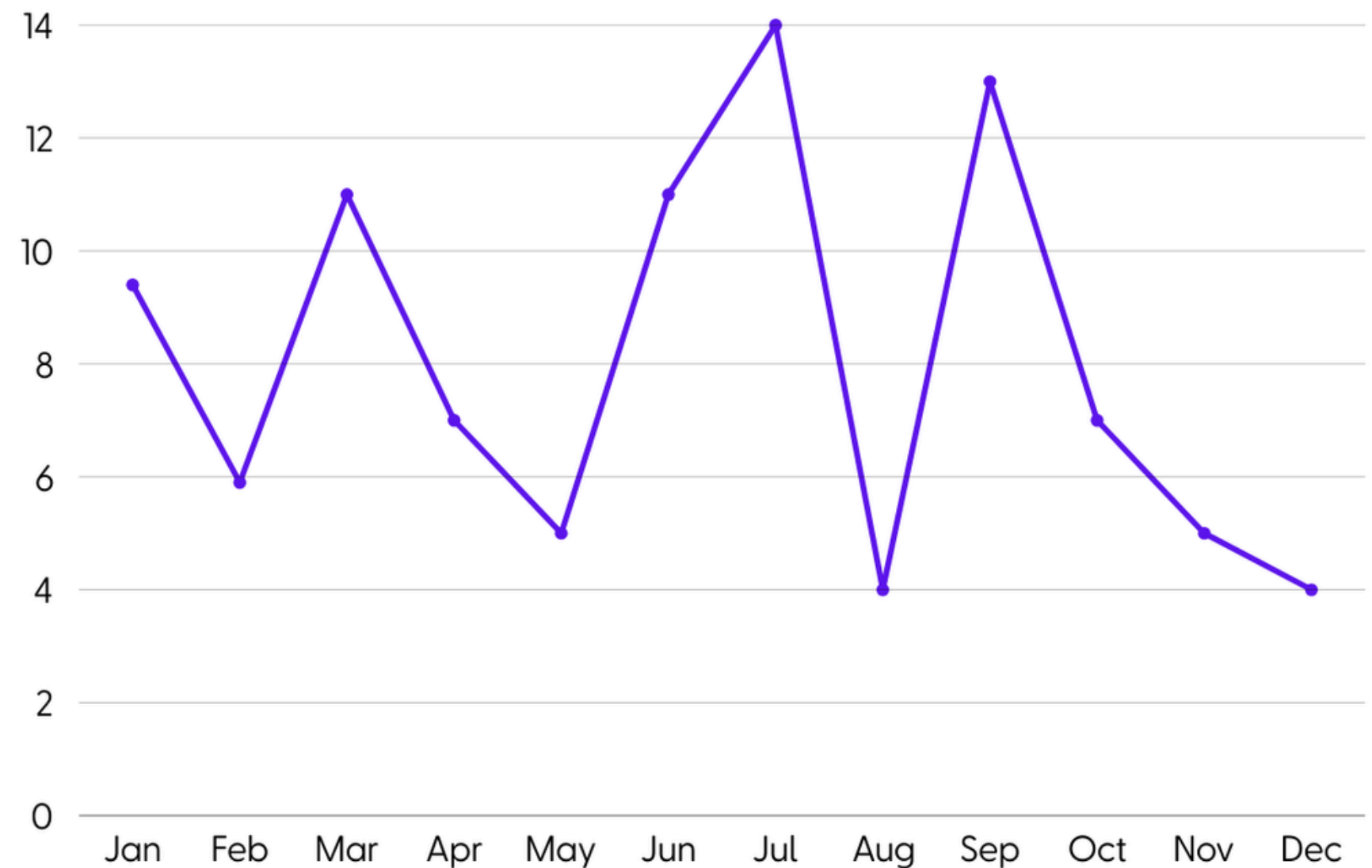
And compared to other months, the difference is even more stark.

August and December were both the lowest months for users logging into the LMS; we speculated due to holiday and absence, so it seems enrollments has followed suit.

Meanwhile, July and September see the biggest percentages for course enrollments.

This could be a result of preparing for summer, or getting learning done before the end of the year.

Course enrollments as a % of users



Using AI in your learning content

Accessplanit surveyed training provider professionals to see how they currently use AI.

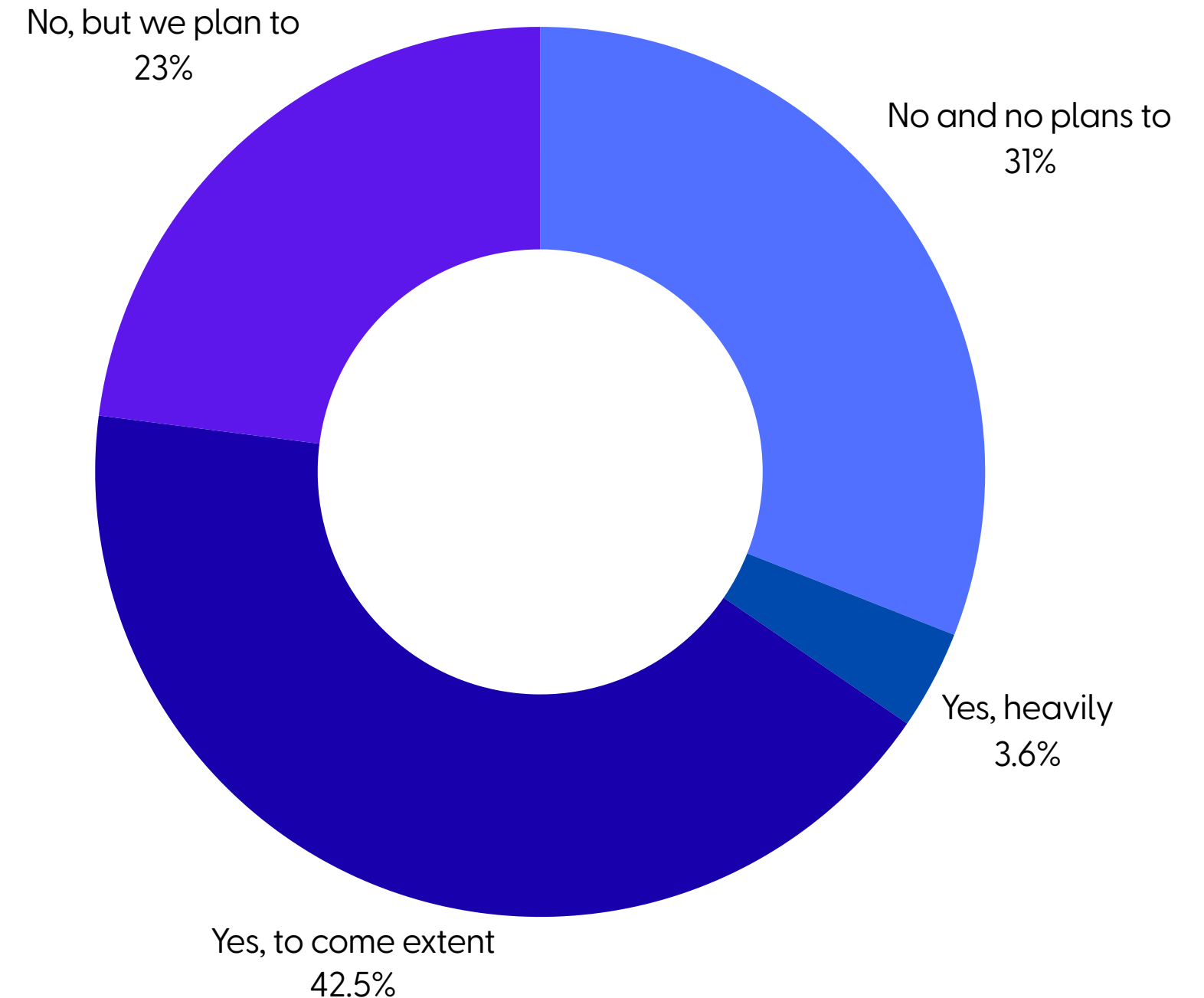
Only 3% said there were heavily using artificial intelligence in their training delivery and management.

When asked, those who said they used it did so for:

- Content creation
- Automating admin tasks
- Personalised learning
- Analytics
- Skills assessments

While AI is clearly on the rise in training, the mixed adoption rates suggest that many providers are either still in the early stages of exploration or have yet to see AI as a valuable tool for their needs

Are you using AI in your training org?



Key recommendations

The training provider industry is evolving rapidly, shaped by rising learner expectations, tougher competition, and the pressure to deliver measurable results. To thrive in this landscape, providers should focus on five key priorities:



Make your courses discoverable

Most learners find training through search engines, accreditation bodies, and employer recommendations.

Investing in SEO, building partnerships with accrediting organisations, and strengthening employer links are essential to ensure your courses stand out in an increasingly crowded market.



Standardise delivery and prove ROI

With budgets under scrutiny and training investment per employee falling, providers need to show measurable outcomes.

Using an LMS to track participation, completion, and learner performance not only demonstrates impact but also builds credibility with employers and funders.



Connect learning to revenue

Rising costs mean providers can't afford inefficient systems.

Integrating payment gateways into your learning platform streamlines enrolment, reduces admin overhead, and ensures a smoother learner experience that translates directly into revenue.



Scale smartly with technology

Resource shortages and limited capacity are holding back growth.

By consolidating systems and embracing multi-tenancy, providers can serve multiple clients or cohorts without multiplying admin tasks.

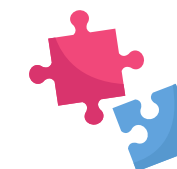
Emerging tools like AI and learning analytics can also automate repetitive work and personalise training delivery.



Embrace learner-first models

Today's learners want flexibility, personalisation, and relevance. Blended delivery, microlearning, and modular certifications all cater to these needs.

Providers who adapt their offerings to fit learner lifestyles – while still maintaining quality and accreditation standards – will gain a competitive edge.



Stay aligned with future skills demand

Green technologies, digital transformation, and AI are reshaping the workforce.

Providers that anticipate these shifts and design courses around future skill gaps will position themselves as indispensable partners in national and corporate upskilling agendas.



MBL, a provider of professional development for service firms, needed to extend its face-to-face seminars and webinars into a cohesive digital learning experience.

BuildEmpire rose to the challenge, delivering a vibrant, learner-centric LMS interface built on Totara. The platform gives users immediate clarity—displaying available courses, progress tracking, and earned certificates.

To boost engagement, a custom webinar activity was added, allowing quizzes during webinar playback and instant feedback to MBL admins. While a bespoke migration plugin ensured smooth transfer of legacy content.

Integration was central to the redesign, streamlining the learner journey from booking to course completion. BuildEmpire engineered webhooks to automatically create user accounts, assign subscriptions, and update enrolment data in real time.

Key project highlights



Over 95,000 users of the platform



2,000 different courses



Multiple complex integrations

About BuildEmpire

We're a platinum partner of Totara, working in the learning space for over 20 years. We support a wide range of customers, particularly those in the training provider space, to build better learning platforms for their customers.

From our eCommerce plugin, to our gamification feature, we take core Totara and we add to it via our Edition.

You can access a new theme, better UI, new dashboard blocks and much more, only with us.

Plus, we're one of the best in the market when it comes to uptime, offering a **99.998%** as standard.

Astutis.



The screenshot displays the BuildEmpire user interface. At the top right, the user's name 'Bradley Whitman' is shown next to a profile picture. Below this is a 'Catalogue' section with a search bar and filters. The catalogue lists four learning courses: Learning Course 101 (£129), Learning Course 102 (£99), Learning Course 103, and Learning Course 104. Each course card includes a category, a description, a duration of 4 hours, and an 'ENROL NOW' button. To the right of the catalogue is a 'Leaderboard' section showing the top three users: #1 Jessica Smith (369 points), #2 Eric Wong (321 points), and #3 Julio Iglesias (302 points). Below the leaderboard is a notification box that reads: 'You completed course one in learning 101 and gained 3 more points! A few seconds ago. With your new points total, you're now 12th in the leaderboard 2 days ago. This is your 3rd consecutive day logging in, so here's 3 more points. 2 days ago'. At the bottom of the notification box, a pink diamond icon shows a total of 366 points.

Get in touch

We pride ourselves on putting the needs of our customers first, and creating innovative solutions that solve their biggest challenges.

[Book a demo](#) to see our platform in action.

