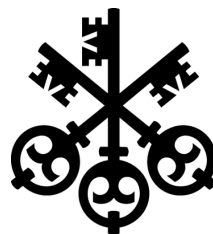


November 2023

BOOST Impact Report

#LifelongLearning
Your opportunity to remain competent.

digital**switzerland** 



UBS

Executive Summary

The Boost programme was launched as part of digitalswitzerland's lifelong learning initiative. It encourages Swiss citizens to digital upskilling to remain relevant and competent in the job market. This eventually contributes to the digital competitiveness of Switzerland and a thriving digital economy.

1. Report Content

- About the programme
- Outreach & engagement
- Impact on participants
- Overall remarks around lifelong learning



2. Impact

- The Boost programme supported **over 340** people with funding of max. 1000 CHF per person for upskilling in digital competencies. The course cost by participants totalled to approx. **1.2M CHF**.
- Impact on people's careers include enabling them to transition to more lucrative and healthy career options, gain a promotion/appraisal or staying relevant in their current jobs.
- Higher participation rate among women and employees from SMEs, enabling them to participate in upskilling measures.

3. Lifelong Learning & Boost

- The Boost programme highlights the need for lifelong learning to stay relevant in today's fast-paced environment.
- Participants' key barriers to adopting upskilling courses, *i.e. time and money*; they were addressed specifically due to the conditions of the current programme.
- **Employers' motivation and perceptions** toward the programme merit attention to shift the onus of upskilling onto the employers in a phased, targeted manner.

About Boost

The lifelong learning initiative was launched by digitalswitzerland and the Swiss Employers' Association (SAV). It started in 2019 with a national awareness and activation campaign about lifelong learning. **The Boost programme was launched as part of the lifelong learning initiative by digitalswitzerland** and was supported in the first two years by Gebert Rüt Foundation and Hirschmann Foundation. Currently, in its second cycle, Boost is supported by UBS and continues to represent the practice of #lifelonglearning and endorses it amongst Swiss employees. **The 2021-2023 cycle was implemented to address the COVID-19 job loss and newly emerging digital requirements** and enables the competitive status of the Swiss economy by encouraging digital upskilling, to remain relevant and competent in the job market. Over the years, Boost has been able to additionally uphold its commitment to diversity by inviting applications from all regions in Switzerland and underrepresented groups.

The key objective of the Boost programme is to encourage the practice of lifelong learning in a rapidly developing world through a concrete and tangible way of supporting upskilling measures financially. Although the quantity of the participants is important, it is even more important that the quality of the programme is such that it benefits participants in a cost-effective, sustainable manner. Over 90% of the participants were of the opinion that **money and time were their two most prominent barriers** to adopt learning courses for their personal and professional development. Taking this into account, the Boost programme has persistently evolved over the past few years to accommodate for time and money constraints by running a robust and successful **co-financing model** with employers and by incentivizing employers and employees alike to enrol into digital upskilling courses.



Report Conditions & Eligibility

Before taking a glimpse at the programme insights, it is crucial to understand the basic conditions of the report and the eligibility criteria for participation in this programme.

This report was written during the final month of the programme, therefore slight deviations in the numbers are possible, which are however not significant. Additionally, for better readability, some figures have been rounded. The final survey to measure the impact has been answered by 116 participants in the Boost programme.



The programme criteria were held simple and straightforward in order to *improve accessibility for participation*:

- Employees from organisations who are signatories of the **#lifelonglearning** pledge by digitalswitzerland.
- Employees of Swiss SMEs and independent Swiss workers.
- The course needs to enhance the participants' **digital skills**.
- The employer makes a substantial contribution to the training costs. Exceptions are possible in well-founded individual cases (e.g. small **SMEs** with limited financial resources).
- Once the jury has approved the programme, the participant must register for the planned course in due time.
- The training course should not last longer than 6 months.
- The employee and employer are available for interviews if necessary, so that a final report on the programme can be prepared.
- **Payment is made in two tranches** – on registration and on successful completion of a course that leads to adopting digital skills.

Outreach and Engagement

400,000

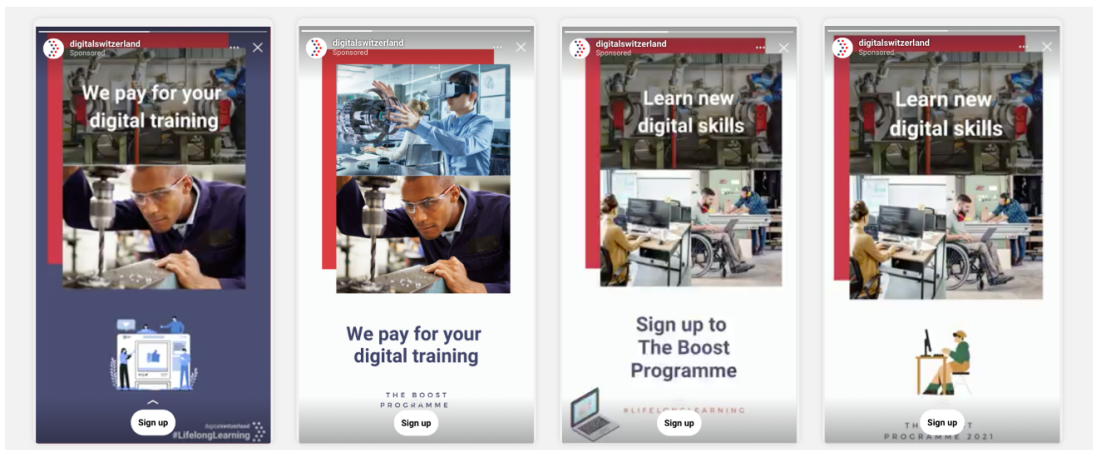
- **Instagram & Facebook** users reached and engaged from May 2021-June 2022

91,000

- **LinkedIn** users reached and engaged

1,000,000

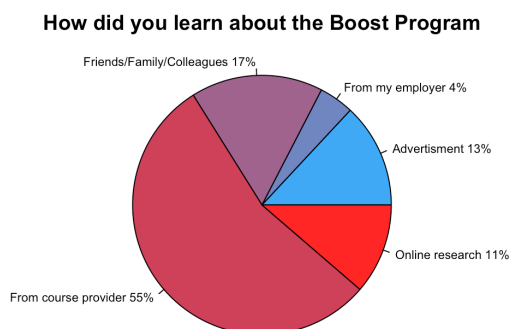
- Possible outreach to advertisements in **trams** in Basel and the "Sonntagszeitung".



Through the programme, a wide reach across all regions in Switzerland was reached, promoting the programme, but also lifelong learning in general.

Interestingly, even though the reach was very high through our campaigns, the most successful method of gaining the right participants was the partnership with course providers in Switzerland, as can be seen by the following graph.

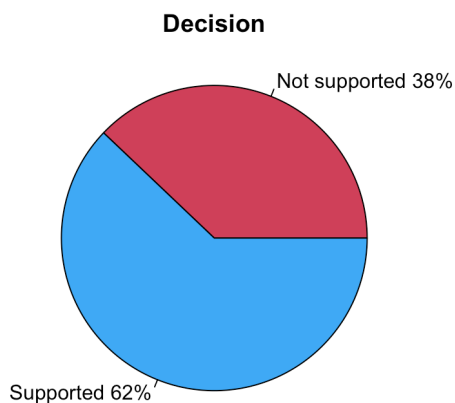
The course providers had a clear incentive to advertise the programme in order to increase participation and were hence very successful.



Snapshot Programme Insights

Since this programme was implemented to address the COVID-19 job loss and newly emerging digital requirements, **digital skills were conditionally emphasised** for participants to pick up. This led to an uptake of digital courses offered by premier institutions in Switzerland and abroad with highly relevant content such as digital marketing, customer experience, etc. **The programme witnessed 4.4x leverage relative to the cost, with courses supported of 1.2M CHF.** The average cost per participant was 836 CHF, whereas the total funding reached a total of CHF 270,000 CHF.

Besides tangible activities like emphasising digital education, short-term courses and co-financing them, the Boost programme has also led to an overall push to the **self-confidence and motivation** levels among course-takers. This just goes on to show that tangible inputs can reap significant intangible benefits and sustainable outcomes.



In 2021-2023, the programme saw applications from more than 550 Swiss employees, amongst which the jury selected **348 (62%)** as depicted by the decision chart.

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96     <h2>One more for good measure.</h2>
97     <p>Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam. Donec id elit non mi porta ante dapibus.
98     </p>
99     <p><a class="btn btn-lg btn-primary" href="#" role="button">View gallery</a>
100    </div>
101    </div>
102    <a class="left carousel-control" href="#myCarousel" role="button" data-slide="prev">
103      <span class="glyphicon glyphicon-chevron-left" aria-hidden="true"></span>
104    </a>
105    <a class="right carousel-control" href="#myCarousel" role="button" data-slide="next">
106      <span class="glyphicon glyphicon-chevron-right" aria-hidden="true"></span>
107    </a>

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Participants' Sociodemographic Characteristics

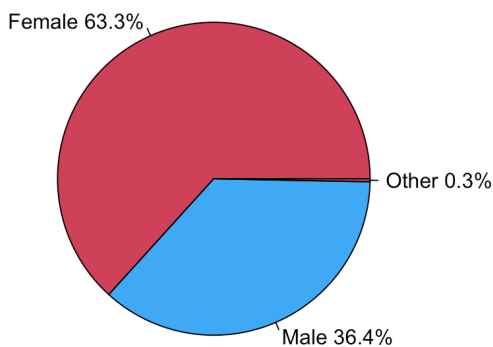
Age

This cycle of the programme witnessed the most participation from people between the ages of **mid-20s to 40**, with the median age being 38. This group is also the most actively employed/working age group of Switzerland, therefore their participation was anticipated. However, the programme observed significant participation from people between **40 and 60 years as well**.

These data points are testimony to the fact that #lifelonglearning is indeed a practice that people believe in, cross-sectionally, and supports the efforts of digitalswitzerland to **sensitise and support** the wider population with the transformation to the digital economy.



Gender Distribution

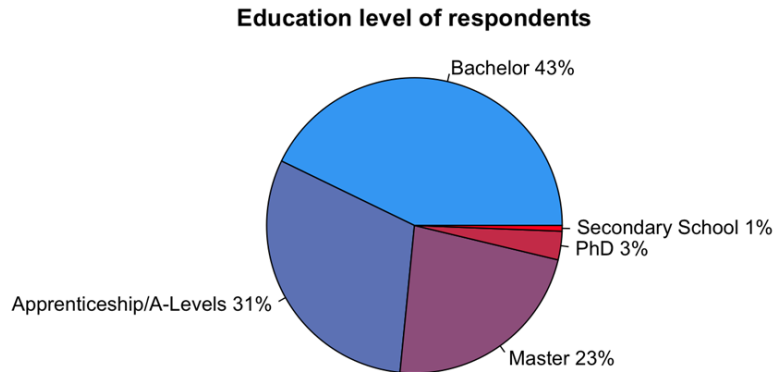


Gender

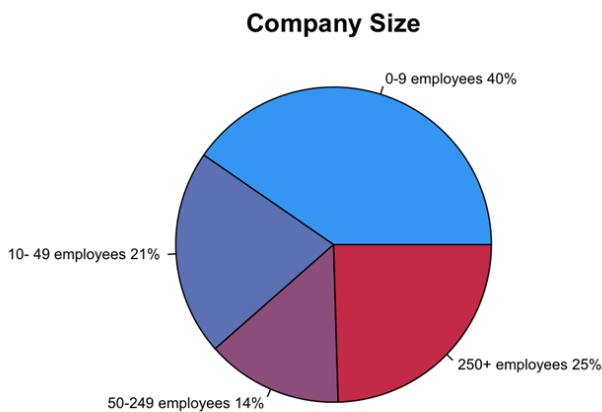
This cycle was able to cater to more women than any other gender. **More than 60% of the programme participants were women**, and one non-binary person. This shows that the programme is able to reach out to women in the workforce and is empowering them in learning crucial digital skills which may further **enhance their levels of career mobility or career transitions, as desirable**.

Educational & Occupational Trends

The Boost programme saw participation from people with various educational qualifications spanning from Secondary School to Apprenticeship or A-levels, Bachelors, Masters, and PhDs as depicted in the following chart.



The educational landscape in Switzerland is diverse and flexible. It allows a career entry, as well as further education on different levels. **Boost reflects this versatility.** It is a programme that reaches out to all levels and is intended to have a unifying effect. **In general, the Boost programme, saw a clear over-representation by participants from SMEs in contrast to large corporations.**



The combination of the educational and occupational data represented above further testifies to the fact that SMEs are the backbone of the Swiss economy. This programme was not limited to, but encouraging of, mainly employees from smaller companies to adopt the crucial digital skills. The equity and diversity lens adopted by the Boost programme becomes even clearer when this data is read in combination with that of education and gender diversity.

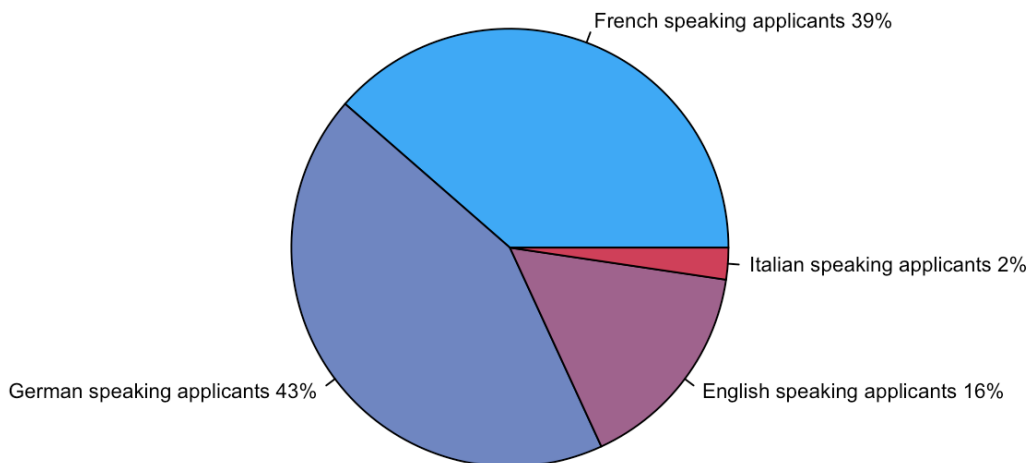
All in all, more representation of female participants, of smaller companies and of lower- to middle educational levels **show the impact where it's needed the most.**

Regional & Linguistic Diversity

Regional and linguistic representation goes hand-in-hand as the three languages, **German, French and Italian**, are represented in various parts of Switzerland with English being distributed across the country. The fourth official language of Switzerland, **Romantsch**, has not been specifically targeted and used.

Most participants were from the German-speaking region, followed by the French-speaking region and Italian speaking region. The data represents the Swiss demographic well.

Language Distribution of Applicants



It is interesting to see that **English-speaking participants are more represented than Italian-speaking participants**. This data can be attributed to the increasing number of expats and people with a migrant background in the country, as well as the increased use of the English language amongst the youth and English being the lingua franca in the business world. It can also be said, that even though specific emphasis has been put into advertisements in the Italian speaking region, the program was not able to attract a significant participation rate from Ticino (around 10% of the Swiss language distribution).

The Boost Impact

Participants' Overall Impressions

Overall experience, rates of recommendations and awareness routes

The feedback form sought responses from participants on their overall experience of the Boost programme. Vital insights include 98% of the participants stating that they had an overall positive experience, and about **99% stating that they would recommend the programme to others in their network.**

A whopping 83.6% of the participants reported that their expectations with respect to the programme were fulfilled, and 13% even reported that the programme exceeded their expectations.



Courses chosen by the participants

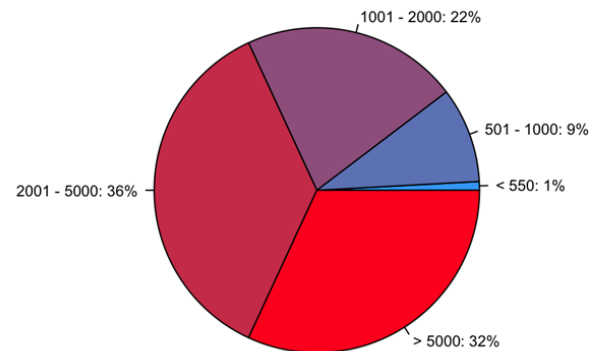
The following list depicts insights regarding the main courses chosen by the programme participants:

Most chosen course titles	Unique courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing, SEO or similar • Digital Design • Management/Leadership in the era of digital transformation • Data Analytics / Data Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning specific tools, e.g. wordpress, web development • Digital Transformation for SMEs • Blockchain • AI Management • Digital Product Management • Digital Ethics

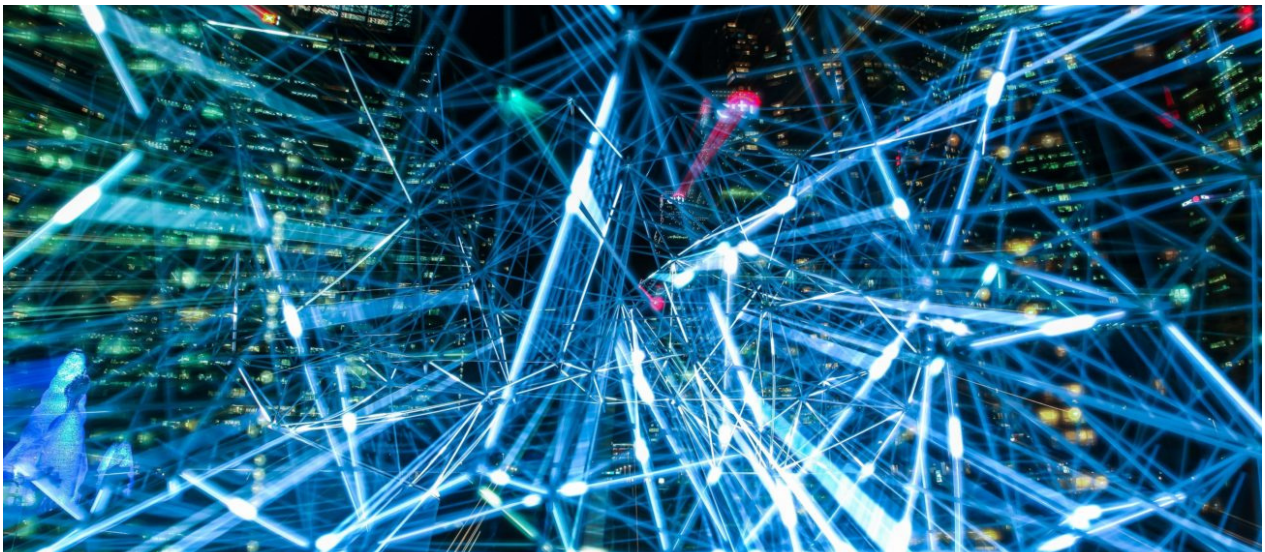
Course Costs

As seen in the graph, the distribution of the course cost is fairly equal above a course cost of 1000 CHF with the highest participation in courses ranged between 2001 and 5000 CHF. This gives an indication on the impact of the co-financing model through Boost and the employers as it has enabled people to take *in-depth courses providing them with a sustainable learning outcome*.

How much was the total cost of the course?



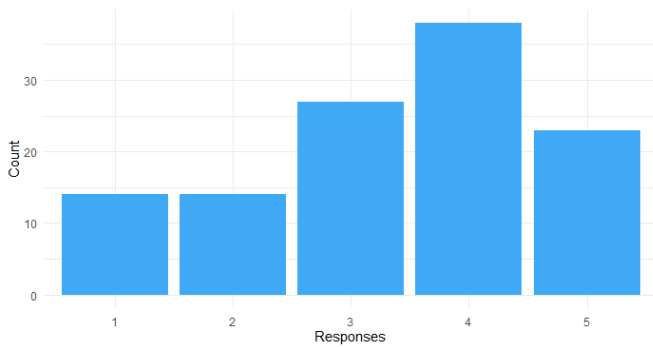
Overall, digitalswitzerland achieved a leverage of approx. 4.4x with the financial support and hereby contributed to courses with a value of 1.2M CHF.



The vast range of courses undertaken by the participants depicts the potential for *employee-led accelerated digital reforms* in the Swiss economy enabled by programmes like Boost that tread the line between generalist and specialist opportunities fairly accurately.

USP of the Boost Programme

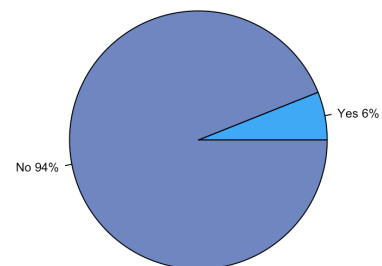
To what extent did the Program motivate you to sign up for, and complete an upskilling course?



On a linear scale, of 1-5, 75% of participants stated the importance in terms of motivating them to take an upskilling course with an answer of 3-5.

In terms of comparability of the program, 94% of the participants cited their unawareness of any similar offering, further highlighting the uniqueness of the program.

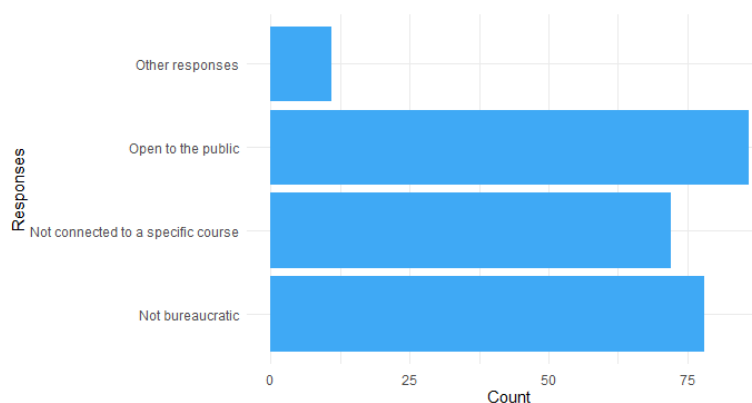
Do you know similar programmes as Boost?



In terms of attractiveness and USP of the programme, the following responses were shared, highlighting the ***non-bureaucratic nature of the programme, with its openness to the general public and any course regarding digital skills.***

What makes Boost attractive?

How is it different from other offers that you might know?



Finally, in terms of continuing the programme for future cohorts, ***almost all participants (98%) supported the continuation of Boost.***

USP of the Boost Programme

Most participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity presented to them in the form of the Boost programme. Participants credited the enrolment process, tranche payments and communications as smooth experiences.

"A huge thank-you, the whole experience has been a real game-changer, and has definitely got me out of a rut. I'm only at the beginning of changing direction and making a new start, but I'm feeling 10 times more confident as a result."

[Participant]

"I was impressed by the Boost Programme. It was easy to apply. The communication was fluid and the payment on time. Congratulations and thank you!"

[Participant]

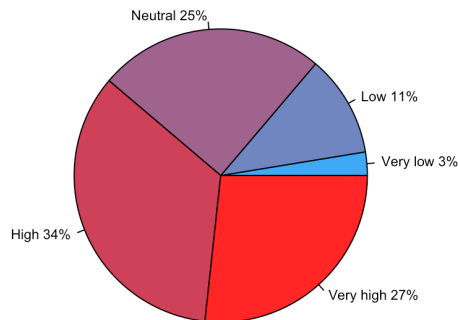
Participants cited this opportunity as a way to **transition to different, more relevant careers, while others credited the programme for positively changing their levels of confidence and encouraging them to adopt a new skill**. Overall, most participants reported experiencing this programme as an opportunity for **personal development and empowerment**.



With the help of these first-hand, user-led insights which continue to tout Boost as an initiative that helps Swiss citizens transition into more competitive roles and careers whilst learning transferable digital skills, one can safely infer that **there is a strong case for Boost to widen its reach and continue its people-centric contribution to strengthening the digital economy**.

The Boost Impact on Participants

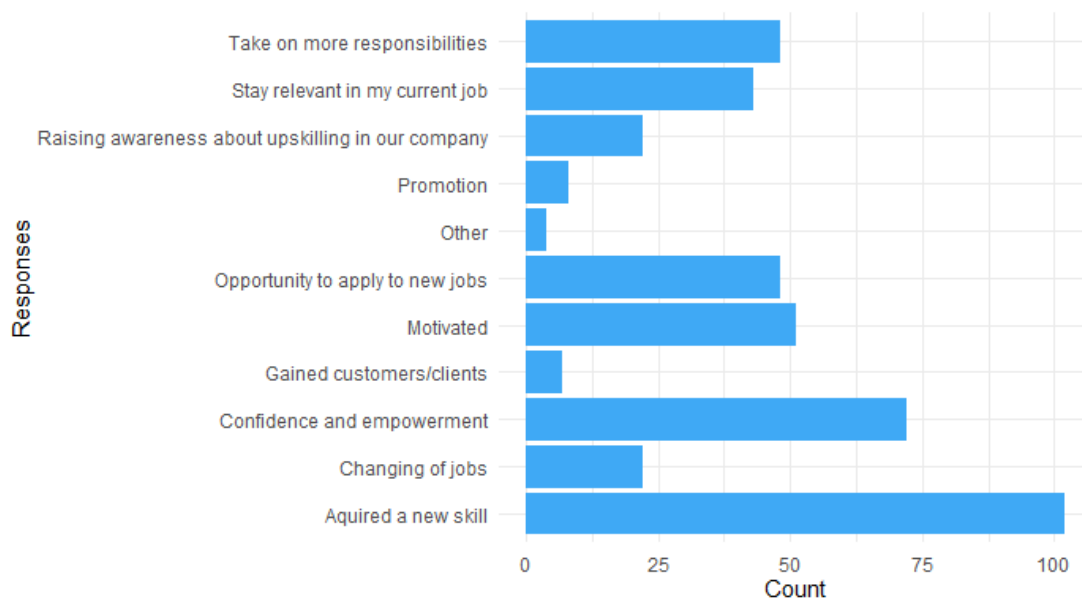
How much did your course impact your career?



This section explores the direct ways in which the Boost programme had an impact on participants' personal and professional lives. It is crucial to gauge the **spillover effects** of a career transition onto an individual's personal life, as many determinants of career transition are likely located in one's personal life.

In this regard, about **61% of the participants were of the opinion that the Boost programme did have a high or very high impact on their career**. This proportion further solidifies the claims that some participants made about the programme aiding their career mobility and enabling their confidence in exploring lucrative prospects.

How did your course impact your career?

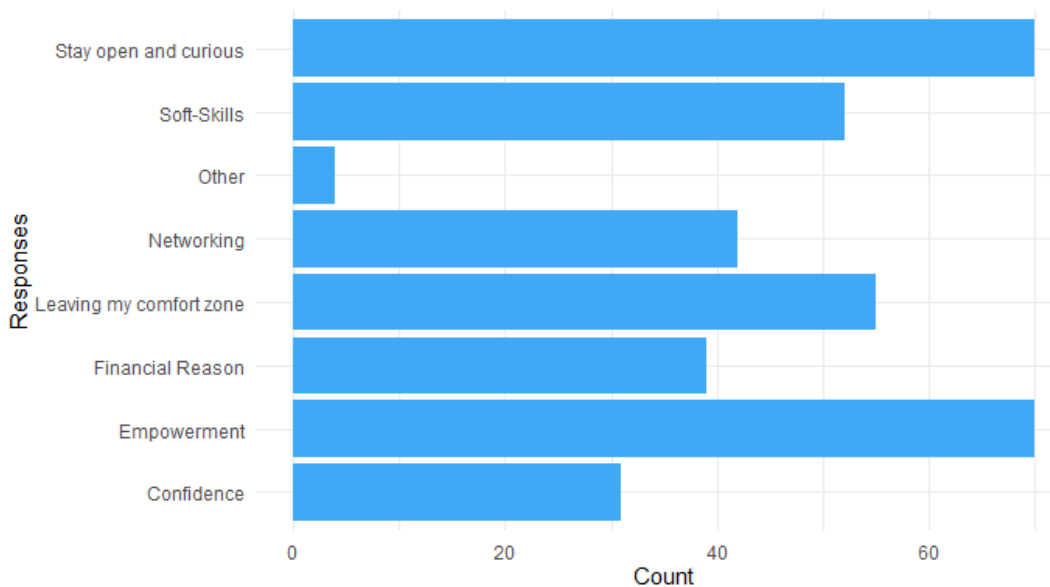


Looking at the specific effects of the programme, almost all participants cited that they acquired a new skill. Furthermore, it is particularly interesting to highlight the significant number of participants who were able to **stay relevant in the current jobs, take on more responsibilities or even change their jobs/get promoted** through their further education as depicted in the graph below.

The Boost Impact on Participants

Next to direct effects on participants career, the effects on participants' **personal life** are not to be neglected, as highlighted in the graph on the right. Aspects such as **encouragement to staying open and curious, leaving the comfort zone, confidence or a feeling of empowerment** all have a high impact on the future career and life of the participants. Additionally, a high number of people also mentioned the financial aspect of the programme, enabling them to participate in the programme and/or transition to more lucrative roles.

What was the impact on your personal life?



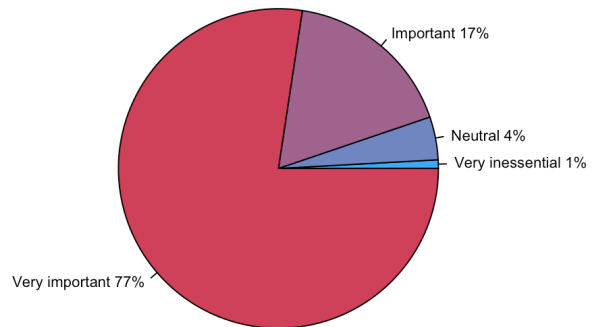
This continues to indicate the **ripple effects** of the programme on not just digital skilling of the participants, but also enabling them to explore their untapped potential. These insights are further indicative of the **need for awareness amongst companies**, i.e. at the organisational level, to invest in their human capital in order for them to thrive in their personal and professional lives, while also bringing meaningful yields for their respective companies. The need for such awareness also indicates the lack therewith and strengthens the case for incentivising employers-either normatively or tangibly, to invest in their employees.

Lifelong Learning

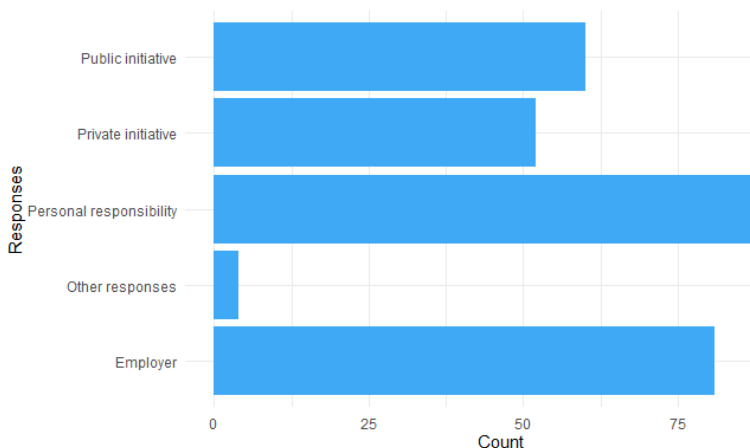
Participants' Perceptions about Lifelong Learning

The Boost programme is aimed at promoting lifelong learning amongst the Swiss population, and **digital upskilling** is identified as the area of attention due to its increasing relevance in every facet of human life-personal and professional. **Over 3/4th of the participants stated that they feel lifelong learning is crucial.** This certainly indicates that the belief in learning beyond formal educational systems can be a variable in determining the uptake of upskilling opportunities amongst employees.

In your opinion how important is lifelong learning?



Who is responsible to enable people with further education?

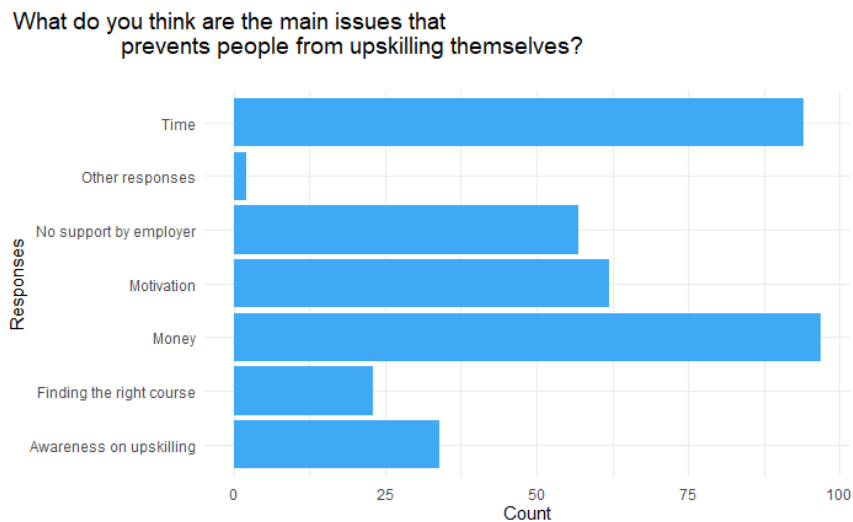


However, willingness or belief are simply not enough for picking up a new skill, especially for people who are employed and may have dependents. **Someone needs to be responsible for setting the conditions conducive for upskilling.** In this regard, based on the data, most people believe it's a personal responsibility followed by the employer and private as well as public initiatives.

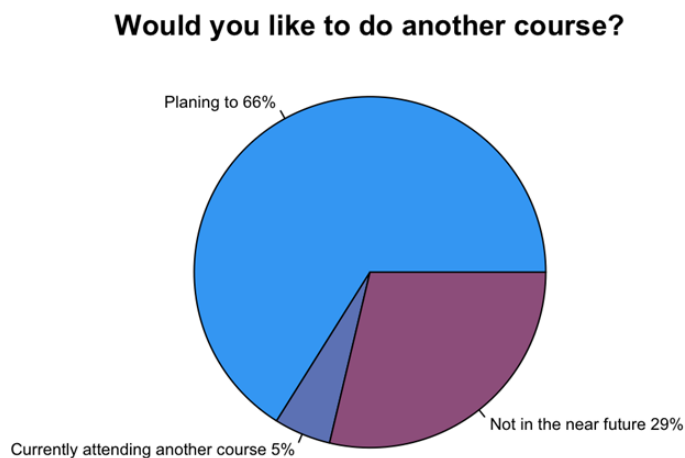
Looking at the wide distribution of answers, one can make the case **for a mixed approach leading to the highest outcome.** This is in line with the Boost programme as a private initiative partnering with employers to support motivated employees in their upskilling.

Participants' Perceptions about Lifelong Learning

Reflection on the barriers to adopting upskilling ventures and pursuing them led to the following responses – **time and money** were the top two most cited barriers that prevent people from taking up new courses. Further, **a lack of motivation and no support from employers were reported as other barriers**. Very few cited the lack of awareness or inability to find the right course as their barriers. This data indicates the need to address the complementary issues of time and money by instituting upskilling at the organisational level. However, the participants do seem positively futuristic with respect to their upskilling aspirations.



The following figure depicts their responses about doing similar/other courses in the future.



These responses emphasise the **demand for courses for upskilling**, at the same time, they highlight key preventive barriers which may be addressed at scale, with the help of a more representative sample.

Further, normative shifts to enhance motivation amongst individuals and increasing support from employers are issues that can be tackled via behaviour change communication strategies.

Final Remarks

All in all we are extremely happy to state that the Boost programme achieved a very high impact on participants' personal and professional lives and was able to address the highest barriers that prevent people from upskilling, namely time, money and motivation.

This cycle of Boost helped us further understand the deeply felt need for this programme and its long-lasting impact. We are further motivated to continue pursuing our mission of lifelong learning focusing on SMEs and underrepresented groups, all of them who form the very backbone of our economy.

This project would not be possible without the consistent support of UBS. **We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the UBS Corporate Social Responsibility team!**

Secondly, thank you to every participant who trusted the programme and congratulations on upskilling for the future.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone involved in the organisation and day-to-day operations of the Boost programme 2021-2023.



#LifelongLearning
Your opportunity to remain competent.

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