

# The Changing Face of CPD

At accountingcpd, we're passionate about providing flexible and effective online CPD that is designed specifically for accountants. Understanding what employees need from CPD is a vital part of this, which is why we conduct a survey twice a year to learn what's important to your team. This whitepaper presents the latest learnings and trends for 2020. Read on to find out what employees want from their CPD.



## Summary

Whilst the first of our 'trend' surveys this year took place against a backdrop of growing concern about the global COVID-19 pandemic, both businesses and individuals are now more accustomed to the many restrictions we find ourselves living under. Business goes on but we have all had to adapt to new ways of working and this is also true for completing our CPD.

### Key findings from this season's survey are:

- The pandemic has accelerated the change in how people want to do their CPD
- Attitudes to CPD are becoming more positive
- Online CPD is coming into its own
- Employers are getting more involved in their employees' CPD

Let's look at this in more detail...





## The pandemic has accelerated the change in how people want to do their CPD

2020 has been an exceptional year. The pandemic has caused rapid changes to schemes and regulations, and CPD has never been more important. Accountants everywhere need to keep up to date. Perhaps it's not surprising, therefore that...



**3%**

**more learners are choosing CPD with a more technical focus than last year**, bucking the trend towards more professional skills CPD seen in recent surveys.

**91%**

**of accountants want to be able to do their CPD, either fully or in part, at home.** That's up significantly from previous years but perhaps not surprising given that we are all being asked to adapt to new ways of working in 2020.





We've also seen the desire for face-to-face CPD fall even further this year. **Only 1% of learners wanted to do all their CPD face-to-face in 2020.** It will be interesting to see if that changes when restrictions relax and events are possible again. But our prediction is that it is unlikely we will see the return to previous levels of face-to-face CPD events.

There has been a **massive drop in people doing their CPD during the day.** Only



**31%**

of people in 2020, **compared to 47% in previous years.** Could it be that the flexibility of online options means that even those who would have attended sessions during the working day are now more likely to log on in the evening or at the weekend?



## **60-minute sessions**

**of CPD are becoming even more popular** with less than 10% of people preferring full or even half day sessions. Combine that with the fact that in terms of frequency, employees vote resoundingly for monthly CPD, we are clearly looking at a **'little and often'** pattern. This is encouraging and suggests a real desire for regular information and 'just in time' development, which can only be good for our profession at a time of significant change.



**99%**

of respondents prefer to do at least some of their CPD online and 65% of learners are planning on doing even more CPD online in the future. This trajectory has been evident for some years now, but recent events are clearly accelerating that trend.

Most encouraging is that **46%** of respondents now have a more positive view of CPD. Accounting professional bodies, as well as CPD providers, have long pushed the idea that CPD shouldn't be a chore but part of the day to day life of an accountant. Hopefully, this is evidence of this message getting through.





## Employers are getting more involved in their employees' CPD

In 2019, only 9% of employers gave their staff time off/allowed time during work for completing CPD. This year it's increased to 28%. 38% of employers pay for either some or all of employees CPD - a **whopping**

**increase of 23%.**



There's evidence that employers who support the employees' CPD - whether by giving time off, paying for it or even providing it - really do see the benefits to the business and improvements in team performance and it's good to see that message getting through to some employers. But still, according to our survey, only

**18%**

**of employers actually provide CPD for their finance teams.**





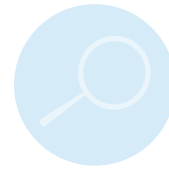
## So, what does this mean for the sort of CPD you should be considering for your employees?

Whatever your opinion on the usefulness of face-to-face CPD, it's going to be a while before that's an option again.

It is clear that online is the way forward and, our survey suggests, what employees want. But that online CPD needs to be effective, engaging and useful to the employees if they are going to get out of it what they, and you, need them to.

The survey suggests that short, regular bursts of online CPD are what employees are looking for. So, avoid long online sessions and pick CPD services where employees can do 'little and often' and don't have to complete it all in one session.

Flexibility is key too, with employees wanting to do CPD outside of working hours. People want to do their CPD at a time that suits them. If that's the case, how can you stop CPD becoming too solitary an undertaking? Choose CPD that embraces discussion, commenting and sharing, even if the users aren't online at the same time.





## Conclusions

In 2020 more employees want to do their CPD at home, but perhaps more surprising is the increase in people doing their CPD in the evenings and at weekends. What's encouraging is the move towards shorter bursts of CPD done more frequently. In our fast-changing world, it's great to see that our profession is responding and adapting.

With face-to-face CPD opportunities diminishing, online CPD has inevitably come to the fore and the move to online has accelerated. 46% of respondents have a more positive attitude to CPD, which is great. But it's not just employees realising the benefits - employers are seeing that taking the lead in their teams' CPD needs produces more engaged, up-to-date and positive finance departments at a time when they definitely need it.







Nicola Dann manages the Strategic Client Relationships for accountingcpd who develop online CPD resources for accountants covering both technical and professional skills.

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