



## Mind the Skills Gap



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Change is the new norm in our digital world – and this applies as much to accounting as it does to anything else but it looks like most UK workers haven't woken up to the fact.

[Our UK Mind the Skills Gap research](#) shines a light on some startling deficiencies with in-work learning, and a complacency with new technology – as Brexit looms and the fourth industrial revolution takes hold. Whilst 62% of business leaders said sections of their operations could be automated in the next five years, it is shocking that 26% of workers have not even considered the impact of automation on their roles. Management accountants need to grab and advise on what this means for their own organisations given the role they have in reporting to decision makers the risks presented by skills gaps and the opportunities that can be seized by closing them.

Technology is already affecting the way we work. In the same way that electricity led to a surge in new technologies that changed the world, artificial intelligence (AI) is set to be the catalyst for a new world and workplace. It is, therefore, not surprising that employees' roles will also change drastically.

In addition to the gap between employers and employees on the impact of automation, more worryingly is worker attitudes to learning new skills. Our recent survey of UK workers revealed that over a quarter have not participated in learning in the last 12 months. Such complacency towards technology and learning new skills signals a growing risk of a digital shock to the economy.

Dealing with new things, including technology, requires us to constantly learn, unlearn and relearn skills if we are to future-proof our careers and add value to businesses and the economy. As management accountants, we need to be mindful of our responsibilities, not only as workers ourselves, but also as enterprise guardians for our organisations. After all, the human capabilities of an organisation are more than a human resources issue, as a lack of the right skills and talent represent considerable non-financial risks to growing a business.

At the Association, we highlight the importance of a business's intangible assets, such as reputation, human capital and intellectual property, and how a large proportion of businesses' value is no longer fully accounted for on their balance sheets. This will only increase with the technological revolution, as financial processes are automated and our members focus on using data to tell the story of how value is created, using their developed emotional intelligence and communication skills. This focus will also be on developing business models that can integrate technology and repurpose workers' roles to improve efficiency, to benefit all a company's stakeholders.

Thankfully, we have not yet missed the boat and management accountants can help businesses embrace these changes. However, a drastic change in the way employees and employers embrace in-work learning of new skills and technology is needed if we want to truly embrace a digital revolution and reap the economic benefits of doing so.