

The National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE), Led by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), commissioned research and consultancy firm 108 Growth Partners to study Workplace Learning (WpL) among enterprises in Singapore, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The study aimed to assess the current state of WpL and propose actions to accelerate its adoption. The study comprised two phases:



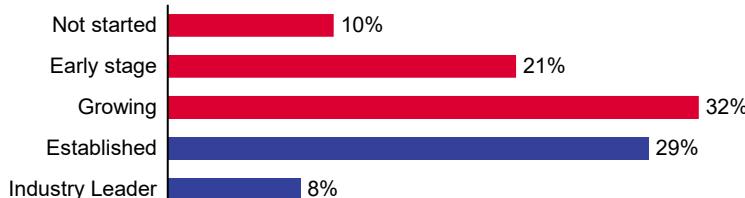
This infographic highlights insights from the research based on inputs from SME owners, C-suite leaders, and HR/L&D professionals on Workplace Learning.

State of Workplace Learning in SMEs*

1. WpL is still emerging in most SMEs

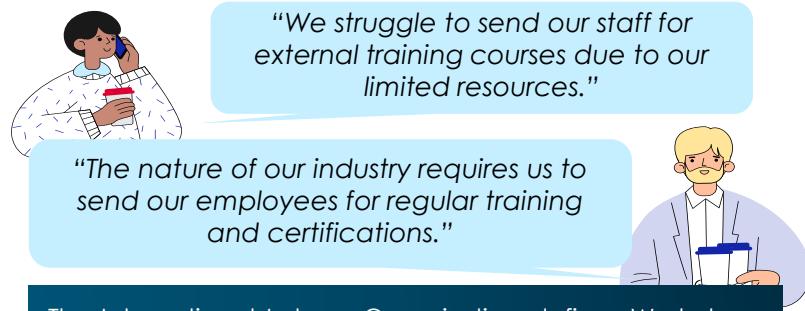


63% of SMEs are at early stages or have not yet began WpL adoption. Practices tend to be limited, unintentional, and inconsistently applied.



2. Understanding of WpL is inconsistent among SMEs

WpL is often mistaken for classroom training, overlooking its full potential when embedded in the flow of work.



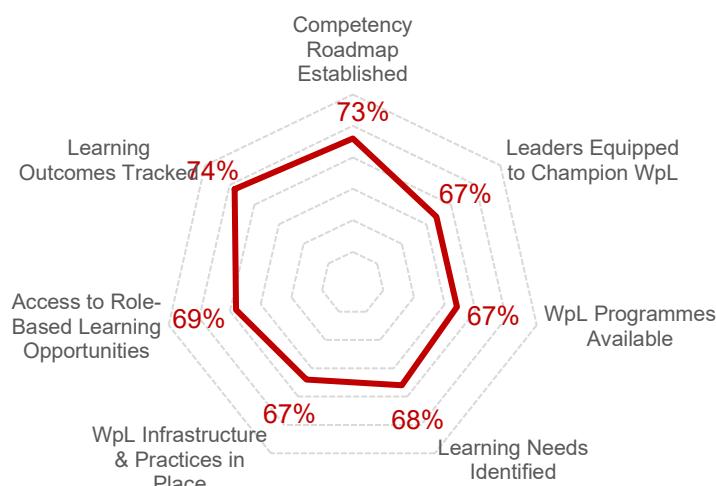
The International Labour Organisation defines Workplace Learning as the acquisition of knowledge or skills by formal or informal means that occurs in the workplace.

Enabling Conditions for Workplace Learning

3. Enabling conditions for WpL are still limited in most SMEs.

65-75% of SMEs report having few of the necessary conditions in place to support WpL.

Gaps in WpL Enablers



The largest gaps are in developing competency roadmaps and tracking learning outcomes.



Enabling conditions are more developed in SMEs with dedicated L&D functions or advanced WpL practices.

4. SMEs need customised frameworks and support to deepen WpL

Areas identified by SME leaders as needing most support:

- Support to **develop tailored competency roadmaps**.
- Tools to **measure and demonstrate learning impact**.
- Guidance to **build internal WpL infrastructure and leadership buy-in**.

"We need help in developing a competency roadmap that can map competency gaps and current levels of mastery to targeted programmes."

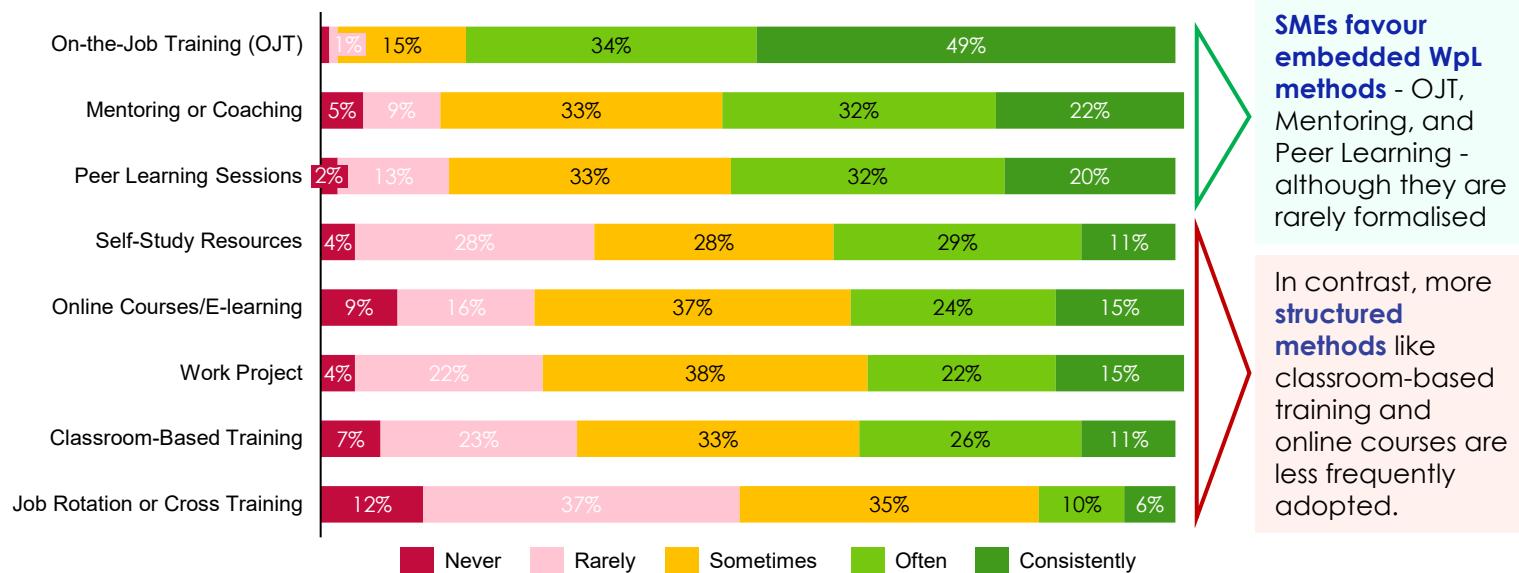
"An LMS portal to track learning progress can help ease the workload for our HR department."



* Given that most respondents were SMEs, the findings are considered representative of the SME context.

Legend: Quotes from SME leaders

5. Embedded WpL methods are widely used but unintentional and unstructured



SMEs favour embedded WpL methods - OJT, Mentoring, and Peer Learning - although they are rarely formalised

In contrast, more **structured methods** like classroom-based training and online courses are less frequently adopted.



SMEs with dedicated L&D function demonstrated higher adoption rates across all WpL methods.



"Recognition and acknowledgement of internal training efforts will motivate businesses to invest in it."

"We need toolkits with specific case studies on how to implement these structured programmes."

Workplace Learning Opportunities Across Employee Groups

6. Access to WpL opportunities is concentrated among general and frontline staff

61% rate access to WpL as good or excellent for general and frontline staff



Less than 50% rate access to WpL as good or excellent for middle and top management



SMEs tend to prioritise WpL for general staff, leaving middle and senior management less supported.

Barriers to Workplace Learning

7. Time, budget, and measurement challenges limit WpL

"We have limited time and budget to send staff for training."



Workplace Learning is often **deprioritised in SMEs** due to **limited resources**, compounded by **challenges in measuring its impact**, which makes it harder to gain recognition from decision-makers.

8. SMEs are motivated by tangible, immediate business outcomes

More than 60% of SMEs adopt WpL to enhance business performance and employee productivity.

SMEs prioritise learning initiatives that deliver immediate, measurable operational benefits.

Less than 20% of SMEs adopt WpL to drive improvements in innovation, digital transformation or capability building.

Strategic, long-term outcomes receive less attention in SME learning agendas.

"SME leaders are more concerned about the top line and bottom line."

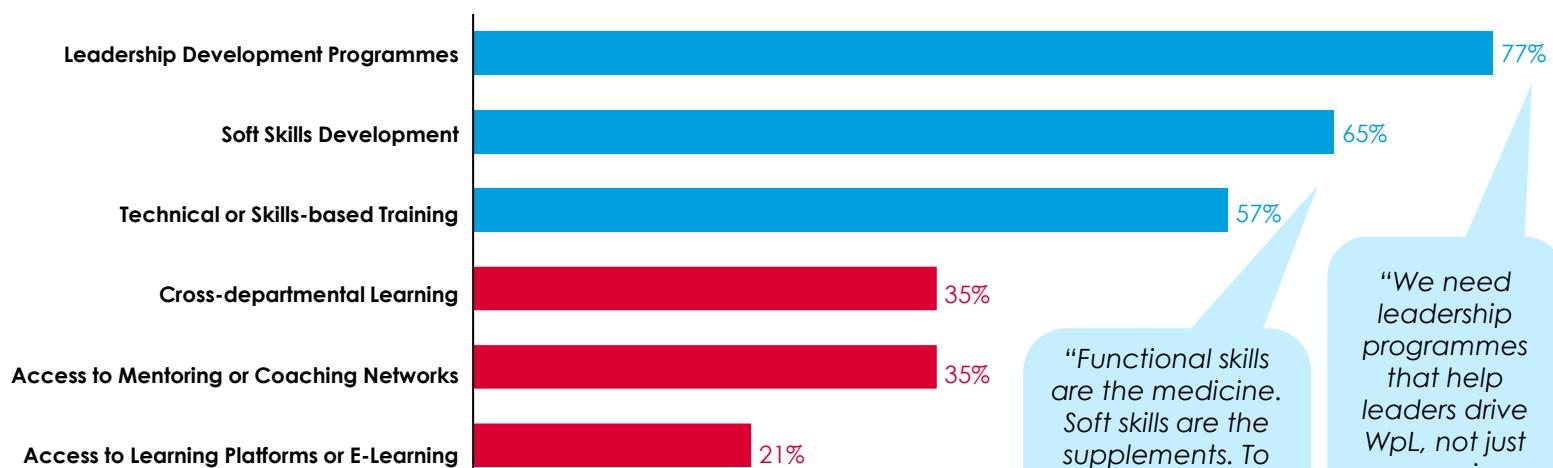


"SME leaders seek immediate gratification."

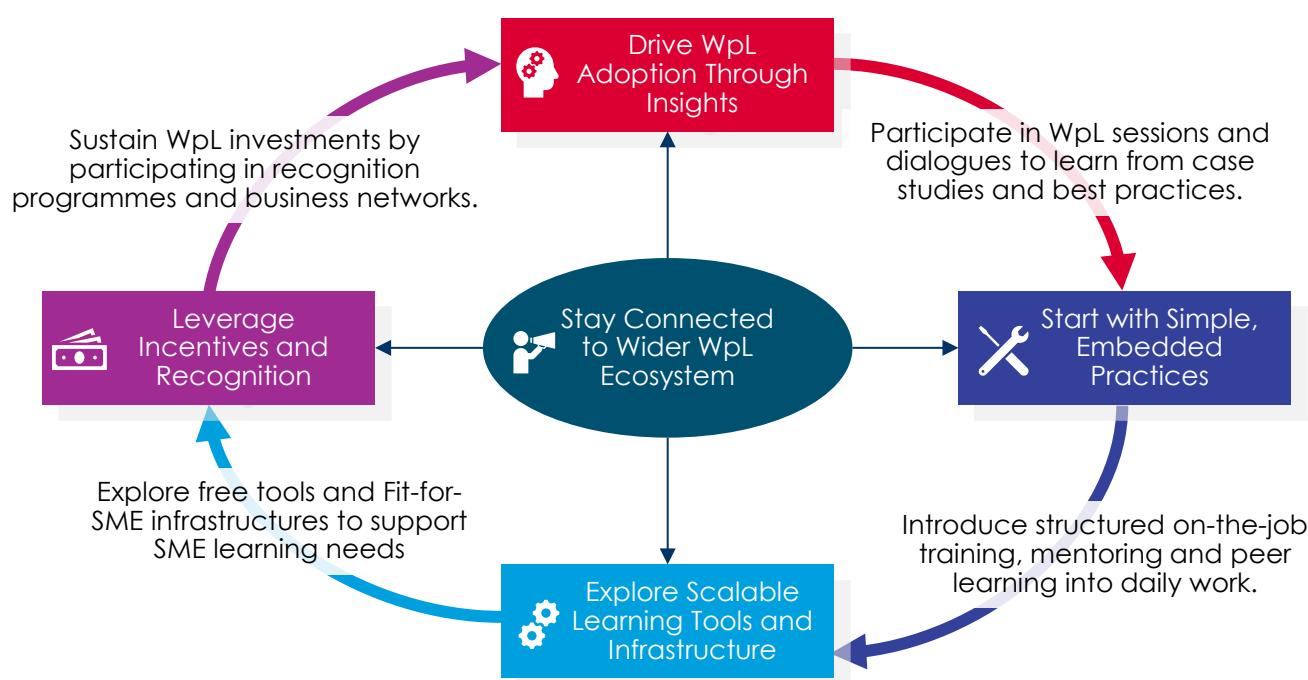
Immediate business impact drives WpL adoption in SMEs.

Additional Workplace Learning Opportunities SMEs Want

9. SMEs seeks more opportunities to develop leadership, soft skills and technical skills



Next Steps: How SMEs can Take Action



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