FIDI FOCUS

Measuring the value of training



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Foreword



Cédric Castro,
FIDI President

When margins get tight, which costs do you look at first? In many companies, training is near the top of the list. The results are hard to measure in the short term, courses take people away from their work when teams are already busy, and there is the old fear that staff will learn new skills and then leave for a competitor. When the pressure is on, it can seem sensible to wait for better times.

I understand this reasoning, but I do not agree with it. In my view, a difficult market is exactly when investing in people matters most.

Our industry is changing fast. New technology and AI are altering the way we work, and customers and corporate clients ask more of us than they used to, on compliance and quality of service, as much as on price. The people who will have to handle these changes are the staff we already have. I am not sure the market will ever return to what we knew before and I do not think we should wait to find out. What we can do is make sure our teams are able to adapt – and that depends on people who keep learning.

Keeping good people is another concern. Many young people leave a job quickly if they cannot see where it might take them. Offering them training is one of the clearest ways to show that we see a future for them in our company. Taking it away sends the opposite message.

This paper brings together research from several countries and the experience of FIDI Affiliates. Both point in the same direction: companies that train their people perform better and keep their staff longer. The FIDI Academy has an important part to play here, in particular through its residential seminars. For a young and promising employee, spending a few days with colleagues from other countries is often the moment they realise how fascinating and varied our international business is. Many of the contacts they make there last for years and they tend to come home more motivated to build a career in this industry.

The Academy is now open to anyone working in moving and relocation, including people whose companies are not FIDI Affiliates. I am pleased about this. The more people in our industry share the same knowledge and ways of working, the easier it becomes to work together across borders, and our customers benefit from that.

My request to fellow business leaders is this. Before you reduce your training budget this year, think about what it would cost you not to invest. And if you can, make one concrete commitment to your team's development for the coming year – and keep to it, even if business stays difficult.

Cédric Castro, FIDI President

"Offering training is one of the clearest ways to show employees we see a future for them in our company. Taking it away sends the opposite message"

Introduction



Since the pandemic, margins in the moving and relocation sector have been squeezed like never before, with lower volumes, rising operating costs and intense pressure on pricing.

At the same time, fundamental changes in the business – from technology and AI to regulation, sustainability and changing customer expectations – are redefining the skills that companies need.

The combination has led most businesses to re-evaluate their cost bases and cut back on expenditure that is perceived as a 'luxury', in favour of those considered to be essential and delivering immediate returns. Marketing, advertising and other less immediately measurable areas are often among those that, anecdotally, are first in the firing line. Staff training is also often perceived to be a 'safe' place to cut.



Why we don't invest in training

'The benefits of training should be tangible, but are often difficult to measure, and usually only over a longer period of time,' says Max Neumann, Managing Director of Streff.

For companies with tight margins, teams operating at capacity and an intense focus on productivity, training can seem like an easily cuttable cost. Businesses can also be reluctant to take employees away from their day-to-day responsibilities, and they ask: 'What happens if we invest in developing this person's skills but they then move on to another company?'

'The immediate cost and time away from daily operations can make companies hesitate, particularly when margins are under pressure,' says Sara Lyrum, of Aspire Mobility Group. Neumann adds: 'During peak season, when everyone is focused on serving customers, extensive training can be difficult.' Meanwhile, Markus Luthe, at Hasenkamp Relocation Services, says: 'Some focus on short-term costs or fear that trained employees may leave.'

These are valid considerations – perhaps. However, there is a substantial amount of evidence that demonstrates that training your staff not only develops the individual, but also brings a wide range of benefits that stretch throughout a business.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) 2021 report *Training in enterprises: New evidence from 100 case studies*, for example, suggests that organisations that educate and train their staff enjoy increased productivity and profitability. Better-equipped employees bring clear benefits to the organisation, it says, and progress more rapidly.

The report also shows that barriers to investment – lack of time, cost, negative perceptions among managers – are



Max Neumann, Managing Director, Streff

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Sara Lyrum, Group Director, Aspire Mobility Group

common, but it also emphasises the significant rewards available to those companies that look further forward than the next annual report.

Another OECD report into Portuguese firms that supported staff with training showed increases in sales, productivity and exports estimated at a minimum five per cent, but in some cases more than 10 per cent.

Earlier research from the UK – *The impact of training on productivity and wages: Evidence from British Panel data* – demonstrates that a one percentage-point increase in the proportion of employees given training translates into a 0.6 per cent increase in value to the company every hour, and average hourly wages of approximately 0.3 per cent more. A 2015 study in Belgium – *The impact of training on productivity and wages: Firm-level evidence* – found that while a trained employee commanded an average wage premium of 12 per cent, the additional productivity they delivered to their company was 23 per cent.

Larger studies back up these findings. A 2025 analysis of 159 studies and more than 75,000 observations *(Organisational-level training and performance: A meta-analytic investigation)* shows a close relationship between organisations that train and those that perform well. Interestingly, researchers found that the results also vary according to context and how training is delivered and measured – quality of the programme and its relevance are important considerations.

The analysis – of 119 studies – points to the positive impact of training on performance, but also indicates that the benefits grow over time, a reminder that the payback from training is greatest for those who commit to the long term. These findings were found to be valid for different industries and company sizes.

There are productivity benefits for managers of trained staff, too. The 2025 National Bureau of Economic Research study *Training, communications patterns, and spillovers inside organisations* suggests increases in managerial productivity can account for as much as 45 per cent of the benefits of a programme. When managers spend less time answering questions, helping employees solve straightforward problems or correcting mistakes, they are freed up to focus on more strategic, commercially useful tasks.

In short, the benefits of training are demonstrably widespread within a business. They manifest in more efficient, knowledgeable employees, who make fewer mistakes and need less supervision, and in better customer service, increased productivity, all-round stronger business performance and more effective management – not to mention greater resilience among companies that need to adapt to challenging market conditions.

The people question

Despite compelling evidence that making your people better has clear benefits for the performance of a business, anecdotally there are still companies that believe training people means a higher risk of them leaving for a competitor – particularly as employees' loyalty and allegiances are more fluid than ever. The research challenges this, however.

One German study, *The retention effect of training: Portability, visibility and credibility,* shows that training staff positively correlated with retaining them – even when the training was certified, gave them skills they could take elsewhere and was visible to other companies. Increases in retention rates, it estimates, are between 14 and 18 per cent – a 'double dividend' considering the combination of higher productivity



and greater retention. Meanwhile, 2025's analysis of 408 Korean companies in 75 industries – *Does investment in training help firms retain talent? Testing the commitment and human capital perspectives* – showed that investment in training typically led to lower voluntary turnover of staff.

Crucially, the return is greatest when employees are also given opportunities to put their new knowledge into practice. Training delivers most value when newly acquired skills become part of the employee's day-to-day role, rather than remaining theoretical.

Training is particularly important because the nature of many job roles and the skills needed to carry them out well are changing so rapidly through technology – particularly artificial intelligence – and changing customer expectations. The moving and relocation sector is certainly experiencing this, and needs staff who can adapt and bring new processes and responsibilities to their workplaces.

Getting the message

There is plenty of evidence that industries understand the value of training. The World Economic Forum's *The future of jobs report 2025* shows that 77 per cent of employers who planned this for their staff expect a boost to productivity as a direct result, while 70 per cent predict improvements in competitiveness. Talent retention was cited as the third most important benefit.

LinkedIn's *Workplace learning report 2025: The rise of career champions* found that 88 per cent of organisations were concerned about employee retention, with learning opportunities the most cited strategy to hold on to staff. Businesses with the most well-established development programmes were also the most confident about their profitability and ability to attract and retain talent.



The Affiliate experience



Angelo Lepore, Director, International, Armstrong Moving

For the moving and relocation companies interviewed by *FIDI Focus*, difficult market conditions are precisely when investing in people becomes more, rather than less, important.

Streff's Neumann says: 'Training is not a luxury that companies can afford only in good times. In our industry, it is always a necessity. As experienced and qualified people become increasingly difficult to find or to keep, developing talent internally is more important than ever. This is why we continue to invest in training regardless of conditions in the market.'

Streff has given its staff access to a broad range of training, including internal and external provision – such as FIDI Academy programmes – on-and off-the-job learning, classroom sessions and webinars, to suit differing roles, personalities and career stages. Timing is an important consideration, too.

'We try to use quieter periods to invest in development,' Neumann says.

Angelo Lepore, Director, International at Armstrong Moving, agrees that trading challenges, rather than stifling opportunities for staff development, make them all the more vital.

'Professional growth should not be put on hold during difficult market conditions. In fact, investing in people becomes even

“Better-qualified employees make better decisions, reduce operational risk, improve efficiency and deliver a consistently high level of service to our customers”

more important,’ he says. ‘Continued learning in any form broadens perspectives and strengthens critical thinking that help team members make better decisions.’

Other Affiliates also point to the strong connection they’ve experienced between development and business performance. Better-trained employees, they argue, are more capable of making sound decisions, dealing with complex situations and maintaining service standards when businesses are operating under pressure.

Similar arguments are made by other FIDI Affiliates: margins are tight, customers are demanding more, technology is changing jobs and experienced staff are becoming more difficult to replace – so having a knowledgeable, adaptable workforce is increasingly valuable.

But how do we quantify this value? Calculating the cost of a course against the estimated revenue it has produced is useful, but most agree it’s not as simple as this. Learnings from training are often put into practice as soon as the employee returns to their desk, but they compound into even greater gains over time as the employee’s confidence grows, their decisions improve, and good practice and more critical thinking drive further positive change.

The career progression seen among FIDI Academy graduates provides another way of looking at this longer-term return. Skills and knowledge gained earlier in a career can continue to deliver value as employees take on greater responsibility and move into leadership positions.

‘Training improves service quality, reduces claims, increases efficiency and helps employees take on greater responsibility,’ says Neumann. ‘The cost of training should be viewed as a long-term investment rather than a short-term expense.’

He adds that the returns extend across his business, well beyond the trainee’s department, boosting all-round ‘productivity, customer satisfaction, compliance and engagement’.

Robert Cormier, Group Director, Strategic Development at Paramount Transportation Systems, says his company has had a similar experience: ‘Better-qualified employees make better decisions, reduce operational risk, improve efficiency and deliver a consistently high level of service to our customers.

‘The return is reflected in higher customer satisfaction, stronger client relationships and fewer costly mistakes.’

To which Inés Tabuenca, General Manager at SIT Moving, adds: ‘Better customer service, stronger operational performance, improved compliance and greater confidence when managing complex relocations.’





Growing confidence

Fiona Conroy, of Conroy Group, agrees that return on investment goes well beyond the immediate bottom line and cites growth in confidence as the most significant outcome of developing her company's employees.

'It's the biggest benefit,' she says. 'When people understand the industry, the process and the "why" behind what they do, they make better decisions and feel more confident dealing with customers and partners.

'We've also seen improvements in communication, problem-solving and overall service delivery, which ultimately creates a better experience for our customers.'

Conroy adds that training also sends a message to a business's existing and prospective employees about how it values its people and shares their vision for growth.

'People want to work for businesses that invest in their development. Training shows our team that we're committed to helping them grow, not just do their current job,' she says.

'We've had team members complete industry training and then move into more senior positions within the company. It's rewarding to see people develop their careers with us, which strengthens the business at the same time.'

Hasenkamp's Luthe agrees: 'Employees appreciate working for a company that invests in their development. Industry-specific training creates opportunities to take on greater responsibility and grow within the organisation, helping us retain talent and develop future leaders.'

It is a key reason why professional development is a central part of the values at Affiliates such as Armstrong Moving. 'Training is a core part of our culture,' says the company's Lepore. 'We have a long-standing commitment to the FIDI Academy, which is highly valued by our employees, who see training opportunities as both an honour and an important investment in their professional growth. This helps us attract talented professionals and strengthens employee loyalty.'

Far from equipping employees to move on, a culture of development and investment clearly lengthens retention rates, says Lyrum, of Aspire – and is a key factor behind the company's own impressive rates.

'We believe development opportunities absolutely do contribute to retention. Our people value the fact we focus on and care about the investment in their future,' she says. 'We have a very experienced team, with an average tenure of approximately 12 years – and several people who have been with us for more than 25 years.'

Commitment to staff training alone doesn't guarantee employee retention, but when it's part of a strong company culture, it can be a vital pillar in employment packages that demonstrate that working for a given company will bring more than merely a job and salary. This is a particularly important consideration for the younger generation of employees, who shop around for firms they can work for that will encourage them to grow.



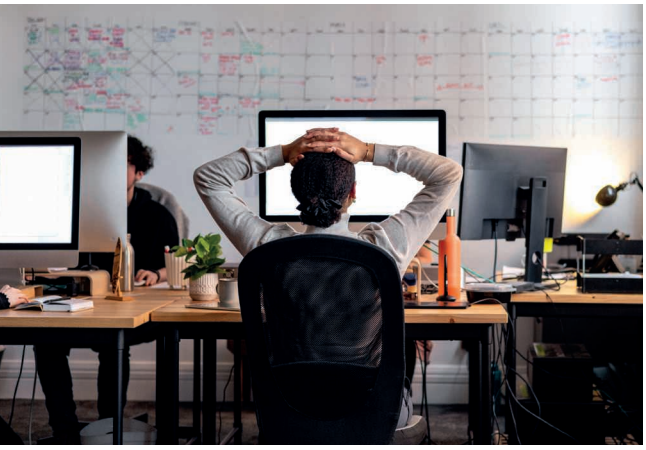
Fiona Conroy, Conroy Group

"People want to work for businesses that invest in their development. Training shows our team that we're committed to helping them grow, not just do their current job"

The cost of doing nothing

One of the strongest arguments among those Affiliates who invest in staff development as standard is that they believe the costs to their businesses of not doing so are real – and high.

The costs of training – from course fees, travel, management time and hours away from normal operations – are easily offset by the consequences of not doing it. Lack of knowledge can lead to mistakes, customer claims, inefficient working practices, poor customer service and compliance failures, all of which have significant potential costs attached.



Terence Wee, Managing Director of Smart Relocations, says these costs – which are often unpredictable and less visible – must be included in any ROI calculation.

'How we should look at cost of not training is the real question,' he says. 'Lower productivity, staff turnover and poor customer experience are so much more expensive than investing in employee development. Training helps us reduce these risks, while strengthening business resilience and competitive edge.'

Lyrum agrees. 'We do not consider training as a cost,' she says, 'because the cost of mistakes, poor service, compliance failures and more because of lack of training – or losing experienced employees because of missed training opportunities – can be considerably higher than the training itself.

'Reducing your training costs or having inexperienced people work for you can create much greater costs and risks.'

Cormier adds: 'We always appreciated the saying: "What happens if we train our people and they leave? A better question is: what happens if we don't train them and they stay?". Developing people protects the future of the business.'



Robert Cormier, Group Director, Strategic Development, Paramount Transportation Systems

"Lower productivity, staff turnover and poor customer experience are so much more expensive than investing in employee development"

Ready for the future?



Inés Tabuenca, General Manager, SIT Moving

For any moving and relocation business, the future is continually evolving – and at an accelerating pace – thanks to the introduction of new technology, higher customer expectations, and increasing complexity from compliance, sustainability requirements and more detailed RFPs.

Paramount's Cormier says training is central to keeping on top of this new era of rapid change, with digital competence, customer service, compliance, problem-solving, adaptability and the intelligent use of AI and automation all increasingly important.

'While technology continues to transform our industry, knowledgeable professionals who can interpret information, solve complex problems and build trusted customer relationships will remain our greatest asset,' he says. 'Continuous training ensures these skills continue to evolve alongside the market.'

Tabuenca believes 'digital skills, customer experience, compliance, sustainability and leadership' are all vital parts of the mix of skills needed to future-proof businesses.

Smart Relocations' Wee adds that 'cultural intelligence, alongside sustainability awareness, digital literacy and customer experience,' are essential factors to train into moving industry workforces.

Lyrum cites a similar balance of tech – and people-based knowledge that needs to be taught to staff in the modern workplace.

'Digital skills, AI and technology, but also skills within compliance, sustainability and data protection, are important,' she says. 'Strong interpersonal skills will all become increasingly important as well. Continuous training will be essential as our industry evolves. We are moving people, not only boxes, so the human element is vital in what we do and how we help families during the move... such as good listening to make the assignee feel at ease and safe.'



Shared knowledge standards



Markus Luthe, Hasenkamp Relocation Services

"Learning alongside others in the industry gives employees something that is difficult to match through more generic courses"

Affiliates say there is particularly high value in using industry-specific development through a variety of FIDI Academy programmes. This means their staff get up-to-date material that is relevant to the industry – guidance from experienced tutors, current content and best practice that has been tried and tested – while making connections with peers from other moving and relocation businesses.

According to Hasenkamp's Luthe, learning alongside others in the industry gives employees something that is difficult to match through more generic courses. He says the Academy provides access to industry-specific knowledge and best practice while giving participants opportunities to 'learn from other FIDI professionals, exchange experiences and gain different perspectives'.

It also provides a structured introduction to moving, and progression, for those who come into it from a different sector.

'As someone who entered the industry from outside, progressing through the full pathway from Essentials in Moving (EiM) to MiM and eventually LiM was an invaluable experience for me,' says Neumann.

'It provided a comprehensive understanding of our industry, gave me an outside perspective, adding to what I have learned internally at Streff, and reinforced the importance of lifelong learning. We have encouraged selected office staff to complete FIDI Academy programmes, to develop them personally and as recognition for their performance.'

Armstrong is another company with a long-standing relationship with the FIDI Academy. Lepore says: 'It has helped shape our culture of learning and excellence while supporting the development of professionals within our organisation. It has been an important part of our company's development for decades, dating back to its origins as the FIDI Institute. Our commitment is reflected in our FIDI Wall of Honour, where team members have their graduation certificates proudly displayed as a testament to their professional achievements.'

SIT Moving's Tabuenca says it has helped her company 'strengthen knowledge, professionalism and service standards'.

Training through the institution has also put employees and their businesses at the frontline of developing valuable new guidance for the sector, says Cormier: 'The Academy has helped establish common professional standards and a shared language across the international FIDI network, making collaboration between agents more consistent and, ultimately, improving the customer experience.'

A competitive advantage

As the skills required by moving companies continue to change, Academy content will also need to develop – reflecting new requirements around technology and AI, regulation and compliance, and customer expectations. Companies that continue to prioritise staff learning will be best equipped to deal with this new landscape.

There may be no equation or single figure that captures the complete impact of investing in well-delivered, quality training, but these interviews with businesses that have first-hand and ongoing experience of doing so show that there are significant returns across almost every part of a moving business. The wider surveys and analyses from other industries point in the same direction.

Some of the benefits are relatively easy to identify: improvements in productivity and efficiency, fewer mistakes, lower risk and tangible boosts to the confidence of well-trained staff. Customer service improves, sales performance can lift and employees become more capable of progressing into senior roles, enabling more recruitment from within.

Meanwhile, most companies agree that a culture of improvement through training means that not only do your people get better, but they also stay with you for longer. Businesses retain their knowledge and experience in-house for longer, which, in turn, reduces the costs and disruption associated with recruitment and onboarding. Even relatively small improvements in retention can therefore increase the return generated by investment in development.

There are longer-term benefits, too, including greater adaptability to changes in regulation, technology and new service areas. In addition, training can ensure staff are better prepared to respond to emerging business opportunities and new customer requirements.

In short, the FIDI Affiliates we spoke to highlight that developing staff is a cost – but one with such a strong influence on performance across the business that it can pay back in multiple ways, both in the short and long term.

The exact ROI will differ from company to company, depending on its workforce, markets and priorities. But the underlying equation is straightforward: if training helps people work more effectively, make fewer costly mistakes, serve customers better, stay with the business longer and step into more senior roles, the return accumulates in multiple places.

As Wee puts it: 'Invest in your people today and you will be prepared with a competitive advantage for future success.'

'Buildings, trucks and technology can all be replicated by competitors, while well-trained people cannot,' adds Cormier. 'Our people remain our greatest competitive advantage and continuous professional development is one of the best investments any moving company can make.'

'Ultimately,' says Neumann, 'our businesses move people. Investing in our own people is therefore the most natural investment we can make.'



Terence Wee, Managing Director, Smart Relocations

"Buildings, trucks and technology can all be replicated by competitors, while well-trained people cannot"





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