FAKE IT ‘til you MAKE IT?
understanding employee job confidence and know-how
Methodology

We’ve all heard the phrase, “fake it ‘til you make it,” but we’re curious to know how many employees are actually unsure of how to do their job or perform specific tasks at work.

Americans and Brits not only share a language, many times they share day-to-day tasks. To understand how this workforce may be “winging it,” we’ve polled U.S. and UK employees to understand how confident and qualified they feel in their current role and how they make decisions at work.

Our survey was conducted in December 2018, and we polled 2,400 respondents age 18+ in the U.S. and UK (1,200 respondents in each country).

We only polled respondents who are employed or self-employed, and used Pollfish to reach respondents directly with a 17-question mobile survey.
Key Findings

Training tools aren’t meeting the needs of today’s workforce.

Survey results show employees are insecure about the level of knowledge they have to perform their job. In fact, workers say job training is limited, leaving them to look for answers wherever they can find them (including Google!).

Employees don’t feel qualified for their job (and think the same about their coworkers)

When it comes to experience needed and skill set, many employees question whether or not they’re up to par. In fact, one in three (32%) admit they’ve felt unqualified for their job, and another one in three (33%) fear that a boss or colleague thinks the same of them.

Baby Boomers are the only group that doesn’t seem to be worried about their workplace qualifications. Just one in five (21%) Boomers feel unqualified in their role and one in six (17%) worry about what others think.

Not only do workers critically judge their own work performance, they also judge their colleagues’ performance. Over half (52%) of workers in the U.S. and UK say they have a colleague they don’t think is qualified for their job. Millennials lead in judging others in the workplace (54%), while less than two in five (38%) Baby Boomers had the same feedback for their coworkers.
Key Findings

Employees lie at work...just not as much as you’d think

On average, today’s workforce is open to asking for help. When asked if they’d prefer to ask their boss for love advice or admit they didn’t know something, the majority (83%) prefered to own up to not knowing a task or concept.

Two in three (65%) have admitted to their boss that they didn’t understand an assignment or concept, which included a majority of Millennials (68%). Most people (82%) would even take a polygraph test if it meant getting their dream job.

However, employees admit that they still lie at times, especially when it comes to padding their resume to land a job. One in five (20%) admit they’ve lied about their experience to get a job, a trend that happens more in the UK (22%) than in the U.S. (18%). Millennials are most likely to lie (22%), especially in the UK (24%).

Training is important for employee retention and happiness

Training matters to employees today, so much so that one in three (36%) - and almost half (48%) of all Millennials - say they would quit a job due to a lack of learning and development opportunities offered at their place of employment.

The majority (59%) say learning opportunities impact their workplace happiness, especially in the U.S. where one in three (32%) find learning opportunities critical to their workplace happiness, compared to one in four Brits (27%).

Employees will pay for training if it’s not offered at work. One in four in the U.S. (25%) and UK (24%) have paid for outside training to help them advance their career.
Employees are “Googling” advice to make business decisions

Employees may want training, but they aren’t satisfied with current offerings.

In fact, one in three (35%) say their employer’s training is out-of-date. Brits (38%) are more likely than Americans (33%) to say that training doesn’t meet their expectations.

What happens when employees can’t get the help or advice they need from their employer? They turn to the internet for help. When employees need help or advice on how to complete a task or make a decision, more than one in three (37%) prefer to ask Google for help over a coworker. This includes one in three (37%) Millennials and almost half of UK Millennial women (45%).

So, how can employers start to upgrade training offerings to prevent employees from Googling how to make critical business decisions? Get rid of old-school training documents and turn to video.

When asked how employees would prefer to learn, about one in ten (13%) prefer to read training documents, while one in six (17%) opt for training videos. Video is most widely preferred in the U.S. where one in five (20%) express interest in watching videos to train and onboard for their role.
Question 1

In the last year, have you ever felt unqualified for your current job (i.e., you aren’t always sure how to make decisions in your current role)?

Many employees aren’t confident they’re qualified to perform their job
- One in three (32%) have felt underqualified for their current role in the past year
- Those in the UK are slightly more likely (33%) than Americans (31%) to feel inadequate in their job

American men are confident in their job skills
- Across both countries, more women (33%) than men (31%) have felt unqualified for their current job
- American men were the least likely to feel unsure of their job performance (29%), while British women were the most likely to feel this way (34%)

Boomers are more confident than Millennials
- Just one in five (21%) Baby Boomers have felt unqualified in their current job, compared to one in three (34%) Millennials
- Millennial women in the UK are the most likely to feel unqualified (37%), slightly leading Millennial men in the UK (36%), U.S. Millennial women (34%) and U.S. Millennial men (29%)
Question 1: By Country

![Bar chart showing responses to the question by country.]

**U.S. Overview**
- 31% have felt unqualified for their current job
- 64% have not felt unqualified for their current job
- 5% don’t know

**UK Overview**
- 33% have felt unqualified for their current job
- 61% have not felt unqualified for their current job
- 6% don’t know
In the last year, have you ever feared that your boss or a colleague felt you were unqualified for your job?

Employees feel judged in the workplace
- One in three (33%) fear that a boss or colleague thinks they're unqualified for their job
- This fear was slightly more prevalent in the U.S. (33%) than in the UK (32%)

Women on both sides of the pond worry about judgment from others
- Across both countries, women (34%) are more likely than men (31%) to fear that a boss or colleague thinks they are unqualified
- U.S. men were the least likely to fear judgement from others (31%), followed closely by UK men (32%)

Millennial women fear judgment the most
- Millennials overall are more likely to worry that a boss or colleague thinks they are unqualified (38%), but roughly two in five (39%) Millennial women in both countries feel this way
- Meanwhile, Baby Boomers are less concerned with what others think, with only one in six (17%) sharing this concern
Question 2: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 33% have feared a boss or colleague thought they were unqualified for their current job
- 60% have not feared a boss or colleague thought they were unqualified for their current job
- 7% don’t know

UK Overview
- 32% have feared a boss or colleague thought they were unqualified for their current job
- 58% have not feared a boss or colleague thought they were unqualified for their current job
- 10% don’t know
Question 3

In your current job, do you have colleagues that you feel are unqualified for or don’t have the right skills to be successful in their role?

Most employees don’t think their coworkers are qualified for their job
- Over half (52%) of employees have a colleague they don’t feel is qualified for their current job
- Brits (53%) judge their colleagues more than Americans (51%)

UK women are the harshest critics
- In general, women (53%) were more opinionated than men (51%) regarding coworkers’ qualifications
- Women in the UK, however, were the most likely to judge (55%)
- American men were the least likely to size up their colleagues inadequacy (50%)

Boomers are less likely to judge
- Half of Millennials in both countries work with someone they feel is unqualified for their job (54%), but Baby Boomers don’t seem to see this as much (38%)
- UK Millennials (56%) were more critical than their U.S. counterparts (52%), while UK Baby Boomers (32%) were less likely than those in the U.S. (42%) to find their coworkers unfit for the job
Question 3: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 51% have a colleague they feel is unqualified for their job
- 30% don’t have a colleague they feel is unqualified for their job
- 10% don’t have colleagues in their current job
- 9% don’t know

UK Overview
- 53% have a colleague they feel is unqualified for their job
- 32% don’t have a colleague they feel is unqualified for their job
- 7% don’t have colleagues in their current job
- 9% don’t know
Have you ever lied about your experience/skill level or embellished your resume to get a job?

Lying is a part of the hiring game
- When it comes to getting a job, one in five employees (20%) admit they've embellished their resume to do so
- Brits are more comfortable lying on their resume (22%), while just one in six Americans feel the same (18%)

Women are more likely to embellish to get the job
- Slightly more women (20%) than men (19%) admitted to lying about their experience to get a job
- One in four women in the UK (24%) have exaggerated their work experience, ahead of U.S. women (21%) and UK men (18%)
- U.S. men were the least likely to lie on their resume (17%)

UK Millennials lie the most
- Overall, Millennials lie more (22%) than Baby Boomers (14%) to get a job. In fact, only one in eight (12%) of U.S. Baby Boomers admit they've embellished a resume (UK=15%)
- Roughly one in four (24%) UK Millennials admit to lying on their resume, while just one in five U.S. Millennials note the same (20%)
Question 4: By Country

**U.S. Overview**
- 18% have lied about their experience to get a job
- 80% have never lied about their experience to get a job
- 2% don’t know

**UK Overview**
- 22% have lied about their experience to get a job
- 77% have never lied about their experience to get a job
- 1% don’t know
Question 5

Would you rather ask your boss for love advice or admit you don’t know how to complete a task they expected you to know?

Today’s workforce isn’t afraid to ask for help
- Across both countries, the majority would rather admit they didn’t know how to complete a task (83%) (US=83%; UK=83%)
- One in 10 (10%) workers would prefer to ask a boss for love advice instead of admitting they didn’t know how to complete a task

Both sexes are comfortable admitting what they don’t know
- Women (83%) and men (82%) would almost equally prefer to admit they didn’t know how to complete a task, instead of ask for love advice
- That said, U.S. women (84%) and UK men (84%) were the most likely to ask for help, followed by UK women (82%) and U.S. men (80%)

UK Boomers are almost always open to help
- Overall, Millennials (10%) are more likely to ask for love advice over help in a task versus Baby Boomers (4%)
- UK Boomers (1%) had the smallest amount of respondents who would choose love advice over admitting they need help (U.S.=7%)

Docebo | FAKE IT ‘TIL YOU MAKE IT SURVEY  15
Question 5: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 11% would rather ask their boss for love advice
- 83% would rather admit to their boss that they don't know how to complete a task
- 6% don’t know

UK Overview
- 10% would rather ask their boss for love advice
- 83% would rather admit to their boss that they don't know how to complete a task
- 7% don’t know
Have you ever made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because you were afraid to admit you didn’t know how to complete the task?

Bad decisions happen
- Roughly one in four (28%) employees admit they’ve made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because they were afraid to admit they didn’t know how to complete a task
- Almost one in three (30%) UK workers admit to this behavior - significantly more than in the U.S. (26%)

UK women let their ego impact their work
- More women (30%) than men (26%) will risk submitting poor quality work to avoid admitting they didn’t know something
- British women are the most susceptible to this behavior (35%), while just one in four UK men (26%), U.S men (27%) and U.S. women (26%) note the same

Poorly informed mistakes are common for Millennials
- One in three (31%) Millennials admit to making a bad decision because they weren’t able to admit they didn’t know something
  - Meanwhile, just one in five (20%) Baby Boomers had the same experience
- UK Baby Boomers were the least likely to let their ego impact their work (19%), while almost half of UK Millennial women (44%) suffered from poor decisions
Question 6: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 26% have made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because they were afraid to admit they didn't know how to complete a task
- 68% haven't made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because they were afraid to admit they didn't know how to complete a task
- 6% don't know

UK Overview
- 30% have made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because they were afraid to admit they didn't know how to complete a task
- 63% haven't made a bad decision or submitted poor quality work because they were afraid to admit they didn't know how to complete a task
- 7% don't know
Question 7

If your dream job required you to take a polygraph (lie detector test) about your work skills or experience, would you do it?

A polygraph wouldn’t catch most employees lying about their qualifications

- The majority of workers across both countries (82%) said they’d take a polygraph test about their qualifications to apply for their dream job
- UK workers were slightly less willing (80%) than those in the U.S. workforce (85%)

U.S. women are the most comfortable being honest

- While roughly an equal number of men (82%) and women (83%) were comfortable taking a polygraph test, U.S. women (86%) were the most comfortable being honest about their skill set
- In comparison, UK women were the least comfortable with the idea (79%)

U.S. Boomer Men are leery about a lie detector; as are UK Millennial women

- Overall Millennials (83%) and Baby Boomers (82%) tend to be comfortable with a polygraph test
- That said, U.S. Baby Boomer men (72%) were the least likely to take a polygraph test for their dream job, followed closely by UK Millennial women (77%)
**U.S. Overview**

- 85% would take a polygraph test about their work skills / experience
- 9% wouldn't take a polygraph test about their work skills / experience
- 6% don't know

**UK Overview**

- 80% would take a polygraph test about their work skills / experience
- 10% wouldn't take a polygraph test about their work skills / experience
- 10% don't know
Have you ever been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task at work?

U.S. employees get into trouble for not knowing how to do their job
- Nearly one in five (16%) employees have been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task
- U.S. employees (18%) were more likely to be criticized for a lack of knowledge than those in the UK (14%)

U.S. men get called out the most
- Overall, women (17%) are more commonly reprimanded than men (15%)
- However, one in five U.S. men (20%) admit they've been reprimanded, leading U.S. women (17%), UK women (17%) and UK men (13%).

U.S. Boomers are commonly called out
- Slightly more Baby Boomers (18%) than Millennials (16%) are scolded for not knowing how to complete a task
- U.S. Boomers, however, face the most flack with one in five (21%) admitting they've been criticized (UK Boomers=14%)
Question 8: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 18% have been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task
- 79% haven’t been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task
- 4% don’t know

UK Overview
- 14% have been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task
- 81% haven’t been reprimanded for not knowing how to complete a task
- 5% don’t know
Have you ever admitted to your boss that you didn’t understand an assignment, skill or concept related to your core job function?

Employees will stay quiet if they don’t understand an assignment
- One in three (31%) won’t admit to their boss that they don’t understand an assignment or concept
- Brits are more hesitant to admit they don’t know how to complete an assignment (33%) than Americans (28%)

UK women are not as willing to admit fault
- An even number of men (65%) and women (65%) own up to not understanding a task, but women in the UK are the least likely to do so (61%)
- Meanwhile, U.S. men (70%) are the most likely to concede

UK Boomers don’t like to be wrong
- Almost two in five Baby Boomers (38%) have never admitted they don’t understand an assignment or concept, while just one in four (27%) Millennials note the same
- UK Baby Boomers are the most likely to never ask for clarity (44%)
Question 9: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 68% have admitted to their boss that they didn’t understand an assignment
- 28% have never admitted to their boss that they didn’t understand an assignment
- 4% don’t know

UK Overview
- 62% have admitted to their boss that they didn’t understand an assignment
- 33% have never admitted to their boss that they didn’t understand an assignment
- 5% don’t know
Have you ever personally paid for a training program outside of work to improve your job performance?

Employees want training...even if they have to pay for it
- One in four (24%) employees have personally paid for a training program outside of work to improve their job performance (U.S =24%; UK=25%)

U.S. women are a bit stingier; as are UK men
- Women (25%) are slightly more likely than men (24%) to pay for outside training programs
- When it comes to fronting personal cash for training, U.S. women (23%) and UK men (23%) are more hesitant than U.S. men (25%) and UK women (28%)

UK Millennials are more likely to spend than U.S. Millennials
- One in four Millennials (24%) have paid for an outside training, but UK Millennials (27%) are more likely to do so than U.S. Millennials (21%)
- Just one in six (16%) Baby Boomers will shell out cash for outside training
Question 10: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 24% have personally paid for an outside training program
- 74% haven’t personally paid for an outside training program
- 2% don’t know

UK Overview
- 25% have personally paid for an outside training program
- 74% haven’t personally paid for an outside training program
- 1% don’t know
Question 11

Are you more likely to ask a colleague or the internet (e.g. Google or YouTube) for help when you don't know how to complete a task at work?

Workers are “Googling” advice on how to perform their job
- Nearly two in five (37%) prefer to use Google when seeking advice on completing work tasks
- This was especially the case in the UK, where two in five (40%) prefer Google, while just one in three (34%) Americans note the same

UK women rely on the internet the most
- In general, men (39%) are more likely than women (36%) to opt for the internet over a colleague
- Nearly half (43%) of British women prefer to ask Google for help - a clear difference in preference than American women (32%)

Millennials shy away from peer support; Boomers aren’t far behind
- One in three (37%) Millennials will also turn to the internet instead of a colleague for help
- Baby Boomers are less likely to look to Google, but not by much - one in three (30%) still admit to the behavior
Question 11: By Country

- **U.S. Overview**
  - 34% would search the internet for help on how to complete a work task
  - 58% would ask a colleague for help on how to complete a work task
  - 3% would just guess
  - 5% don’t know

- **UK Overview**
  - 40% would search the internet for help on how to complete a work task
  - 52% would ask a colleague for help on how to complete a work task
  - 3% would just guess
  - 4% don’t know
Has on-the-job training that your employer offers provided you with needed skills to grow in your current role?

- While one in seven (15%) have employers that don’t offer training, two out of three employees (68%) do have access and say it’s provided them with needed skills to grow in their role.
- Americans (69%) see more benefits from employer-offered training than Brits (66%).

U.S. men are most likely to say on-the-job training has helped
- The majority of men (67%) and women (68%) see on-the-job training as beneficial, but U.S. men take the lead (70%).
- In comparison, UK men (66%) were the least likely to see the benefits of employer-offered training.

Millennials heart on-the-job training
- Almost three out of four (71%) Millennials have grown in their current role due to employer-offered training, while two in three (64%) Baby Boomers admit the same.
Question 12: By Country

**U.S. Overview**
- 69% think on-the-job training has provided them with needed skills
- 10% don't think on-the-job training has provided them with needed skills
- 16% have an employer that doesn't offer on-the-job training
- 6% don't know

**UK Overview**
- 66% think on-the-job training has provided them with needed skills
- 12% don't think on-the-job training has provided them with needed skills
- 15% have an employer that doesn't offer on-the-job training
- 6% don't know
Do you feel that your company’s current training opportunities are out-of-date with your expectations of technology?

**Training tech is outdated**
- More than one third (35%) of employees say their company’s training tech is outdated
- Brits (38%) are more likely to feel that training tech doesn’t meet their expectations than Americans (33%)

**UK women are not impressed with their employers’ training technology**
- Women (36%) are more likely than men (34%) to think their employer’s training tech is too old school
- UK women are the harshest critics, with two in five (42%) saying their employers’ training relevancy is out-of-date

**Boomers may have lower expectations**
- One in three (36%) Millennials may see their employer’s training tech as out-of-date, but just one in four Baby Boomers agree (24%)
- UK Boomers seem to be the most lenient, with less than one fifth (19%) thinking their training tech needs an update
Question 13: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 33% think their company's current training technology is out-of-date
- 56% don't think their company's current training technology is out-of-date
- 12% don't know

UK Overview
- 38% think their company's current training technology is out-of-date
- 50% don't think their company's current training technology is out-of-date
- 12% don't know
If you had to choose from the following options below, how do you most prefer to “get up to speed” when you start a new job?

Video training is popular among U.S. workers
- While the majority (64%) still prefer an in-person meeting to get up to speed, one in six (17%) would opt for training videos
- Training videos are even more popular in the U.S., where one in five (20%) would choose this method to onboard (UK=15%)
- Meanwhile, just one in 10 (13%) will look to training documents to ramp up

Women will opt for videos, especially in the U.S.
- One in five women (19%) prefer to turn to training videos to onboard, while just one in six men (16%) agree
- U.S. women are the biggest fans of video (21%), followed by U.S men (17%), UK men (15%) and U.S women (14%)

U.S. Millennials and Boomers prefer video training
- An equal number of Millennials (18%) and Baby Boomers (17%) prefer video trainings to get up to speed, but one in five U.S. Millennials (20%) and Baby Boomers (22%) are fans
- In comparison, just one in ten (10%) UK Baby Boomers prefer video trainings while one in six (18%) still prefer training documents
Question 14; By Country

U.S. Overview
- 11% prefer training documents to get them up to speed when starting a new job
- 20% prefer training videos to get them up to speed when starting a new job
- 64% prefer to meet in-person to get up to speed when starting a new job
- 6% don’t know

UK Overview
- 14% prefer training documents to get them up to speed when starting a new job
- 15% prefer training videos to get them up to speed when starting a new job
- 65% prefer to meet in-person to get up to speed when starting a new job
- 6% don’t know
Question 15

How often do you fear being let go from your role as a result of feeling under experienced or lacking certain skills?

Employees worry their lack of skills could get them fired
- One in four worry they will be let go at least once a month (23%)
- Two in four (39%) worry they’ll be let go at least once a year

Women are more concerned with losing their job
- Roughly one in four (25%) women worry at least once a month about losing their job due to a lack of experience, compared to just one in five (21%) men
- UK women (27%) are the most likely to worry at least once a month about losing their job

Baby Boomers have no fear of getting fired
- Just one in ten (11%) Baby Boomers worry once a month that they will be let go due to a lack of experience, compared to one in four (27%) Millennials
- One in three Millennial women in the UK (30%) experience concern at least once a month
Question 15: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 8% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a week
- 15% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a month
- 14% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a year
- 63% never fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced

UK Overview
- 8% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a week
- 15% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a month
- 17% fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced at least once a year
- 60% never fear being let go as a result of feeling underexperienced
**Question 16**

Does the availability of learning and development opportunities impact your happiness at work?

![Bar chart showing responses to the survey question](chart.png)

**Happiness at work is closely tied to training**

- Most employees (59%) say that happiness in their job is tied to the availability of learning and development at work, including one in three who note it as very important to their workplace satisfaction (29%)
- One in three Americans find learning opportunities critical to their workplace happiness (32%) compared to just one in four Brits (27%)

**Women find more happiness at work when training is offered**

- Two out of three women (61%) say that learning opportunities impact their at-work happiness, compared to just over half of men (56%)

**UK Boomers don’t need training to be happy**

- Millennials (62%) are more likely than Baby Boomers (52%) to tie on-the-job learning to workplace satisfaction
- In fact, just two out of five (41%) Baby Boomers in the UK find joy on the job from learning opportunities
Question 16: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 32% find the availability of learning and development opportunities very important to their workplace happiness
- 28% find the availability of learning and development opportunities slightly important to their workplace happiness
- 33% don’t find the availability of learning and development opportunities important to their workplace happiness
- 7% don’t know

UK Overview
- 27% find the availability of learning and development opportunities very important to their workplace happiness
- 32% find the availability of learning and development opportunities slightly important to their workplace happiness
- 35% don’t find the availability of learning and development opportunities important to their workplace happiness
- 7% don’t know
Question 17

Would you quit a job because of a lack of learning and development opportunities?

Lack of training opportunities is a sign to move on
- One in three (36%) would quit a job because of a lack of learning and development opportunities
- Brits (38%) are more likely than Americans (34%) to leave a job because training is limited or not offered

Men are more ready to walk out the door, especially in the UK
- Overall, men (37%) compared to women (35%) are more likely to abandon a role due to limited learning opportunities
- Almost half of UK men are likely to put in their notice (46%), while just one in three U.S. women were the least likely to do so (32%)

Millennials will leave if training is not offered
- About half of Millennials (48%) would leave a job due to a lack of training, compared to one in five Baby Boomers (19%)
- UK Millennials are the most likely to leave a job without learning opportunities (55%)
Question 17: By Country

U.S. Overview
- 34% would quit a job due to a lack of learning and development opportunities
- 45% wouldn’t quit a job due to a lack of learning and development opportunities
- 21% don’t know

UK Overview
- 38% would quit a job due to a lack of learning and development opportunities
- 39% wouldn’t quit a job due to a lack of learning and development opportunities
- 23% don’t know
Thank you.

For more information about this survey and Docebo, please visit www.docebo.com.

To receive more insight or executive commentary on survey findings, please contact SHIFT Communications at docebo@shiftcomm.com.