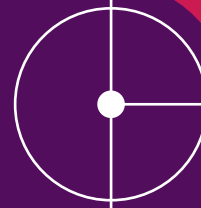


CIPD

*Championing better
work and working lives*



THE PEOPLE PROFESSION IN 2018

Europe

Report

November 2018

Report

The people profession in 2018: Europe

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Foreword	4
Introduction	4
A snapshot of the profession	6
Key findings: Greece	10
Key findings: Romania	14
Key findings: UK and Ireland	18
Conclusion	21
References	22
Appendix	23

1 Acknowledgements

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I'd also like to thank CIPD colleagues for their support throughout this project.

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 150,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.



The European Association for People Management (EAPM) is a network association and the European body for HR, founded in 1962. It forms an umbrella body of national organisations which represent people management and development professionals. It has 32 member organisations in total, which include the CIPD, HR Club Romania, and the Greek People Management Association (GPMA).



HR Club is the professional body for HR in Romania, with over 400 members. It was founded to develop a community that facilitates and encourages the sharing of good practice in the field. One of HR Club's aims is to support a people profession that is fit for the future and to foster the professionalisation of the function, preparing it to step up to the complex challenges presented by the world of work.



The GPMA is the largest and oldest association of HR professionals in Greece, with a membership of over 750. The GPMA's main aim is to promote the foundation and work of those involved in the management and development of people. The GPMA collaborates with academic institutions in Greece to explore trends in the profession, and has close links with the main public institutional bodies.

2 Foreword

Both the way that people work and their relationship with work is diversifying. The impact of technology, changes in demographics, globalisation/protectionism, disruptions to established business models and the growth of less secure, possibly more fluid employment relationships have challenged the traditional models relied on by human resource management (HRM). In this context, organisations must adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the modern workforce, and to build the skills and competencies to remain relevant in a globalised economy.

The CIPD, in collaboration with the European Association for People Management (EAPM), has developed a survey to take a bi-annual snapshot of the state of the people profession. The aim is to establish where, when and if the profession is responding to the external and organisational factors shaping the workplace. As professional associations, we share a responsibility to ensure that the people profession is competent and confident in its role when delivering value to the workforce, organisations and wider society. We need to have data in order to support the continuous development of the people profession in meeting the challenges of the modern workplace. The survey also seeks to understand the career aspirations of those in the profession, and the breadth of workplace experiences, education and competencies that characterise their career paths.

This report covers the participating EAPM member countries for this year: the UK, Ireland, Greece and Romania. The survey will evolve as we gain more insight into the drivers shaping the people profession and we hope to include more countries in future. This dataset not only highlights the state of the profession in different countries; it also indicates where, as professional associations, we may develop and support the people profession now and in the future.

Dr Wilson Wong, Head of Insight & Futures, CIPD

3 Introduction

The CIPD has worked in collaboration with the EAPM to develop a new survey of career development and current practice within our profession. We also worked with the Institute for Human Resource Professionals (IHRP) in Singapore and the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) to replicate this study in Asia Pacific, and these findings will be summarised in a separate report. In order to create a baseline indicator of the profession beyond the UK, we have reimagined the CIPD's *HR Outlook* survey series, which was limited to the UK and varied by question focus each year. This new study will provide robust, longitudinal data on the shape of the people profession across countries, alongside information on career and professional development for those working in the profession across the globe. The aim is to include a set of core tracker questions each year the survey is run, with a focus section on a particular topic of interest for each region.

What is the people profession?

We have moved away from referring to 'professionals working in HR and L&D' to talking about 'people professionals', to reflect the wide range of specialisms that now make up our profession – encompassing HR, learning and development, organisational development, and organisational change.

The world of work has moved on significantly in the last 30 years. New specialisms, ways of working and priorities have emerged and roles have diversified. In some areas, the practices in use today were developed in the industrial era and are no longer fit for purpose. The role of the people profession has evolved in response to the external environment into one that is called on to create long-term, sustainable value for people, organisations and society. This transformation has brought the status of HR as a profession into sharp focus. Early critique of HR practices highlighted a lack of professional qualifications (Gilmore and Williams 2007). However, as the field of HRM has evolved, there has been an increase in relevant formal degrees, training and certification (Wooten 2001); and having a professional HR qualification has been linked to higher salary and career progression (Ackah and Heaton 2003). Furthermore, the traditional route of climbing the career ladder in one organisation may have been replaced by more diverse career progression, with people professionals working in a number of different roles in other business areas, possibly to build experience or develop skills (Heaton and Ackah 2007). As we continue to develop the people profession, there is a need to understand the profile and career paths of today's people practitioners, and the factors that are associated with career progression.

This report paints a picture of career journeys and professional priorities in today's people profession. It can help practitioners at every level and in all roles to gain insight into the variety of ways in which people professionals progress in their careers.

Methodology

We conducted an online survey of people professionals between 28 March and 8 June 2018. Respondents were based in the UK, Ireland, Greece and Romania. The sample included a mix of seniority levels and professional body members. The online survey was distributed by YouGov, and the sample was extended with respondents from across our networks and those of our partners. Table 1 outlines the total number of respondents by region.

Table 1: Respondents per region

UK	899
Ireland	75
Greece	370
Romania	182
TOTAL	1,526

The sample characteristics are shown in the appendix. Because of a low number of respondents in Ireland, the UK and Ireland samples have been grouped together for the purpose of the report.

Throughout the report we highlight interesting differences between sectors, organisation sizes and seniority levels, where these are significantly greater than could be expected by chance ($p < 0.05$). We focus on the most revealing findings for each market in the discussion.

Dimensions of career success

In the literature, career success is divided into extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions (Ballout 2007). Extrinsic factors represent the objective component of career success, that is, observable accomplishments or outcomes including pay and promotions. There is a strong subjective aspect to career success, since what constitutes success for one individual, or someone at a particular point in their career, may look different for another at a different career stage. The intrinsic – or subjective – component refers to individuals' feelings about their careers and progression, and can be assessed in terms of psychological success, such as career satisfaction and happiness in work.

The objective and subjective measures of career success used in the survey are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Measures of career success

Objective (extrinsic) success measures	Subjective (intrinsic) success measures
Annual salary	Career satisfaction
Number of promotions	Perceived likelihood of promotion
	Meaningfulness of work

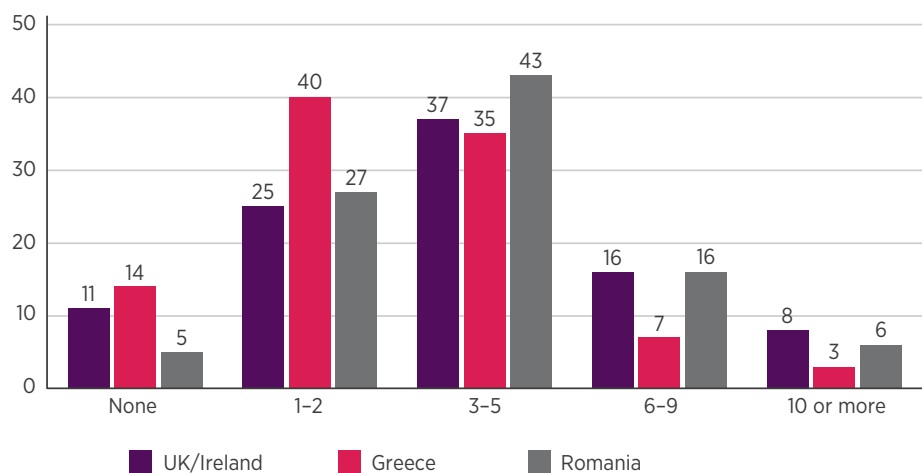
4 A snapshot of the profession

The survey provides a snapshot of where people professionals currently are in their careers and professional development. In this section, we introduce the high-level comparisons between markets, before we explore the key findings within each market.

Career progression

To explore objective career success and what factors are associated with people professionals' ability to achieve it, we first asked respondents how many promotions they have received over their entire career, including promotions within the same or a different organisation. The findings showed that practitioners in the UK/Ireland and Romania were most likely to say they have had between three and five promotions, while practitioners in Greece were most likely to say between one and two promotions (Figure 1).

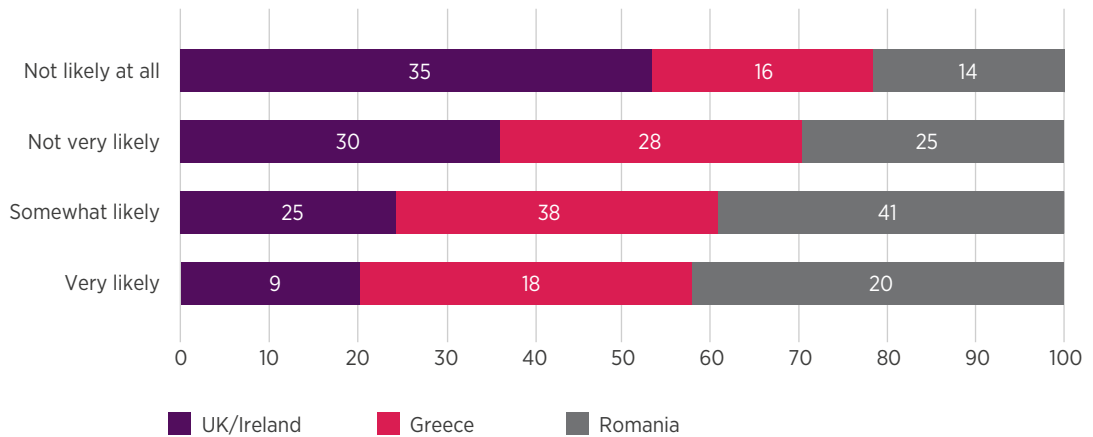
Figure 1: Number of promotions (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

To look at practitioners' subjective view of their career advancement, we asked how likely they think it is that they will receive a promotion within their current organisation in the next three years. People professionals in the UK and Ireland were significantly more likely to feel that it's not at all likely they will be promoted (35%), compared with those in Greece (16%) and Romania (14%) (Figure 2).

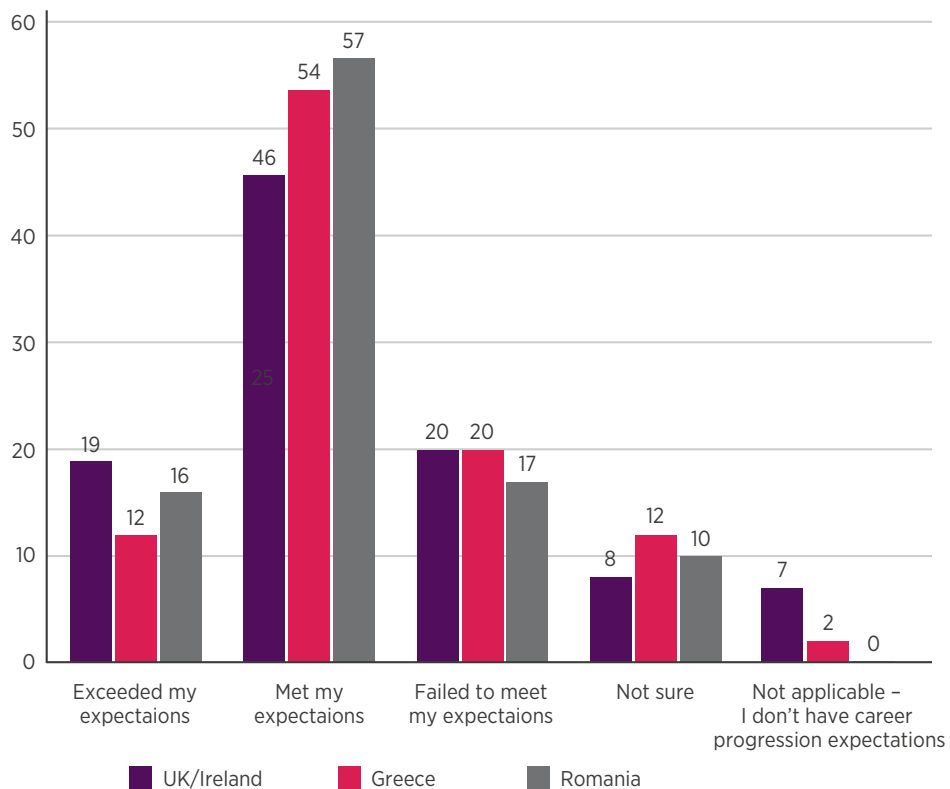
Figure 2: Perceived likelihood of promotion (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

The majority of practitioners in each region reported that their career progression to date has met their expectations, although respondents in Greece and Romania were more likely to say this (54% and 57% respectively) than those in the UK and Ireland (46%) (Figure 3).

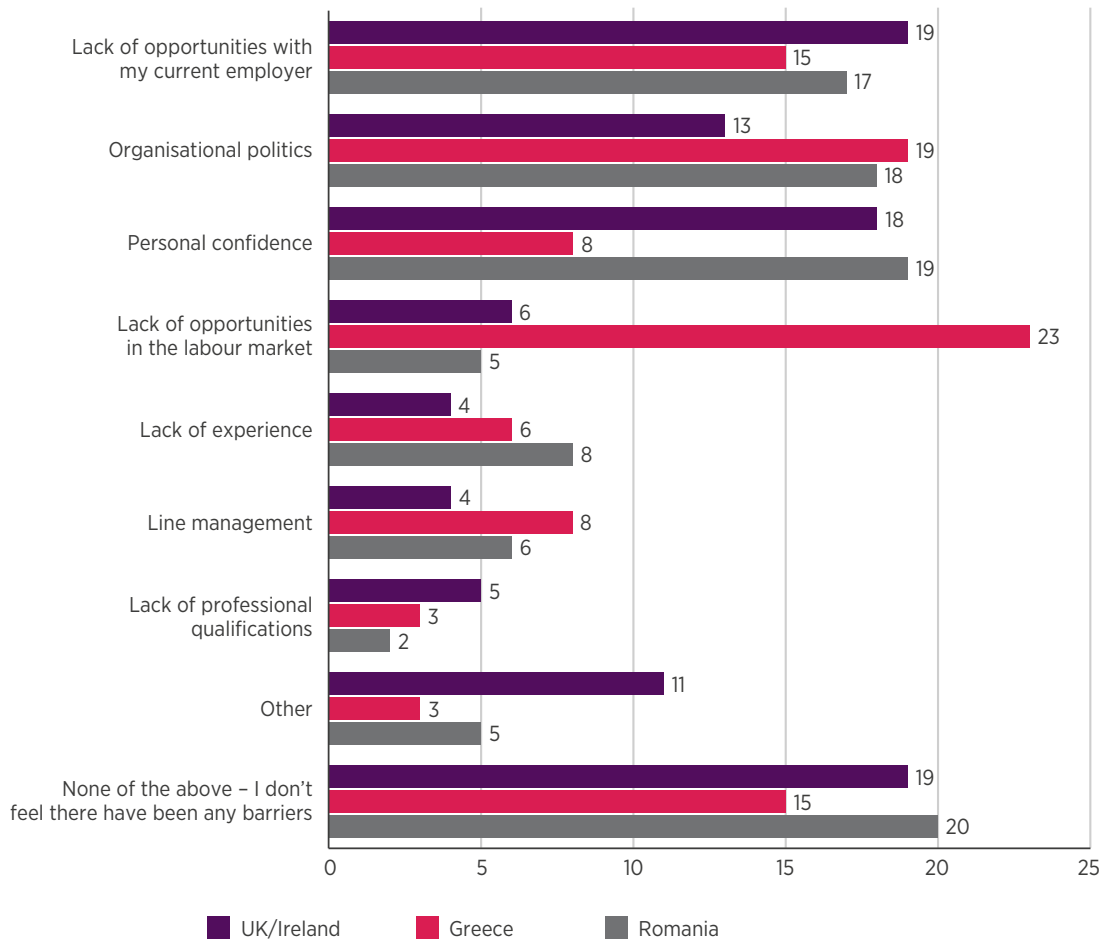
Figure 3: Satisfaction with career progression (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

Unsurprisingly, given economic circumstances, people professionals in Greece were much more likely than practitioners in the other markets to cite lack of opportunities in the labour market as the single biggest barrier to career progression (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Barriers to career progression (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

Professional development and skills

This section of the report compares levels of skills and professional development across the European countries. To find out practitioners' level of engagement in continuing professional development (CPD), we asked them how often they carry out different aspects of CPD (these aspects correspond with the stages of the CIPD's CPD cycle). Across all stages of CPD, practitioners in the UK and Ireland were the least likely to have regularly taken action in the past six months.

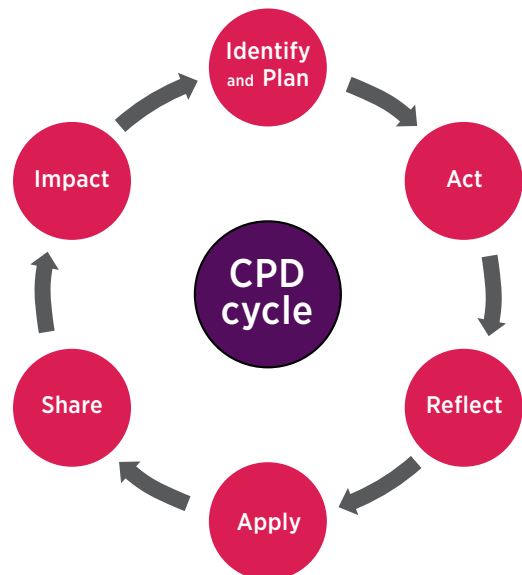
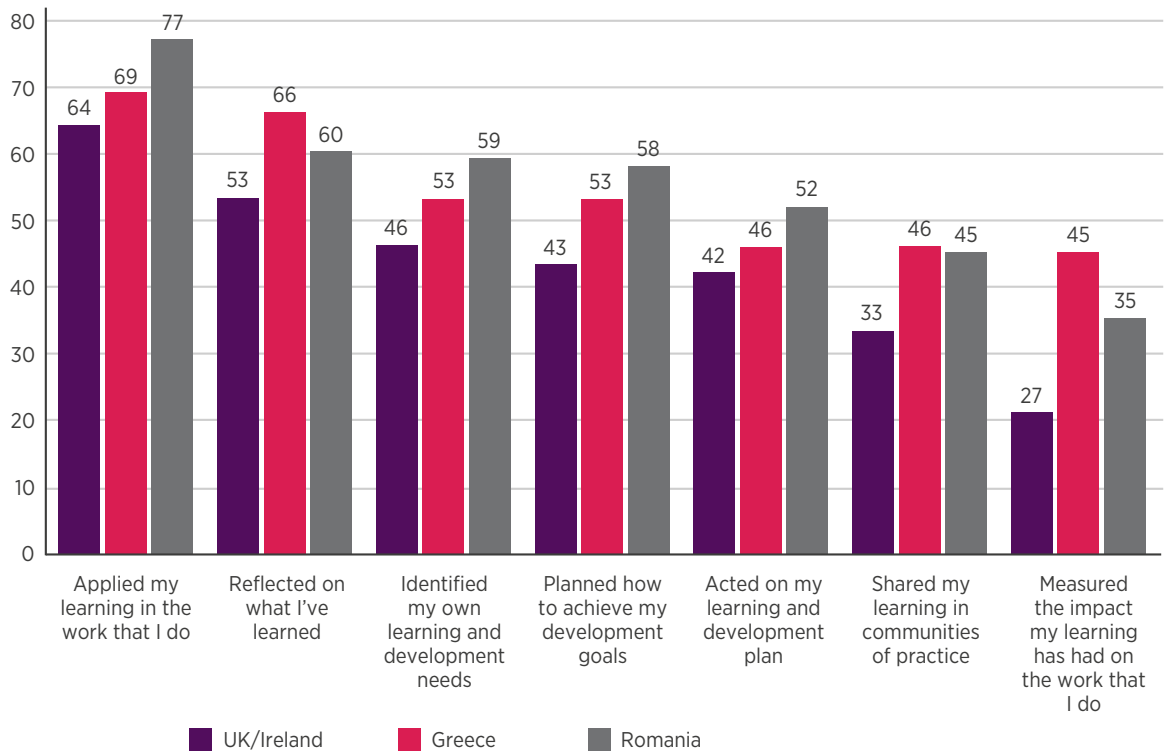


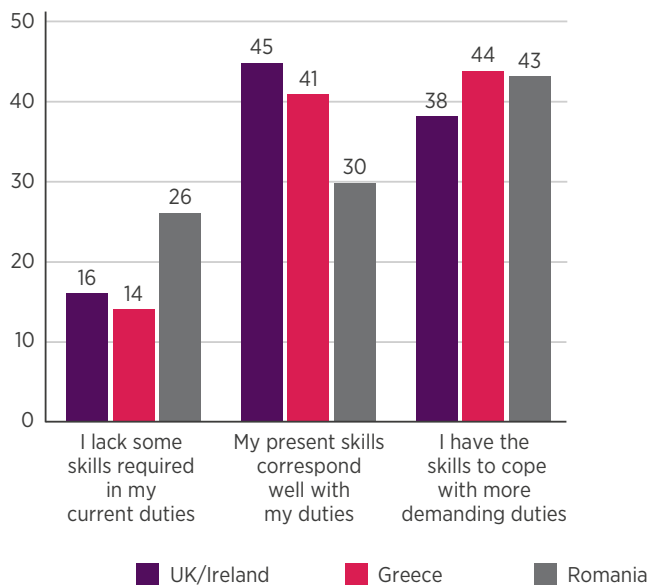
Figure 5: Percentage of practitioners who have often or very often taken CPD actions (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

To look at how well practitioners feel their level of skills fit their current role, we used the European Working Conditions Survey (Parent-Thirion et al 2015) measure. The findings showed that Romanian respondents were more likely to feel they lack some skills required for their role (26%), compared with Greek and UK/Ireland respondents (14% and 16% respectively) (Figure 6).

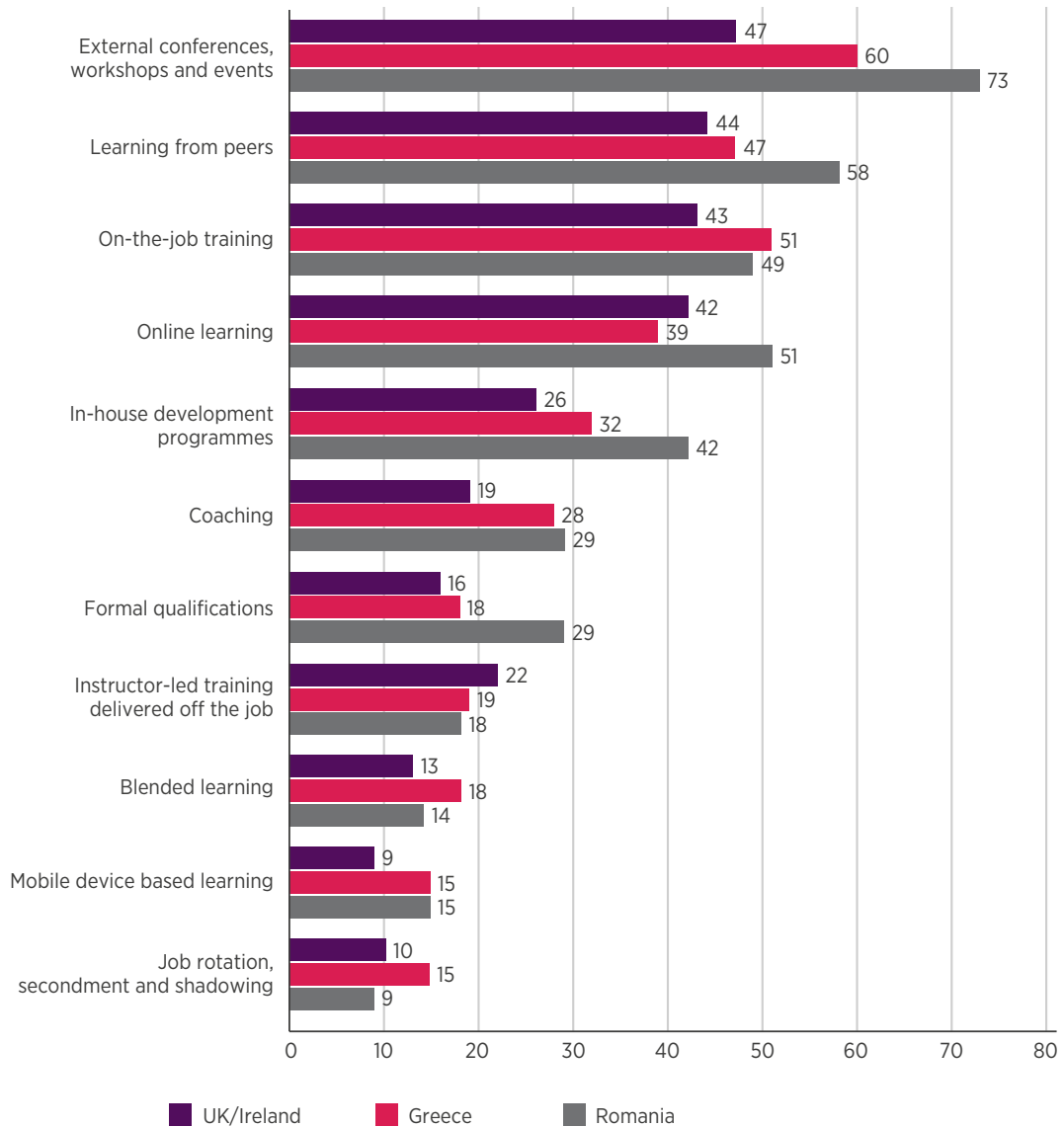
Figure 6: Skills level (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

In terms of learning and development received in the last year, practitioners in Romania were the most likely to have attended external conferences, workshops and events (73%), although this was the top response for each of the three groups (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Learning and development received (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182

5 Key findings: Greece

After more than eight years of economic turmoil, Greece’s projected growth in 2019 is 2.3% (OECD 2018). In 2017, it ran a primary budget surplus of 3.7% of GDP, ahead of the 3.5% of GDP target set for 2018. This marks a milestone in Greece’s economic restructuring and the restoration of international confidence in its economic governance. From the time of the first aid package in May 2010, Greece’s economic output fell by a quarter and living standards collapsed when more than a million lost their jobs, pushing unemployment to a high of 28%.

Now, with increasing exports and improved competitiveness, employment is once again rising. But with little investment in skills and immigration in the intervening years, Greece is experiencing a skills gap, trapping many workers in low-skill and low-wage jobs. The lack of effective social safety nets, coupled with the extended crisis and high unemployment, have depressed wages, widened inequalities and left many in in-work poverty.

The challenge to the people profession is, therefore, vast. There is urgent need to recruit and retain skilled workers, then develop their potential to meet the needs of the labour market. Organisations also face the challenge of managing and engaging the many part-time and temporary workers Greece has relied on to rebuild the economy.

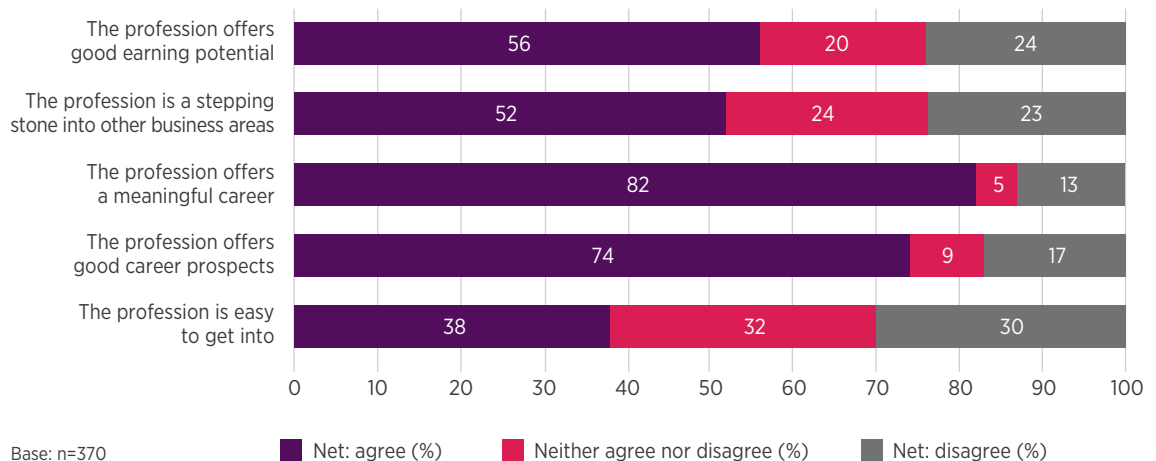
There is opportunity for people professionals to take the lead in designing better jobs to increase productivity, and advocating a long-term view on sustainable development. This survey provides insights into the wealth of knowledge and experience individual people professionals bring to their roles, and the opportunities for their employers and the professional body to further develop the profession so it can contribute meaningfully to Greece's recovery.

Career journeys

The majority of practitioners believe the people profession offers a meaningful career

To understand practitioners' views on career prospects in the people profession, we asked to what extent they agree with a set of statements (Figure 8). Positively, over eight in ten (82%) respondents said that the profession offers a meaningful career. Those who work in an organisation with a family culture were more likely to say this, compared with practitioners who work in a formalised and structured organisational culture (89% and 75% respectively). We also found that practitioners with up to five years' experience in the profession were more likely to agree that the profession offers good career prospects, compared with those who have between six and fifteen years' experience (81% compared with 70%).

Figure 8: Attitudes towards a career in the profession (%)



The data revealed that lack of opportunities in the labour market was the most commonly cited barrier to career progression, with nearly a quarter (23%) of practitioners reporting this. This is expected, given that the Greek labour market is still slowly recovering from the recession: the OECD-average unemployment rate has not yet fallen back to its pre-crisis level (OECD 2017). Almost a fifth (19%) of respondents said organisational politics was the biggest barrier, followed by lack of opportunities with current employer as the third most commonly cited barrier (15%).

Two-fifths of practitioners have the appropriate skills for their role

Two-fifths (41%) of respondents felt that they have the right level of skills for their current role. Practitioners who are a member of an HR professional body were more likely than non-members to feel over-skilled in their current role (54% and 40% respectively). Moreover, non-members were more likely to say that they lack some skills required in their role, compared with those who are a member of a professional body (18% and 8% respectively) (Table 3). This indicates the value of membership in building people professionals’ skills base.

Table 3: Skills level by professional body membership (%)

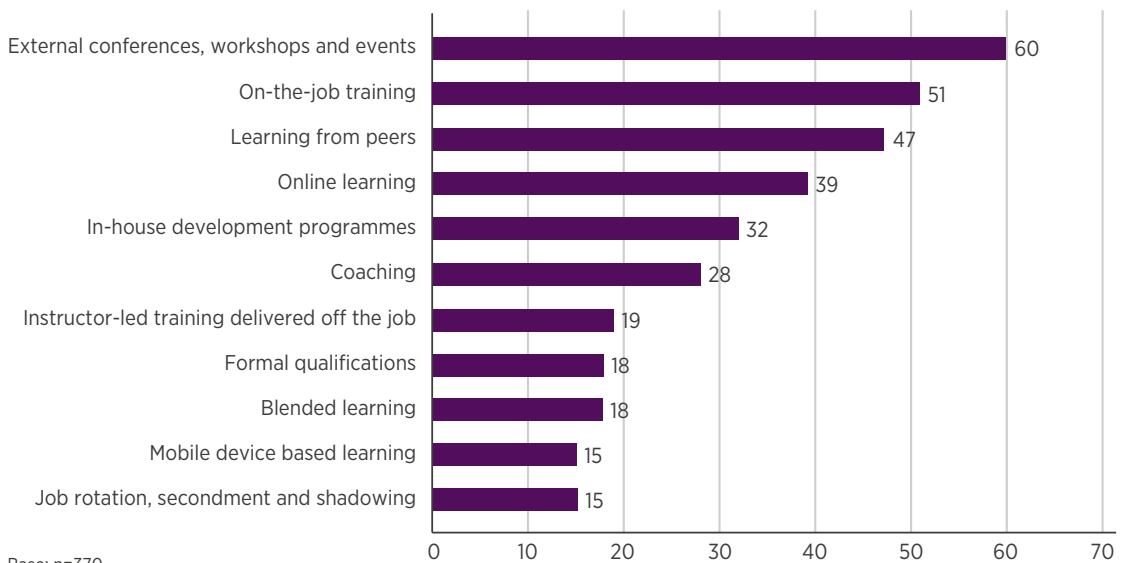
	Member of any HR professional body (n=127)	Not a member of any HR professional body (n=243)
I lack some skills required in my current duties	8	18
My present skills correspond well with my duties	39	42
I have the skills to cope with more demanding duties	54	40

Base: 370

A diversity of L&D and specialist activities within the profession

Almost all (97%) respondents received some form of learning and development at least once in the last year. The majority (60%) have attended external conferences or events, while around half have experienced more informal L&D through on-the-job training (51%) or learning from peers (47%) (Figure 9). Practitioners with up to five years’ experience in their current organisation were more likely than those with more experience in their organisation to have received L&D through learning from peers (55%, compared with 40% of those with between six and fifteen years’ experience, and 35% of those with 16 or more years’ experience).

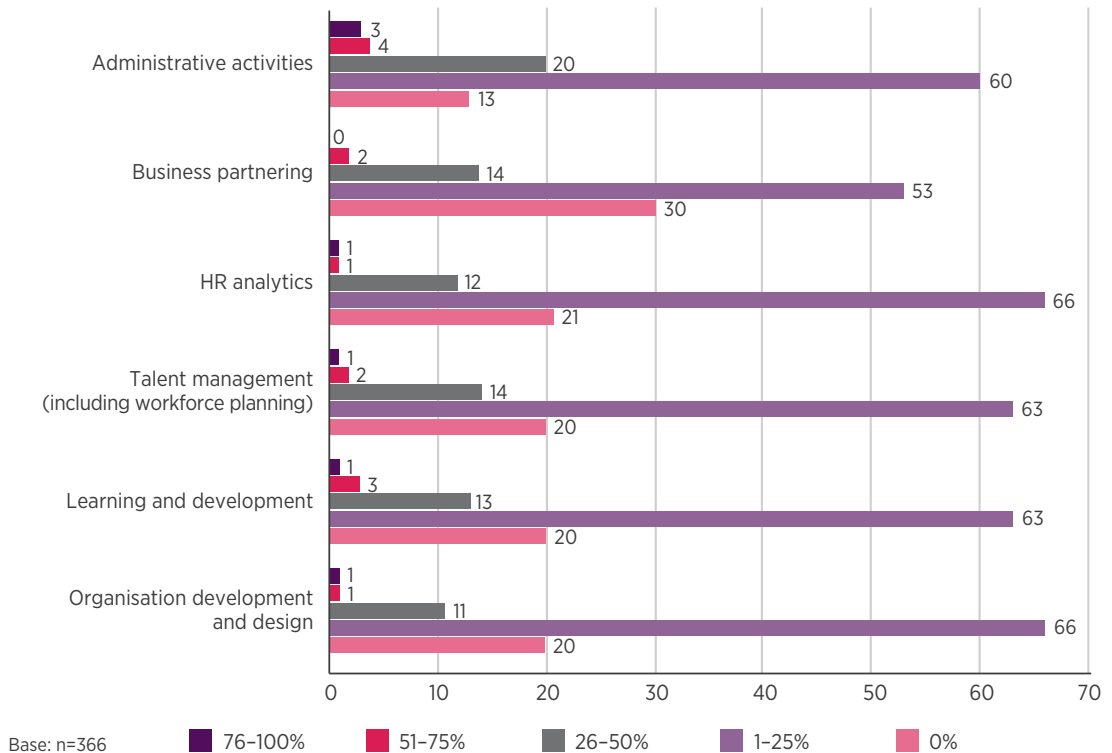
Figure 9: Learning and development received in the last 12 months (%)



Base: n=370

To explore roles and specialisms within the people profession, we asked the respondents to indicate how much time they spend working on various specialist activities. We found that practitioners tend to split their time across different HR and people management areas, rather than focusing on one specialism (Figure 10). The majority spend up to a quarter of their time on each area. Three in ten (30%) do not do any business partnering activities.

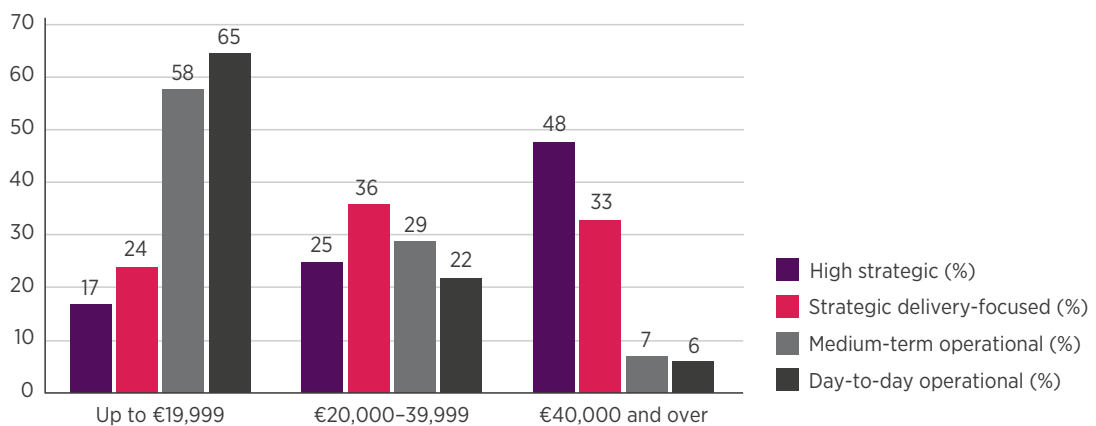
Figure 10: Percentage of time spent on specialist activities in an average week (%)



Levels of career success

Looking at annual income, the survey showed that many practitioners in strategic positions were earning €40,000 or more (48% of those in high strategic roles and 33% of those in strategic delivery-focused roles, Figure 11). More than half (58%) of respondents in medium-term operational roles had an annual salary of up to 19,999 euros, and the majority of those in day-to-day operational roles were also in this income bracket (65%).

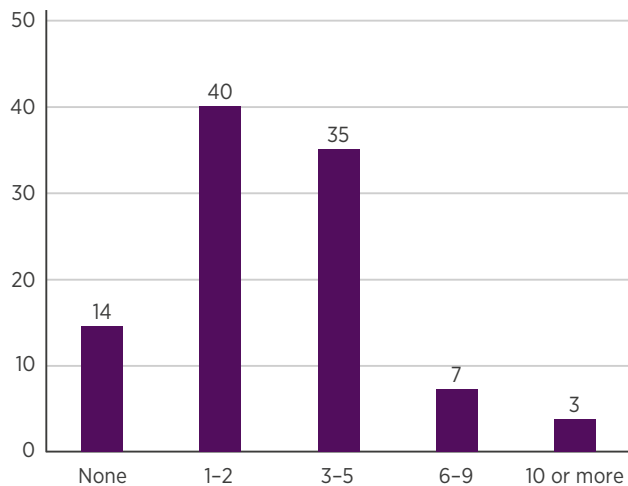
Figure 11: Annual salary (including bonuses, before tax deductions), by seniority level (%)



Base: n=343

As another measure of extrinsic career success, we asked respondents how many promotions they have received over the course of their career (Figure 12). We found that people professionals who are a member of an HR professional body were more likely than non-members to have had three or more promotions (66% and 34% respectively). Those who work in an SME were more likely not to have received any promotions (19%) than practitioners who work in a large organisation (8%). This suggests that people professionals who work in small organisations may need more support to move upwards in their career, where there are possibly fewer promotion opportunities or organisational structures in place to help them.

Figure 12: Number of promotions received over entire career (%)



Base: n=370

Career advancement prospects vary with organisational culture

We explored how likely practitioners felt it was that they would be promoted within three years in their current organisation. The data showed that 55% believed a promotion was likely and 45% said not likely. Younger respondents were more likely to perceive that a promotion was likely: 63% of 18-34-year-olds and 57% of 35-44-year-olds said this, compared with 40% of people aged 45 and over.

Looking at how satisfied people professionals are with their career progression to date, we found that over half (54%) felt their progression had met their expectations, while only 12% said it had exceeded expectations and a fifth (20%) said it had failed to meet their expectations. Practitioners who are a member of a professional body were more likely than non-members to say their career progression has met their expectations (63% compared with 50%).

6 Key findings: Romania

People professionals in Romania are facing significant challenges, including a lack of clear alignment between skills taught by education institutions and those needed in the labour market, as well as increasing employee migration to countries which promise greater professional opportunities. These challenges, amongst others, create a unique opportunity for people professionals in the region to help leaders and organisations adapt to new technology and changing patterns of work, and help the organisation as a whole to drive positive changes in public policies and society.

HR first emerged as a profession in Romania in the 1990s, when multinational companies began setting up offices there. As such, there were no formal education programmes specialising in HR until 2004. The role of the professional body is to develop a community that facilitates and encourages the sharing of good practice in the field, and to foster the professionalisation of the function – preparing it to step up to the complex challenges presented by the world of work. This research is one of the first steps in addressing this need.

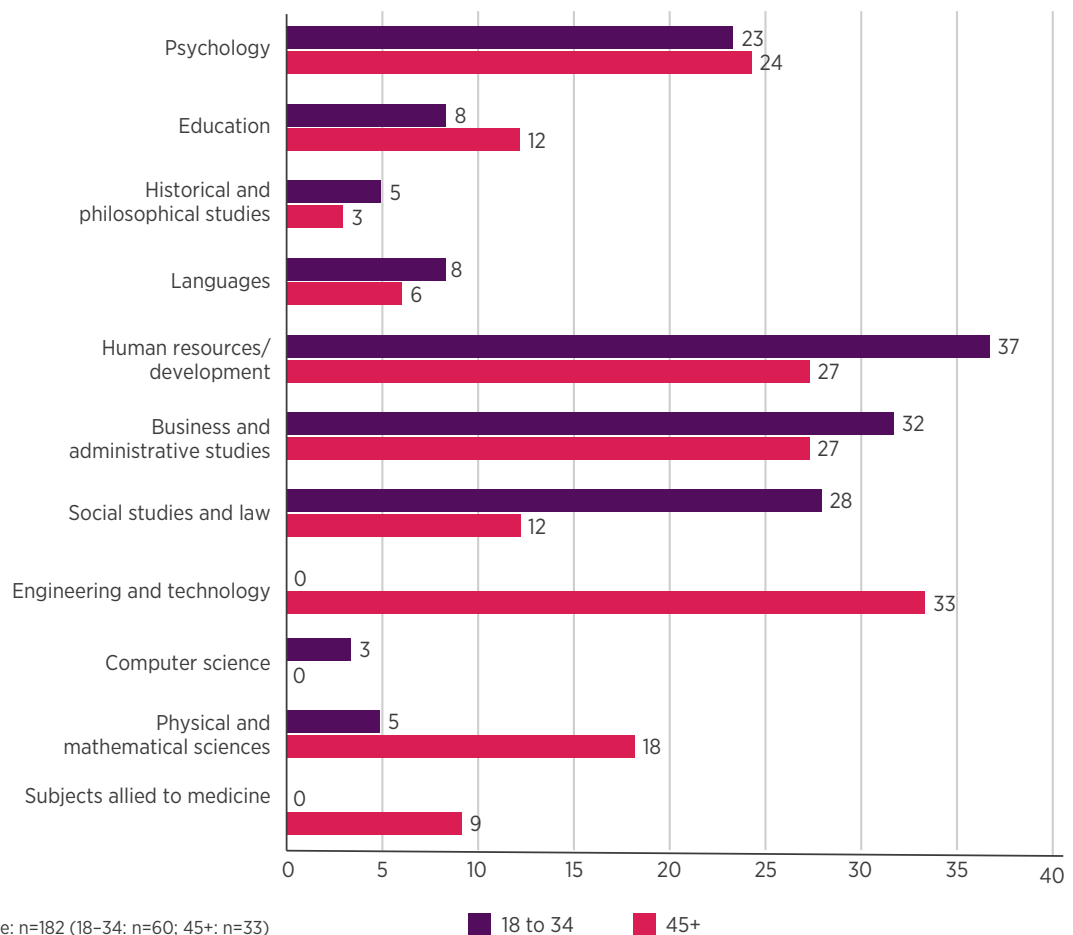
Career journeys

In order to explore the factors that influence career success in the people profession, we asked survey respondents about their professional and academic backgrounds.

A diversity of skills and experience within the profession

People professionals in Romania tend to come from varied academic backgrounds. The data presents some interesting comparisons between ages and academic background, showing that older professionals tend to come from more diverse fields than their younger counterparts. Since there was only a small number of respondents in the 45+ age group (n=33), the results offer only an indicative perspective, but are still interesting to note. For example, 33% of respondents over 45 years old studied engineering and technology, while none of the respondents aged 18–34 studied these subjects. In contrast, the younger professionals have academic backgrounds more closely linked with their field of practice, as can be seen in Figure 13. However, people tend to shift between fields over time, so a longitudinal study would enable us to observe whether or not this trend continues.

Figure 13: Age and academic background (%)



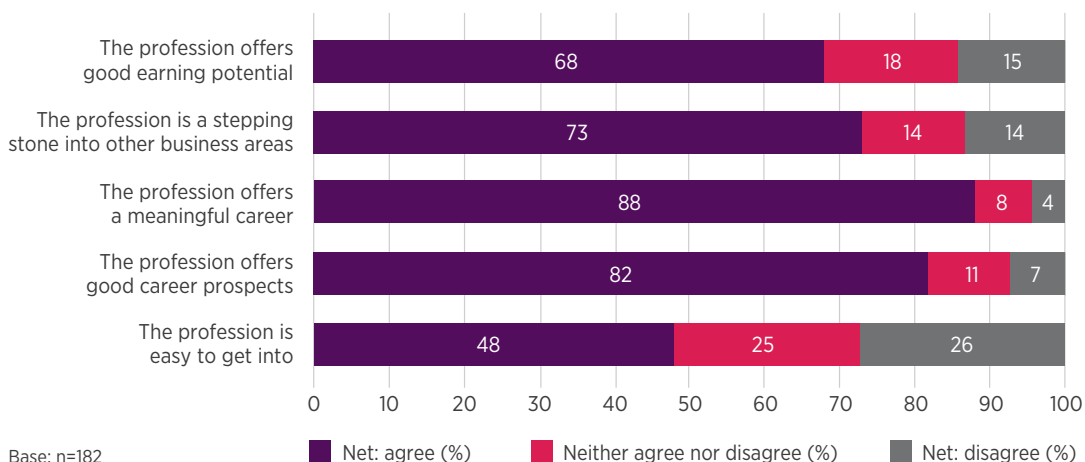
We also asked respondents about their work experience outside the people profession. Seventy-five per cent reported that they have worked outside the profession for more than a year, and most commonly respondents had between five and ten years' experience (18%).

The majority believe the profession offers a good career

In addition, our findings showed that 73% of respondents believe the profession is a stepping stone into other business areas (see Figure 14). The data also showed that attitudes towards a career in the profession differed by the following organisational and individual factors:

- The majority of respondents who worked in a large organisation (250 employees or more) agreed that the HR profession is easy to get into (53%).
- Most respondents who worked in a large organisation (85%), in a strategic role (95%) or were a member of a professional body (89%) agreed that the profession offers good career prospects.

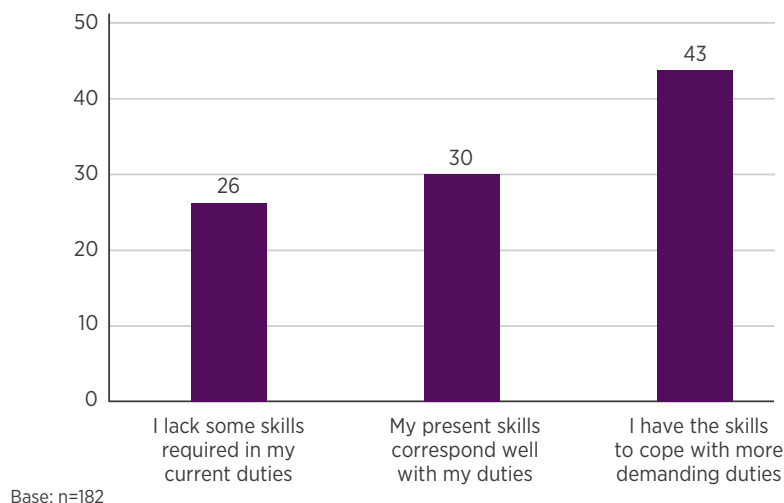
Figure 14: Attitudes towards a career in the profession (%)



A quarter of practitioners feel under-skilled for their job

The survey showed that a quarter (26%) of practitioners felt they lack some skills required in their current role. On the other hand, 43% of the respondents felt they have the skills to cope with more demanding duties than their role currently requires, suggesting that they are ready to take the next step in their career.

Figure 15: Skills level (%)



Perhaps unsurprisingly, the percentage of practitioners who said they lack some skills in their current duties was lower among those with more experience (38% of people with up to five years of work experience in the people profession compared with 15% of people with 16 or more years' experience).

Levels of career success

Three to five promotions is the average

Four in ten (43%) respondents said they had received three to five promotions over the course of their career. The number of promotions received was positively linked to membership of a professional body: respondents who were a member of a professional body were more likely than non-members to have had six or more promotions over the course of their career (35% compared with 15%).

Most believe a promotion is on the horizon

The majority of respondents (61%) felt it was likely that they would be promoted within their current organisation in the next three years (compared with 39% who thought it was not likely). Also, respondents aged 18 to 34 were more likely to believe they are very likely to receive a promotion (33%), compared with 35–44-year-olds (14%). This finding may be attributed to different expectations and opportunities specific to distinct points in their careers.

Confidence and organisational politics are the main barriers to progression

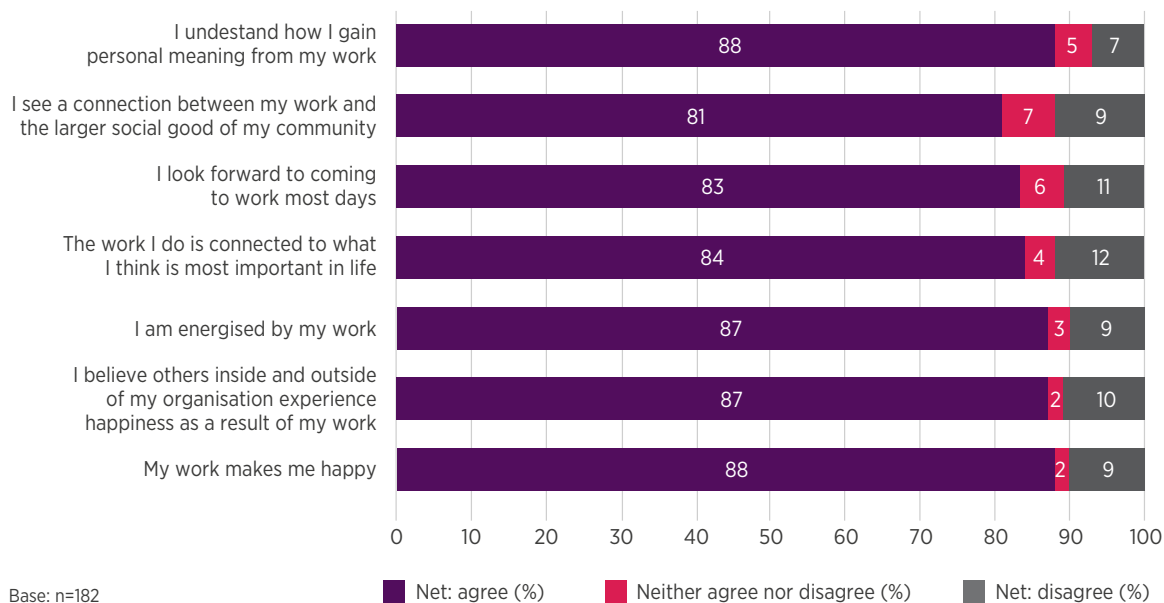
When asked what has been the single biggest barrier to advancing their careers to date, respondents most often cited lack of personal confidence (19%), followed closely by organisational politics (18%) and lack of opportunities with their current employer (17%). This underlines that talent development strategies should keep sight not only of practitioners' competences, but also of personal confidence in maximising their full potential.

Those with up to five years' tenure in their organisation were more likely to cite lack of experience as the main barrier (12%), compared with only 2% of practitioners who have been in their current organisation for between six and fifteen years.

Most people professionals feel their work is meaningful

Overall, the data showed strong agreement with statements on work meaningfulness (Figure 16). This can suggest that the people profession offers a multitude of opportunities for personal accomplishment, through actions that can have a positive impact inside and outside the organisation. Moreover, as one of the missions of people professionals is to increase employee engagement by creating a sense of purpose in their work, the high scores could also indicate that they are role-modelling this attitude and leading by example. This could be translated into a clear understanding of the relationship between their job and its impact on the overall organisational objectives.

Figure 16: Meaningfulness of work (%)



7 Key findings: UK and Ireland

Despite continuing high employment in the UK, wage growth has remained relatively low for large parts of the workforce. Weak productivity and uncertainty over Brexit are tightening pressure on recruitment, with many employers struggling to fill vacancies (CIPD 2018b). To address this challenge, organisations are upskilling their existing staff or implementing a diversity strategy to widen the talent pool. Skills shortage is also a persistent issue for organisations in Ireland, which has led to greater emphasis on enhancing employee engagement and internal development opportunities (CIPD 2018a).

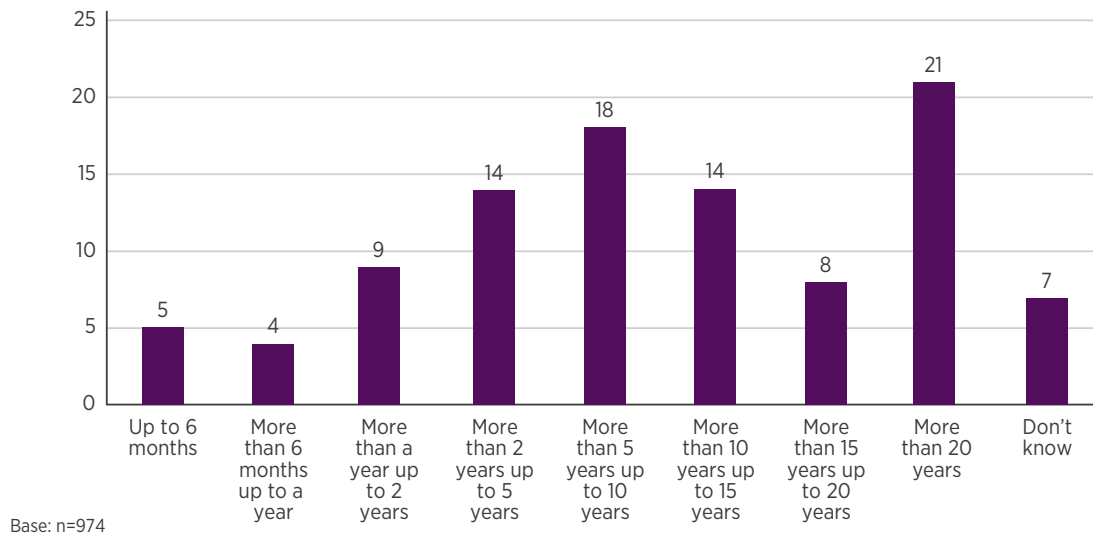
In this context, today’s people professionals are expected to apply their expertise in people, work and change to drive sustainable value for people, organisations and wider society. Given the numerous corporate scandals related to business malpractice and poor treatment of workers, they’re also called on to step up to ethical issues in organisations and help create cultures of transparency. However, a number of factors may put people management practitioners’ professional status at risk. First, as line managers become better educated in HRM practices, people professionals need to carve out a new, unique role in organisations (Farndale and Brewster 2005). Second, technology is enabling the standardisation of and access to information, which can undermine some of the control and unique insights people practitioners previously held.

This presents a critical opportunity for people professionals to step up to these challenges and offer a unique contribution to organisations, by understanding, communicating and unlocking the value of the workforce to enable sustainable business outcomes.

Career journeys

The majority of practitioners (84%) surveyed had worked outside the profession for more than a year (Figure 17). With such diverse career paths, the profession is likely to be benefiting from a wealth of skills and experience brought in from other business areas.

Figure 17: Number of years' work experience outside the people profession (%)



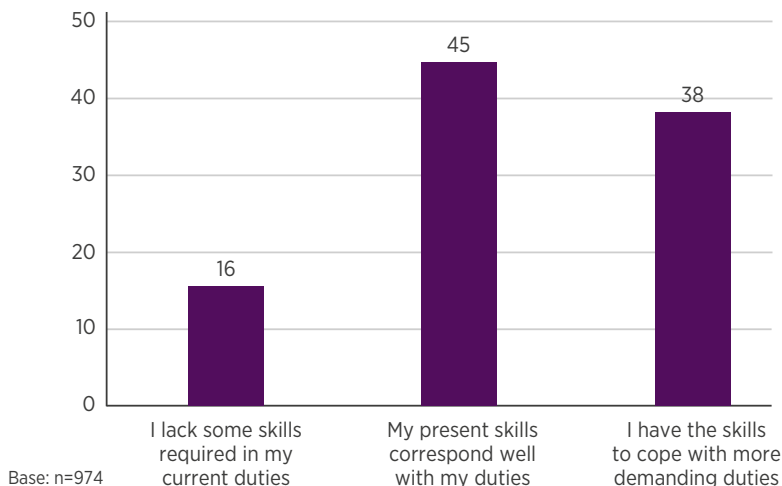
Nearly two in five practitioners feel over-skilled for the requirements of their role

Our survey revealed that 45% of practitioners feel their skills match the requirements of their job, but nearly two in five (38%) feel that they are somewhat over-skilled (Figure 18). People professionals are often overburdened with administrative work, particularly if the organisation lacks administrative resource, which impacts on their capacity to focus on more strategic activities.

People professionals who work in an SME were more likely than those who work in a large organisation to believe their skills correspond well with their duties (51% and 40% respectively). Moreover, practitioners in large organisations were more likely than those in SMEs to feel they have the skills to cope with more demanding duties than their role requires (45% and 31% respectively). This could be because there is more scope to take on challenging tasks that go beyond the job description in smaller companies, whereas large organisations may be more hierarchical and less flexible.

A fifth (22%) of practitioners with less than five years of experience in the profession reported that they lack some skills required in their current duties. This highlights the need for greater investment in training and development for individuals who are at an earlier stage in their career.

Figure 18: Skills level (%)



Levels of career success

Organisational culture can influence promotion opportunities

We asked respondents how many promotions they have received over the course of their career. Three to five promotions was the most common response (37%), with a quarter (25%) reporting one to two promotions and 16% saying six to nine. The data showed that this is influenced by organisational culture, CIPD membership and gender:

- Practitioners who work in an organisation with a dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative culture were more likely to have had ten or more promotions over the course of their career than those who work in a culture that is formalised and structured (15% compared with 5%).
- CIPD members were more likely to have had three or more promotions over the course of their career, compared with non-members (69% compared with 56%).
- Men were more likely to report that they have had ten or more promotions (12%) than women (6%).

Hopes of promotion are generally low

The majority of respondents (65%) felt it was not likely that they would be promoted within their current organisation in the next three years (compared with 35% who thought it was likely). This differed by organisation size and sector: practitioners working in SMEs were more likely to think they had a low chance of promotion (72%) than those in large organisations (57%). This can be expected since large organisations tend to have more hierarchical systems and internal promotional practices, and so are more likely to facilitate career mobility (Ballout 2007).

CIPD members were more likely than non-members to think a promotion is likely (44% compared with 29%). Alongside the earlier finding that CIPD members were more likely than non-members to have had at least three promotions, this suggests that being a member of the CIPD increases people professionals' ability to advance in their careers. Some work environments may value technical skills and on-the-job experience more than a professional qualification, but the ideal is a combination of the two.

Practitioners working in the private and public sectors were also more likely to believe they would be promoted than those in the third/voluntary sector (37%, 37% and 23% respectively).

Most are satisfied with their career progression

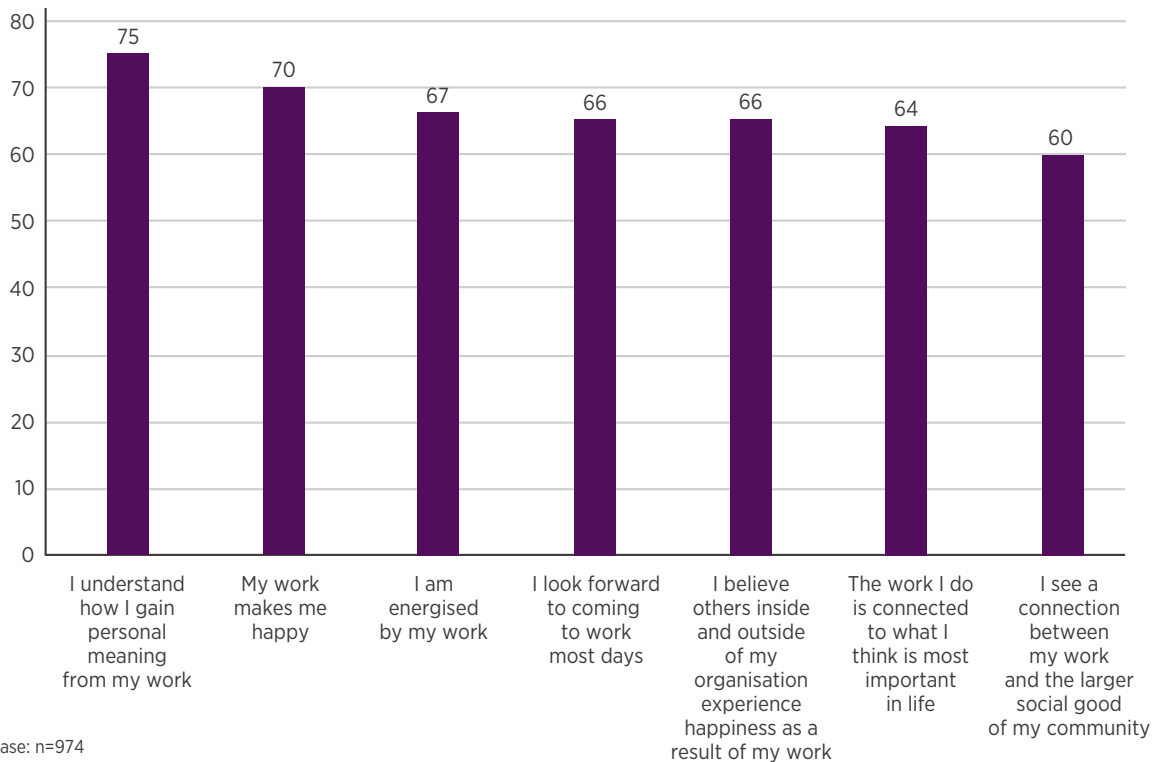
The majority of respondents (66%) said that their career progression has met or exceeded their expectations. In contrast to the finding that those working in SMEs were more likely than those in large organisations to believe a promotion was unlikely, we found that practitioners who work in large organisations were more likely than those who work in SMEs to feel their career progression has failed to meet their expectations (24% and 15% respectively). This could indicate different expectations within different sizes of organisation, with employees in large companies expecting to be able to progress more quickly.

The most commonly cited barriers to career advancement were lack of opportunities with current employer (19%) and personal confidence (18%). Thirteen per cent of respondents said that organisational politics were a barrier to progression, while a fifth (19%) said they don't feel there have been any barriers.

The majority say the people profession is a meaningful career

Overall, the data showed strong agreement with the statements on work meaningfulness (Figure 19). In addition, nearly eight in ten (78%) respondents agreed that the profession offers a meaningful career, and 74% said it offers good career prospects (see appendix). While the majority of respondents had a very high score on work meaningfulness (91%) (see appendix), this differed by sector: private sector professionals were more likely to report a low score (11%) than those who work in the third/voluntary sector (5%). CIPD members were also more likely than non-members to report a high score on meaningful work (94% compared with 89%).

Figure 19: Net agreement with statements on meaningfulness of work (%)



8 Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the diversity of skills and experience within the profession, which illustrates the alternative career paths of today’s people professionals. Overall, the findings paint a positive picture of good career prospects within the profession, and a high level of meaningful work experienced by practitioners. Moreover, the study demonstrates the positive links between professional body membership and career success among people professionals.

In a time when the expectations of people professionals are so high, and their roles are becoming more complex, the results of this study are a useful reference point for any practitioner to understand the current shape of the profession.

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10 Appendix

Role-level descriptions

- **High strategic level:** Strategic level to deliver long-term value for organisations, working with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to influence the way that organisations manage their people.
- **Strategic delivery-focused level:** Strategic overview, however, role is delivery-focused. Create medium- to long-term value for organisations and their people.
- **Medium-term operational level:** Work operationally to deliver short- to medium-term value for organisations and their people. Have influence with immediate colleagues and customers, although work is likely to impact a wider audience.
- **Day-to-day operational level:** Work operationally, supporting the day-to-day delivery of people plans, projects and solutions. Work is usually tactical, gathering information and delivering immediate outcomes for my manager, colleagues and immediate customers.

Demographics

	UK/Ireland	Greece	Romania
Age (%)			
18-34	37	36	34
35-44	27	38	47
45+	36	26	19
N	215	361	178
Gender (%)			
Male	35	35	14
Female	64	64	83
N	974	370	182
Organisation size (nationally) (%)			
2-249 employees	49	49	35
250+ employees	51	51	65
N	935	367	182
Sector (%)			
Private	67	80	97
Public	18	18	2
Third/voluntary	16	2	1
N	965	364	182
Years of experience in the people profession (%)			
Up to 5 years	30	35	21
6-15 years	34	36	57
16+ years	35	29	21
N	945	365	182

Role level (%)

High strategic level	19	16	20
Strategic delivery-focused level	30	29	43
Medium-term operational level	24	33	21
Day-to-day operational level	27	22	15
N	974	370	182

Member of a professional body (%)

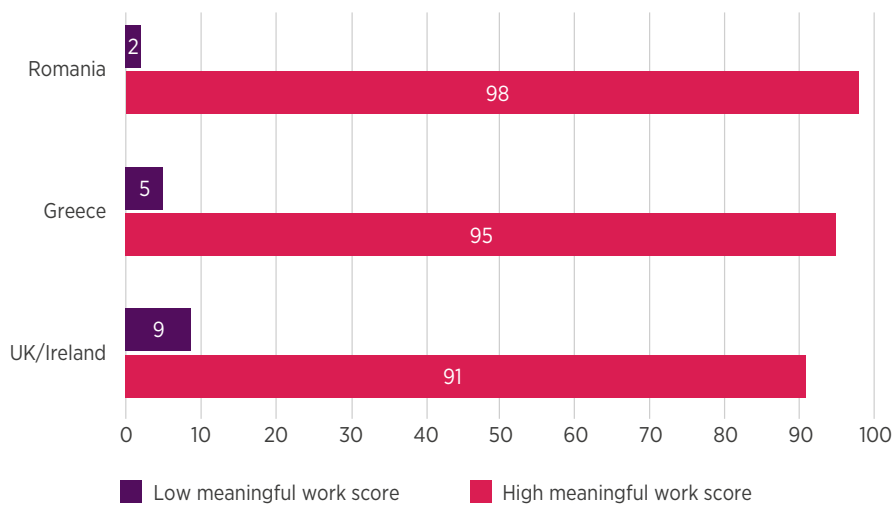
UK/Ireland	37
Greece	34
Romania	37

Comparison between countries on meaningful work

We asked practitioners how strongly they agree with a set of statements adapted from Ashmos and Duchon’s (2000) meaningful work scale, including ‘My work makes me happy’ and ‘The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life’. We then calculated composite scores to compare practitioners who showed high versus low levels of meaningful work with other factors. The five-point scale was re-coded so that a low score represents an average of 1 to 2.49, and a high score represents an average of 2.5 to 5.

The vast majority of respondents showed a ‘high’ meaningful work score, with practitioners in the UK and Ireland reporting slightly lower scores than Greece and Romania (see Figure A1).

Figure A1: Meaningful work score (%)



Base: UK/Ireland n=974, Greece n=370, Romania n=182



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