

Sports Industry – Nurturing the workforce

Introduction

The workforce of any Industry is critical to its success, and the Sport Industry is no different. However, the breadth of roles (from coaches to referees, players to managers, community volunteers to physios, data analysts to media experts, designers to professional services) and skills (generalist skills e.g. customer service, technical skills e.g. strength & conditioning and data skills e.g. coding) across the Sports Industry workforce is what sets it apart.

For governments to ensure the sustainable growth of the Sport Industry, they should develop detailed plans to attract, retain and develop the Sports workforce across all relevant sub sectors.



Current challenges

Governments are facing global sport workforce challenges regarding capability, capacity and funding

CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS

- **Hiring:** Limited supply of potential employees vs. more traditional career paths due to e.g.
 - lack of visible career pathways
 - negative perception of jobs in Sports Industry
 - low pay
 - competition for limited talent

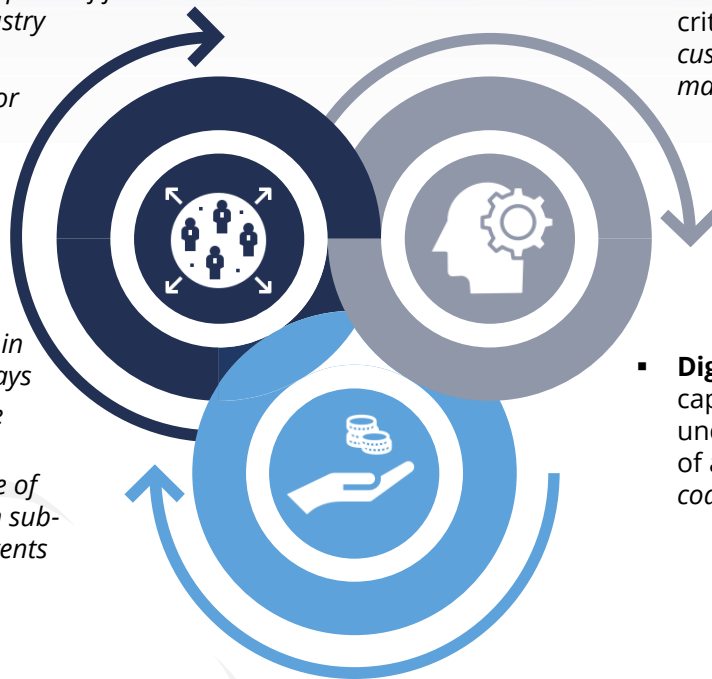
- **Retention:** High turnover of staff and difficulty in retaining talent due to e.g.
 - lack of clarity in career pathways
 - uncompetitive earnings
 - intense nature of working life in sub-sectors e.g. events

CAPABILITY CONSTRAINTS

- **Technical skills:** Lack of specialist skills due to high level of domain expertise required in certain sub-sectors e.g. sport science, media

- **Generalist skills:** Gaps in critical generalists skills e.g. customer service, project management, often driven by:
 - diverse range of entry points into sports industry
 - lack of structured education and upskilling programmes

- **Digital skills:** Gaps in digital capabilities and understanding of the power of analytics e.g. data analysis, coding, modelling



FUNDING

- Sports organisations often heavily reliant on government funding for support and volunteers e.g. Federations, clubs & teams
- Limited capital available through investors, through lack of understanding of business case for investment

Limited capital for hiring

Limited funding for upskilling

Developing a strategy

A structured approach to combatting the capacity and capability challenges is required. Detailed strategic initiatives should be designed for the local environment, while leveraging international best practice e.g. *education, polices and campaigns* to attract, develop, deploy and retain the workforce. System enablers are also critical to the long-term success of a workforce strategy.



Recommendations for policy-makers

To kickstart workforce development, certain steps should be undertaken to build a comprehensive picture of the current landscape

- When assessing the sports workforce, consider both formal and informal roles and touchpoints e.g. volunteers, unregistered coaches
- Consider the balance between nurturing local talent and attracting the best foreign talent and align to national policies
- Understand future demand for roles and skills based on projected industry growth and emerging sub-sectors
- In an often-fragmented ecosystem, ensure clear accountability for workforce initiatives and education
- Connect with youth early to articulate the extensive opportunities of working in sport and association value propositions

SOURCES: Desk research, expert input, Portas analysis