



Learning & Development Priorities **Guidebook**

Maximize the Impact of Your Budget and
Build a Productive Workforce



Top 10 L&D Trends and Priorities

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Grasping the Value of L&D in Your Organization

Learning and Development (L&D) is a critical talent management strategy for any competitive organization. If done right, L&D has the potential to make a meaningful impact on your workforce and business processes. L&D initiatives like training present a prime opportunity for you to mold your workforce into drivers of productivity and success towards your business goals.

In our competitive economy, high-performing organizations do more than merely adapt to long-term trends, they anticipate and jump on emerging opportunities before the rest of the competition. True to this, business leaders who are more willing to invest in talent development capitalize on the rising opportunities of the digital age. Yet, training is still often seen as a cost rather than an investment, which presents an obvious roadblock for these leaders.





Successful organizations today are more efficient in addressing L&D demands. They learn rapidly, adapt quickly, and address the dynamic career needs of their workforce. Organizations that fail to invest in L&D initiatives, however, often find that their workforce engagement, morale, and retention are diminished, and their knowledge, skills, and efficiency fall behind the competition.

Knowing when, where, and how to invest in training will require an understanding of what you want to achieve as an organization. Through careful planning and an in-depth understanding of the requirements of the different roles in your organization, you can give your workforce the necessary training to be more skilled and valuable, so that they may spearhead organizational growth, transformation, and success.

Discover how to get started >

Align L&D Goals to Your Business Strategy

One of the major challenges of L&D practitioners today is aligning training programs to their organization's overall strategy. Without alignment, you can't really demonstrate value when it comes to returns. As a result, L&D functions often encounter budget constraints.

The key idea of alignment is simple. **Your L&D goal should be to equip your workforce with the right skills to meet your objectives for sustainability and growth. So, take time to understand the business and listen to your workforce. Engage them. Assess the business direction and recognize where there are performance gaps.**

To correctly identify and address these objectives, conduct a proper training needs analysis. This will ensure that your training programs target the correct knowledge and skill gaps for your workforce to succeed.





8-Step Training Needs Analysis

1. Gain an understanding of desired business outcomes
2. Assess the gap between current and required levels of skills, knowledge and attitude
3. Determine trainable competencies
4. Identify training resources and delivery methods
5. Create a roadmap for training
6. Plan for training evaluations
7. Do a cost-benefit analysis
8. Report findings and recommendations

Aim to answer the following questions:

- What is the business strategy for the coming year?
- What are some of the main challenges your workforce will face?
- What are the key areas for L&D?
- What will be the impact on business?
- How will training occur?
- How much will training cost?

Enforce Robust Training Measurement

The value of training is realized from your workforce's ability to apply learned concepts on the job, resulting in an impact on objectives. Researchers have argued successfully that most performance deficiencies are due to environmental factors including vague expectations, and insufficient and untimely feedback, among others. **It's not enough to identify training needs and deliver the training. L&D practitioners must assess the impact.**

Today, most organizations find it difficult to get past the first two levels Kirkpatrick's four-level training evaluation model. L&D professionals must move beyond measuring learner engagement and knowledge attainment, and begin to analyze skills application in the workplace, change in performance, and return on investment (ROI).





Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model

Level	Questions to Answer	Recommended Methods
1 - Reaction	Are your learners satisfied with the training program? Are they engaged?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback surveys• hours logged• completion rate of activities
2 - Learning	Are your learners acquiring new skills and knowledge? How have they progressed in the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity pass/fail rate• Rate of progress
3 - Behavior	Are the learners applying what they learned on the job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manager evaluations• self-evaluations
4 - Results	What are your learners' performance against their target? What is the ROI?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance against set targets• Estimated work hours saved

Strengthen Soft Skills

Soft skills are often overlooked because they are difficult to quantify. But when your team lacks soft skills, what you'll find is ineffective communication, low productivity, and a lack of satisfaction in the workplace. In the hiring process and in L&D, management often prioritizes hard skills. While these technical or sector-specific skills are important, soft skills are what will bring the different strengths of your workforce together to achieve a common goal.

We live in an age when you can buy your groceries, order your outfit, and find answers to all kinds of questions online, without having to speak to a single person in the process. While this automation of tasks makes life efficient, it hinders our ability to utilize and develop soft skills that are critical to all types of interactions in the professional setting. **There are many ways to enhance the soft skills of your workforce, but don't just assume these core competencies will be organically acquired by employees on the job.**





Ways to Develop Soft Skills in Your Organization

- Seminars and Programs
- Periodic Feedback
- Identify Mentors and Role Models
- Team Building Exercises and Retreats
- eLearning Tools
- Goal Setting

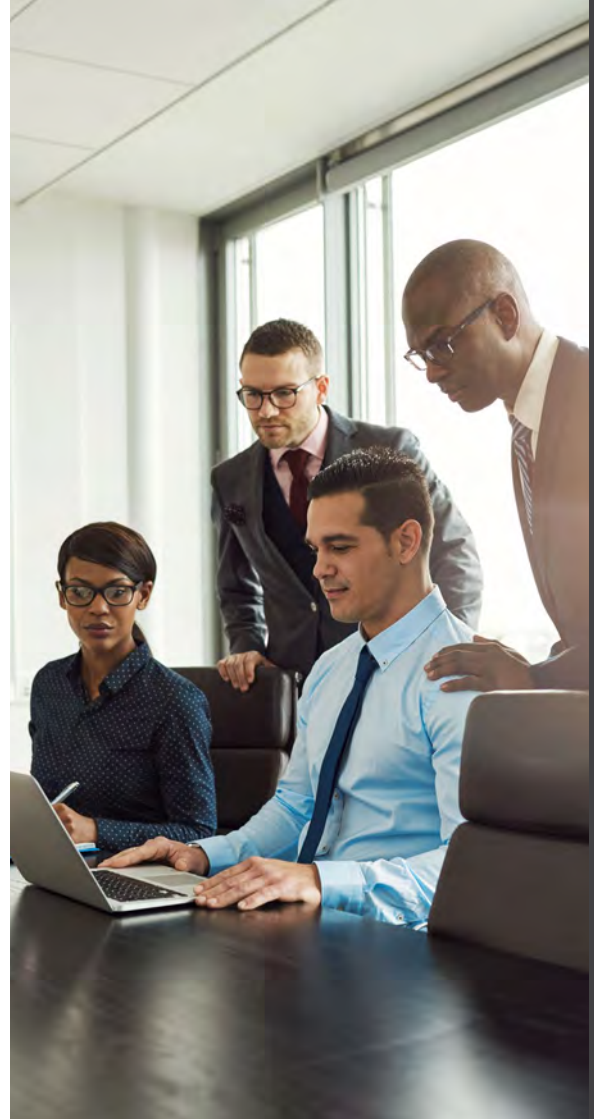
Examples of Soft Skills & Hard Skills

Communication	Programming
Work ethic	Web design
Etiquette	Writing
Leadership	Bookkeeping
Conflict management	Machine operation
Interpersonal	Transcription
Time management	SEO Marketing
Problem solving	MS Excel proficiency
Teamwork	Video editing
Critical thinking	Data mining

Develop Competencies for Future Roles

Back in the day when technology wasn't like it is now, most jobs were repetitive and mundane. The nature of work was standardized and roles were rigidly defined. The climb up to success was straightforward. Today, it is the opposite. Due to digitization and automation, the structure, processes, and responsibilities within organizations have evolved and become more complex. Without continuous training, organizations will find a shortage of skills, looking both internally and externally.

Investing in competencies for future roles should begin as soon as your new employee enters the door. With the short shelf life of skills, L&D professionals must jumpstart a culture of learning in their organization and build a team that evolves with the times.





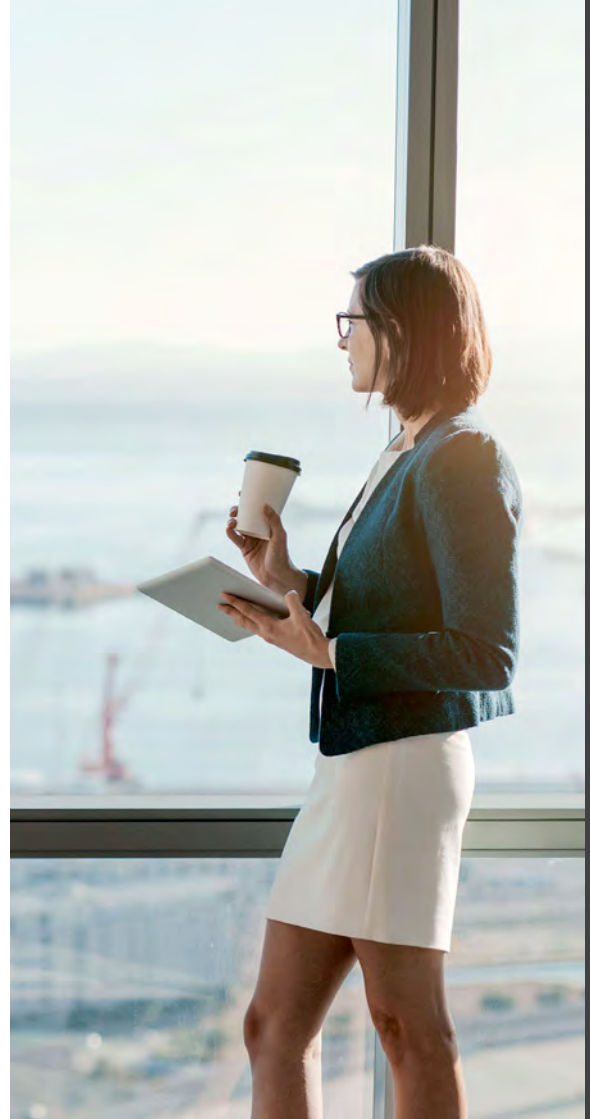
How to Jumpstart a Culture of Learning

- Nurture employees for future roles through programs that will help create a pool of promotable employees.
- Upskill and backfill by training your most productive and trainable employees, promoting them to more critical positions, and replacing their previous lower-risk roles with new hires.
- Cross-train to insert fresh insights and variety into responsibilities.
- Ensure newly-learned skills are retained through real-world application.
- Value trainability more than hard skills in your recruitment process.
- Remember, training not only aids development, but also helps with talent retention.

Meet Learners Where They Are

Getting employees to make time for learning is the number one challenge for talent development today. In a typical work week, employees only have an average of 24 minutes for L&D. That means, **L&D professionals need to step up their game to make programs more relevant and accessible, and aligned to their employees' needs and professional aspirations.**

Remember, people effectively learn in different circumstances—by reading, watching, listening, discussing concepts with others, collaborating with others, practicing skills and procedures in a safe environment, observing others at work, and trying things out for themselves. An ideal training program takes all of these different learning circumstances into consideration and presents learners with the best opportunities to engage in training. This is why harnessing new technologies and methods of teaching are generating more value for learners, which in turn generates more value for their organizations.





Where are your employees learning?



on the commute



during lunch



during idle time



before bed

Adopt a Flexible Learning Management System (LMS)

The learning technology market is saturated with LMS providers, many of which are still rigid and expensive. It will take some research to find the best LMS that will suit your needs, but with the ever-changing needs of organizations and employees, L&D professionals must lean towards LMSs that are flexible, accessible, and able communicate and share data with other programs.





LMS Features Checklist

- **Intuitive User Interface**
User-friendly and quick to learn
- **Integration Capabilities**
Ability to share data across all your systems
- **Content Management**
Supports international standards for eLearning content such as SCORM and xAPI
- **Mobile Learning Accessibility**
Responsive design and mobile-friendly content
- **Blended Learning Compatibility**
Tracks and enables learning across different online and offline channels
- **Reporting and Analytics Tools**
Progress tracking with relevant metrics
- **Security**
Data protection and secure authorization process
- **Customization and Personalization**
Branding and business-relevant learning paths
- **Localization Capabilities**
Accessible for the whole organization
- **Support Services**
Account and technical support

Curate Content on Relevant Topics

Effective learning content curation contributes to organizational performance in many ways. It is about identifying the most relevant information for your learners, and contextualizing and organizing it in a way that makes it effective and accessible for them. L&D trends are moving towards building a learning library that covers relevant topics, which are easily accessible for timely training.





Benefits of Curating Content

- Provides a central repository of learning materials for your employees
- Presents large amounts of informative resources in a systematized way
- Promotes a culture of learning
- Encourages sharing of employees' personal learning references
- Aligns professional learning with organizational goals



Content Curation Process

1. Aggregate – Collect materials from different sources
2. Filter – Select the most relevant materials
3. Organize – Group related materials together
4. Contextualize – Add context to the materials
5. Share – Ensure employee awareness of and engagement in materials
6. Archive – Tag materials in a systematic way
7. Feedback – Seek feedback for improvements

Consider Coaching Rather Than Instruction

Limitations of traditional face-to-face instruction, such as the requirement of being physically present in a particular time slot, may hinder your employees from engaging. But new learning technologies shouldn't steer your L&D away from live training or coaching.

As eLearning programs provide employees with the knowledge and techniques to develop their skills, coaching helps assist the application of these new skills in the workplace. Even though live training no longer plays a central role in many training programs, it still plays a part in ensuring that learners understand and retain new information and skills.

Workplace coaches and distance trainers can work around traditional face-to-face limitations and provide more flexibility, especially for busy professionals.





Why Support Your eLearning With Live Coaching

- One-on-one coaching is more flexible than group instruction
- Coaching happens on a needs basis
- Technology may be more efficient in delivering training, but coaches are better at relating it to context
- Coaching provides personalized feedback
- Coaching helps learners gain a deeper understanding of learning materials
- Coaches can inspire and motivate learners with sincere encouragement

Leverage Training as an Employee Benefit

How do you build a workforce that will work for you and with you, is less inclined to leave, and helps attract the best talent? Through learning and development.

L&D has become a key differentiator between companies competing for talent. Employees perceive L&D programs as their employer's way of preparing them for better opportunities, and it's also a way for management to communicate an employee's purpose and value to the organization.

According to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, factors that cause job satisfaction include personal growth, recognition, or achievement. The lack of opportunities for career advancement is the second most frequently cited reason for leaving an organization.

L&D enhances motivation, boosts morale, and increases loyalty. It plays an active role in engaging, motivating, retaining, and empowering your best talent.





How?

1. Communicate your organization's willingness to provide training
2. Include your employees in the Training Needs Analysis process by listening to their needs
3. Help your employees set goals to enhance their achievement upon training completion
4. Ensure they receive feedback that's critical to their professional growth
5. Give recognition to employees who complete programs and succeed in applying new skills in the workplace
6. Utilize training to communicate your employees' purpose and value to your organization

Educate on Corporate Identity and Values

Brand training for customer-facing employees is a given, but brand training for internal employees are too often set aside. **Just because internal employees aren't engaging with your customers for work, it doesn't mean that brand training is unnecessary and shouldn't be an L&D priority.**

Brand training helps employees understand your organization's big picture and identify with your corporate identity and values. By presenting your brand in a meaningful and purposeful way, you position your employees to make a deeper connection to your organization and its values. For example, if your brand pillars include Integrity, Passion, and Safety, you will want your workforce's work ethic, attitude, and actions to reflect these values.

Furthermore, employees are more engaged and motivated when they make a personal connection to their workplace.





Brand Training Benefits

- Builds a positive image of your organization
- Ensures consistent messaging and understanding of your brand across teams
- Encourages employees to make a deeper connection to your brand
- Unifies your workforce with a common direction and goal
- Streamlines the onboarding process through standardization

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We Are goFLUENT

We are an award-winning provider of customizable blended language training solutions with more than 18 years of B2B experience.

As a strategic partner to organizations seeking to effectively communicate in the global marketplace, we strive to provide impactful solutions that result in a valuable and measurable return.

Combining professional language trainers, innovative technology and client-centric services, we maintain an average satisfaction rating of 98% from more than 500,000 professionals worldwide. As a result, our solutions have paved the way for over 2,000 organizations to succeed in their various markets and industries.

In 2017, we were recognized by esteemed L&D research and analyst firm Brandon Hall Group at their HCM Excellence Awards for:



- *Best Unique or Innovative L&D Solution*
- *Best Use of Blended Learning*



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