

happy

Learning and Development Trends

How Technology Enables Continuous Learning



Employees hold the keys to success for any company that wants to compete in the modern marketplace. Well-educated and well-trained workers add to the productivity and efficiency of the business, while their under-performing counterparts produce low-quality deliverables using obsolete tactics and requiring excessive supervision. When looking at how to keep an organization in top form, learning and development can be one of the best ways.

Research¹ shows that 80% of employees who receive training and development opportunities think highly of their employers and feel comfortable about having an available career path. Modern workers don't want to stay long in a position that offers no opportunities for growth. After a while, anyone who has no hope for the future with their current employer will look for a new job.

From a business stand-point, "organizations are more competitive, agile, and engaged when knowledge is constantly and freely shared." (The Association for Talent Development²). In fact, after surveying around 830 companies in 2015, they found that organizations with a culture of learning were some of the highest performers. They also found that they attracted more talented employees and had higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Research done through LinkedIn³ found that the main way for employees to be productive and achieve goals is for employers to provide them with opportunities for continuous learning. This helps employees continue to improve their skills and be more flexible and adaptable, as changes related to technology and other workplace matters can arise quickly. When continuous learning is supported, employees feel valued, helping boost employee engagement and retention.

Seeing how beneficial learning and development programs are, why is it that only 31% of organizations surveyed had efficient learning and development programs?

The answer seems to come in the form of what some of us love and what some of us love to hate: technology. The challenges arise when technology advances, generations in the workforce change, and expectations about business evolve.

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/open-enrollment-education.aspx>

² <https://www.mindtools.com/blog/corporate/2016/05/06/building-a-culture-of-learning/>

³ <https://hbr.org/2016/03/to-stay-relevant-your-company-and-employees-must-keep-learning>

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The Current State

of Learning and Development

There are three main factors⁴ that seem to be driving forces in the changes occurring in learning and development:

- Due to globalization and the shrinking world, businesses have to compete with other organizations around the world, no longer just in their community or country. Companies need to use technology to help employees continuously learn and develop skills so that the company can stay competitive in the marketplace.
- Mobile devices have made learning available to even more people and almost anywhere. Learning and development programs are less in control of learning as employees can find courses on almost any topic on a mobile device.
- Employees are also finding that learning can help them advance their careers. There are more requests from Millennials and Generation Z employees to have learning opportunities on a variety of topics in an easily accessible manner like an online learning environment.

These forces disrupt the culture of learning in the organization, requiring leaders to continuously learn about and adapt to changes. Leaders who don't, fall behind and miss the benefits of highly developed learning and development programs.

This may be a part of why almost 80% of organizations are not creating plans that incorporate the changes in technology. The majority of organizations (45%) have technology plans and have used learning technologies, but do not have much consistency or long terms goals and planning to support the implementation of these technologies. Many leaders may see the importance of emerging technologies, but may not know how to use them or implement them. Organizations that implement new technologies without having a plan may not get the results they are looking for. A well thought out plan will improve the chances of success and increase the positive impact.

While there is a general link between learning technologies and improvements in productivity and engagement, the impact is much greater when organizations have a more organized and structured implementation strategy.

⁴ <http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/finance/articles/cfo-insights-continuous-learning-environment.html>

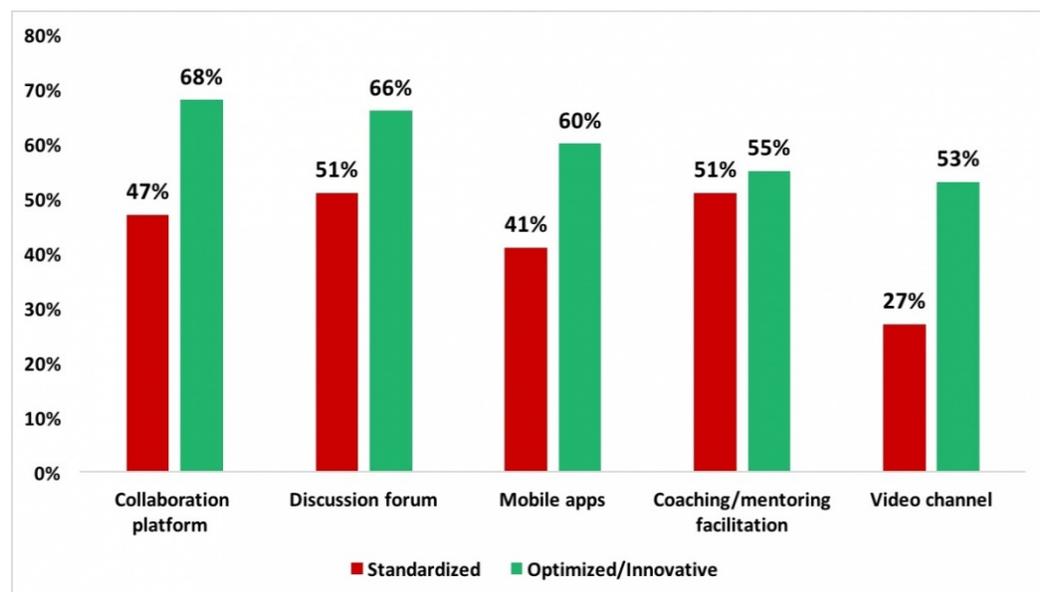
CB Insights, a firm tracking venture investments, found that during the first 6 months of 2015, \$3 billion was invested into learning and educational start-ups. Almost \$1 billion⁵ of that was focused on learning and education in the corporate world. With so much investment it is only a matter of time before something new comes along.

Many businesses are starting to understand the importance of technology and implement it in a structured manner. Brandon Hall Group's 2016 Learning Technology Study⁶ found that the number one learning and development strategy through 2017 is the exploration of new technologies. This shows the importance that companies place on finding out what technologies they can incorporate into their programs. Social and mobile technologies are the two most important technologies for many organizations.

The way to navigate this and to stay ahead of the trends is to establish a strategy that can adapt as technology evolves. Looking back at the almost 80% of companies that are Standardized or below in their technology strategies, it is not surprising to find out that exploring new technologies is not one of their top 3 priorities. Being stuck in the old way of doing things without any vision for the future seems to impact how well they explore and plan for new technologies. It is the number one priority⁷ for companies in the Optimized/Innovative group.

This is even more evident when looking at the data that shows that companies without a clear strategy do not see the importance in informal learning. In every category, businesses in the Optimized/Innovative category were more likely to say that technology is essential.

Importance of Informal Learning Functionality (Essential/Critical)



Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study

⁵ <http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/finance/articles/cfo-insights-continuous-learning-environment.html>

⁶ <https://www.mindtools.com/blog/corporate/2016/05/06/building-a-culture-of-learning/>

⁷ <https://trainingmag.com/mission-critical-fully-developed-learning-technology-strategy>

The New Workforce

25% of Millennials would leave their job within a year, and 44% within two years.

It's estimated that Millennials will make up as much as 50% of the workforce by 2020⁸. Together with the generation that follows them, Gen Z, they constitute a growing proportion of employees. These young people have different ambitions from previous generations. They want a comfortable lifestyle, but they also want more intangible things from their work, such as professional achievements, and a sense of connection and purpose. They see their careers as portfolios of experiences rather than a ladder to be climbed in a single organization, which is why very few of them plan to stay in their current role for the long term.

The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey⁹ is conducted with the help of almost 7,700 Millennials from 29 countries. The survey is specific in that it gathers opinions about the business environment. The report sheds some light into the specific ways that Millennials are impacting companies, by answering some key questions.

Are Millennials disloyal or more strategic?

When asked about quitting a job, 25% of Millennials surveyed said they would within a year and 44% said they would within two years.

Using statistics gathered by Manila Recruitment¹⁰ we can see that 13% of Millennials feel that an employee should stay in a job for at least five years before looking for a new one. In fact, 70% of Millennials plan to change jobs when the economy is better.

In the 2016 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Report¹¹ researchers from the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) state:

“Given today’s advancements, Millennials may be achieving milestones more quickly than their generational counterparts and, therefore, less willing to stay put for extensive periods of time without promotion.”

Those numbers can be interpreted in many ways, but as we look further into the research, maybe we can try to determine a better answer.

Millennials are less willing to stay put for extensive periods of time without promotion.

⁸ <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-agenda/ceosurvey/2016/aiesec.html>

⁹ <http://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennialsurvey.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.manilarecruitment.com/manila-recruitment-articles-advice/recruiting/statistics-about-hiring-working-with-millennials/>

¹¹ <https://www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Articles/Documents/2016-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Report.pdf>

Are they entitled or simply undervalued?

63% of Millennials feel that their skills are not being developed enough.

When asked about leadership skills, 63% stated that their skills are not being developed enough and only 28% feel that their company is using their skills to their full potential.

Career development and leadership roles are important to this group. Do the feelings of limited professional development come from entitlement or are companies not investing enough in it? Are companies not using Millennial employees to their full potential or do Millennials just think they are more “special” than they actually are?

Every company is different, so it is important for leaders to ask for feedback and evaluate policies to see if the Millennials in their company are likely to leave their jobs due to poor development and leadership opportunities or for other reasons.

How do they view companies?

Many Millennials feel businesses are still too focused on profits and wealth, and not enough on social benefits and improving lives.

87% feel that the value of a business should be measured by more than just its profits.

They feel that a business should be judged by the quality of the products, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction.

Many Millennials feel that a business’ long term success is driven by employee satisfaction, ethics, and customer care.



2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey

How do Millennials learn?

Millennials choose to learn in new and different ways. They expect more informal, just-in-time learning sources to acquire and assimilate knowledge.

For them, context is more important than content, and they’re right to expect it considering that we forget more than half of what we learn within one day, and within a

week of a training event we forget almost 90 percent, according to the Herman Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve research¹².

Companies have to adapt to their needs and create a new learning architecture that delivers the right content, in the right amount, at the right time, to ensure that the learning process is effective and not hindering development. The focus should shift from training to capability development.

The Millennial generation with a short attention span has quick and easy access to relevant, bite-sized information in real time through online search engines, social networks, and online company repositories. They rely on collaborative learning rather than formal training, and they prefer to work in teams.

What about Gen Z?

The oldest group of Gen Zers, those born between 1996 and 2010, are now about 20 years old and they're preparing to enter the workforce. Despite popular belief, 41 percent of Gen Zers say corporate offices are their workplace preference, according to a global study¹³ by Future Workplace and Randstad US. Similar to Millennials, Gen Zers prefer communicating with co-workers and managers instead of using email or phone calls.

Globally, the technologies that both Gen Z and Millennials want their employers to incorporate into the workplace include social media (41 percent), wearables (27 percent) and virtual reality (26 percent). While they want to embrace social media, 46 percent of both generations also agree it is their biggest distraction from getting work done, with text messaging (39 percent) and email (31 percent) following closely.

Over the past year, flexibility has become a more desired employee benefit than healthcare for Millennials and Gen Z, yet only one-third of companies offer it (34 percent).

What are the skills of the future?

The speed of current breakthroughs has no historical precedent. In fact, the World Economic Forum has stated that we are on the verge of a Fourth Industrial Revolution¹⁴. It used to be that you could keep phones, TVs, computers, or other electronic devices for at least a year before they became outdated. Now, it seems like something better or updated comes along every few months. The reach of technology extends far beyond personal electronics, meaning that technological progress affects basically all businesses and all aspects of life in increasingly significant ways.

Flexibility is the most desired employee benefit for both Millennials and for Gen Z.

¹² <http://www.flashcardlearner.com/articles/the-forgetting-curve/>

¹³ <https://workplacetrends.com/gen-z-millennials-collide-at-work/>

¹⁴ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>

“When compared with previous industrial revolutions, the Fourth is evolving at an exponential rather than a linear pace. Moreover, it is disrupting almost every industry in every country. And the breadth and depth of these changes herald the transformation of entire systems of production, management, and governance.”

World Education Forum

Over the next 30 years, there will be many advancements in artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, and quantum computing. Those advancements will not just impact people working in those fields, but everyone everywhere, in both their personal and professional lives. With so many changes happening in such a short amount of time, the question for employers and employees becomes what kinds of skills will be essential in the next few years.

The Future of Jobs Report¹⁵, released by the World Economic Forum, compares skills that were needed in 2015 with skills that will be needed in 2020. While they point out many similarities, there are some significant changes. They place emphasis on how important creativity will become. People who are creative will be able to adapt to changes quicker while also finding new and innovative ways to use technology. They will also hold a skill that is uniquely human. Machines have not been created that can replace human creativity, making creativity a useful skill as artificial intelligence becomes more advanced.

Complex problem solving and critical thinking will remain important skills, while emotional intelligence is a new skill for 2020. Here again, we see the impact of machines and technology on the list. Skills that have human elements, ones which machines are not able to fully replicate (creativity, emotional intelligence), rise on the list of needed skills, while skills that machines are able to do (coordination, quality control) fall or stay about the same. Here are the top 10 skills that will be required in the future:

in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

¹⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>

As the world continues to change at an exponential pace, all employees are going to have to develop skills in managing¹⁶ these changes, starting with:

Managing distractions

With people checking smartphones about 220 times a day, sending between one and 67 texts a day, and spending almost 2 hours on social media a day, technological distractions are drains on productivity and focus. Employees will need to manage distractions so they can continue to be competitive in the evolving workplace.

Continuous learning

Employees need to be able to manage all the new technologies by learning how to use them. For some people this may be easier than for others, but whatever your business is it is important to stay current through continuous learning.

Effective communication

One of the biggest ways technology has impacted our daily lives is in the field of technology. There are numerous ways to communicate with others around the world. Many people use multiple methods a day (phone call, text, email, tweet, Facebook post/message, YouTube comment/video, Skype/Facetime).

If you think about how you communicate on a daily basis it is amazing to think about how not too long ago phone calls were the main way to communicate. Now people need to manage multiple communication streams, knowing the platforms and rules for communication with each one.

Building a reputation

As the gig-based economy grows and more people work as freelancers, people need to be able to manage their reputations in order to get more work. People are often judged by what they say using social media, as well as what others say about them. Being able to create a positive reputation online is valuable, even necessary, for many people.

Filtering information

At the University of California – San Diego, researchers found that, in 2008, Americans spent 11.8 hours every day consuming information. That number has increased almost 3% every year since then.

In order to stay competitive, employees need to know how to filter through all this information, to use what is important, and to ignore what is not.

Managing relationships

Relationships of all kinds have become more complicated with technology. Dating has changed through Tinder, friendships through Facebook, and networking through LinkedIn. Those are just three examples of the growing list of online platforms that are changing relationships.

¹⁶ <http://www.futuristspeaker.com/business-trends/twelve-critical-skills-for-the-future/>

Organizations are slowly transitioning from the era of IT industrialization to the digital economy, where technology skills are a must.

Employees need to know how to manage online relationships, as well as real world relationships. Offline relationships require not only verbal communication, but also nonverbal skills like body language, tone, and facial expression.

Embracing diversity

As the world becomes more connected and countries become more diverse, employees need to be more aware of diversity and other cultures. These cultures can include country of origin, religion, generation, sexual orientation, and gender.

Gallup research suggests diversity can be a competitive advantage for organizations that build the right environment. In one of their studies, they found that the combination of employee engagement and gender diversity resulted in 46% to 58% higher financial performance -- comparable revenue and net profit, respectively -- for business units above the median on both engagement and gender diversity, compared with those below the median on both.

Utilizing technology

Employees need to be aware of various trends and innovations in technology so they can make informed decisions about which ones they will use and which they do not feel would be helpful.

In its 2015 CIO Survey, Gartner shows that many organizations are slowly transitioning from the era of IT industrialization to the digital economy, where technology skills are a must.

While news of artificial intelligence, machines replacing jobs, and the general anxiety about the future is in the news more and more often, there are things employees and employers can do to help ease some of that anxiety. When people are willing to learn, interested in change, and open to adaptation, they can learn many of the skills they will need to make them competitive in a world of tech-savvy employees and machines.



A Different Learning

Architecture

As companies have come to realize, the current economy and workplace trends have made learning and development key to the training and retention of top talent. Continuous learning is imperative for this new workforce. Employees at all levels expect dynamic, self-directed, continuous learning opportunities from their employers, but not all of them can deliver.

The Bersin by Deloitte Human Capital Trends¹⁷ report shows that, despite the strong shift toward employee-centric learning, many learning and development organizations are still struggling with internally focused and outdated platforms and static learning approaches. The report also shows that, even though more than eight in ten executives (84 percent) in this year's survey view learning as an important (40 percent) or very important (44 percent) issue, nearly every CEO and CHRO reports that their companies are not developing skills fast enough or leaders deeply enough.

How to create a modern learning architecture

HR professionals often struggle with deciding what type of content to deliver, using which method, to get the best results. Should it be a general course, a training, a specific certification, or a workshop? And how will that contribute to employees' motivation and engagement levels? What would be the next step?

To ensure that their learning and development strategy can be successfully delivered, companies need to create a learning architecture that aligns learning strategies with corporate objectives and leverages technology advancements. It's also important to dedicate resources, set the right expectations, and align corporate culture with the goal of enabling employees to get the learning they need, when they need it, at every stage in their careers.

“A “learning architecture” is a framework you develop which gives your organization guidelines for the use of different types of media and delivery options for different problems.

In your organization, for example, all new product launches may require a 5-minute video from the product manager. All annual sales certification programs may mandate a 5-day in-person workshop. And all new customer service updates may mandate an online web-page which is fully searchable within the customer service portal. “

Traditional models of learning fail to bridge the gap between employer and employee or to improve engagement and performance. eLearning courses and self-guided learning experiences have come to replace them, and enable the advancement of learning and development programs. In the UK, for example, eLearning courses are expected to grow by 59%, while in-house development programs are anticipated to grow by 53% over the same period. (CIPD¹⁸)

The types of media and delivery methods that would make an effective learning architecture, suitable to today's workforce, rely heavily on technology:

“Developments in mobile learning technologies, followed by virtual classrooms and social media, are expected to have the greatest impact on the learning and development profession in the next five years”.

CIPD's Annual Learning and development survey report¹⁹

Mobile, social, and web-based platforms that can deliver on-demand learning content are the capabilities that companies should look to develop in the next years. These platforms will aim to offer learning experiences, provided by a cohesive learning architecture that enables tracking, measuring, and optimizing, based on real-time data.

It won't be easy to shift from an internally focused, corporate-centric learning universe to a learner-centric one, where employees have control over their learning content and their schedule. But these experiences will be customized to each employee's needs, proving to be much more effective than bulk, one-for-all approach learning programs that have worked in the past.

¹⁸ <https://elearningindustry.com/learning-and-development-trends-practices-watch-2016>

¹⁹ http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/learning-development_2015.pdf

The Age of

Technology

“Employees at all levels expect dynamic, self-directed, continuous learning opportunities from their employers.”

Even though technology and learning have been connected for years now, many companies are still having trouble incorporating external technologies into their learning structures. Leaders can identify ways that technology can impact their learning and development programs (online certificates, massive open online courses/MOOCs, and social media learning) but 61% of executives¹⁹ state they have problems moving their organizations toward these types of learning styles.

When companies have a clear strategy about incorporating technology into their learning and development programs, they are more satisfied with technology. Businesses with the most success are changing how they view learning and development, as the business environment evolves. They create an employee-centric process where learning is a continuous event that the entire company is a part of.

No longer is learning and development a periodic event managed by HR. It is more important than ever to understand the changes in the business world, how technology impacts business and learning, and creating plans to adapt to these changes.

Employees themselves want to continue to learn new skills and develop their competencies. As research from Deloitte states²⁰, “Employees at all levels expect dynamic, self-directed, continuous learning opportunities from their employers.”

It is the job of employers to keep up with technology in order to provide learning and development best practices.

Technology trends in learning and development

In this report by Deloitte²¹, fourteen multinationals based in the Netherlands participated in survey and interview research. The results from this research show that organizations vary a lot in which trends they practice, but that there are some main trends that most multinationals have in common.

The following trends are helping companies create a sustainable employable workforce and motivating them to become more innovative, adaptable, and client-oriented.

¹⁹ ²² <http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/finance/articles/cfo-insights-continuous-learning-environment.html>

²¹ <http://www.krauthammer.com/chfr/blog/ld-trends-developing-workplace-learning>

Mobile learning

A big part of learning happens in the mobile space. Online learning using tablets, phones, and laptops allows learning to happen anywhere, at any time. This type of learning can be very important for companies and employees who use freelance employees. In a more gig-based economy, employees could live anywhere in the world, making mobile learning an important aspect of an organization's learning and development strategy.

Microlearning

Microlearning²² is similar to mobile learning, but microlearning is primarily done on phones and tablets. It also strays from the course model and delivers very small amounts of information like very short how-to videos or text-based instructions. Primer by Google is a good example of using small amounts of information to teach employees about marketing through a phone app.

Gamification

In learning systems, gamification²³ is the process of adding game elements to learning software. It uses research from neuroscience, motivation, and learning to create a learning environment with game elements such as story and immediate feedback. These elements can improve retention of information and improve engagement. Many employees from more recent generations have grown up with video games and mobile technologies. They will gravitate to this form of learning environment as opposed to more traditional ones.

Digital knowledge sharing

Part of the new learning landscape is that employees can help teach other employees through social media and other technologies. Encouraging employees to use forums and social media will help reinforce learning and help others find valuable learning opportunities.

In the past, many companies had trouble getting employees to use their social networks. As the nature of business changes, technology fills in the gaps. When employees live in various locations, social networks enable them to stay connected and share ideas. Many employees who are Millennials or members of Generation Z use social media more than they use email to communicate. Businesses can help this process by keeping their social networks and social media pages up-to-date and promote their use.

²² <https://www.td.org/Publications/Blogs/Learning-Technologies-Blog/2016/02/5-Learning-Tech-Trends-to-Watch-in-the-Next-5-Years>

²³ ²⁶ <http://www.halogensoftware.com/blog/3-trends-that-are-changing-how-we-learn-at-work>

Informal learning technologies

Employers can support continuous learning through the incorporation of informal learning technologies like blogs, YouTube videos, wikis, and podcasts. These technologies can make learning an everyday aspect of the workplace. Video-based learning can also be useful for companies with limited learning and development budgets. Videos are fairly inexpensive to make as HD cameras are on a variety of computers and mobile devices.

Content management systems

Companies can help make learning more accessible by creating management systems where learning content can be curated. These systems allow employees to find relevant information quicker and easier. Many companies are turning to cloud technologies in order to curate content and make it accessible everywhere.

Having a well-structured system²⁴ also allows employers to create learning paths and connect learning to job skills. HR and management can see where employees need to gain skills and help direct them to certain content areas to help them progress in their careers and improve performance. An added bonus is that giving employees access to various types of learning makes them responsible for their own learning. This feeling can help improve engagement.

Self-directed learning

In the old learning and development system, HR and management gave limited learning options at specific times. With changes in technology, learning has become more employee-centric. This means that employees want to learn what they want to learn when they want to learn it.

Individualized learning

Similar to self-directed learning, individualized learning means that employers need to offer a wide range of learning options as not all employees will need or have an interest in a few select topics.

Individualized learning also takes into account an individual user's skill level. Online learning systems are now designed to assess a learner's strengths and weaknesses in order to provide the most accurate and pertinent information to them.

Many of the technologies found in the Deloitte survey have been around for many years and are still being developed and incorporated into companies to create best practices. There are also other technologies which are more recent but are making a big impact in learning and development, across the Globe.

Immersive learning

One of the most recent trends in learning is immersive technologies. Some of these technologies are virtual reality (VR), like Google Cardboard and Oculus Rift. These allow learners to immerse themselves in any environment in real time. They could help teach employees how to react in dangerous or high-risk situations.

A similar approach is augmented reality. This technology uses the camera on a device to display digital images over the image of the real setting. Microsoft's HoloLens has applied this technology to learning by displaying instructions on top of the image of the real world situation. Another, more common, use of immersive learning is the creation of 3D or virtual world learning games.

Creating continuous learning through technology

When searching for ways to incorporate technology into a continuous learning culture²⁵, the task can be daunting as there are so many options. Before looking at the next trend or the latest software, there are some basics that leaders can start thinking about to help them decide what types of technology would be best for their organizations.

Self – assessment

When preparing employees for continuous learning, employers can ask them to assess their skills. Self-assessments are a vital part in creating a culture of learning as they help employees see where they are in their skill development and motivates them to develop their skills:

- Social networks - Continuous learning requires that information is available almost everywhere and that employees can share knowledge and discuss what they are learning. This constant connection is maintained when companies are active on social media and have working social networks.
- Learning analytics - While it is useful to have employees assess themselves, it is also important to have a system of learning analytics in place. Tracking progress is an important step in helping employees and employers see what their strengths and weaknesses are.

²⁵ <http://www.healio.com/nursing/journals/jne/2016-1-55-1/%7B6849838b-fb51-4960-8896-29b63fc3033c%7D/creating-a-continuously-learning-health-system-through-technology-a-call-to-action>

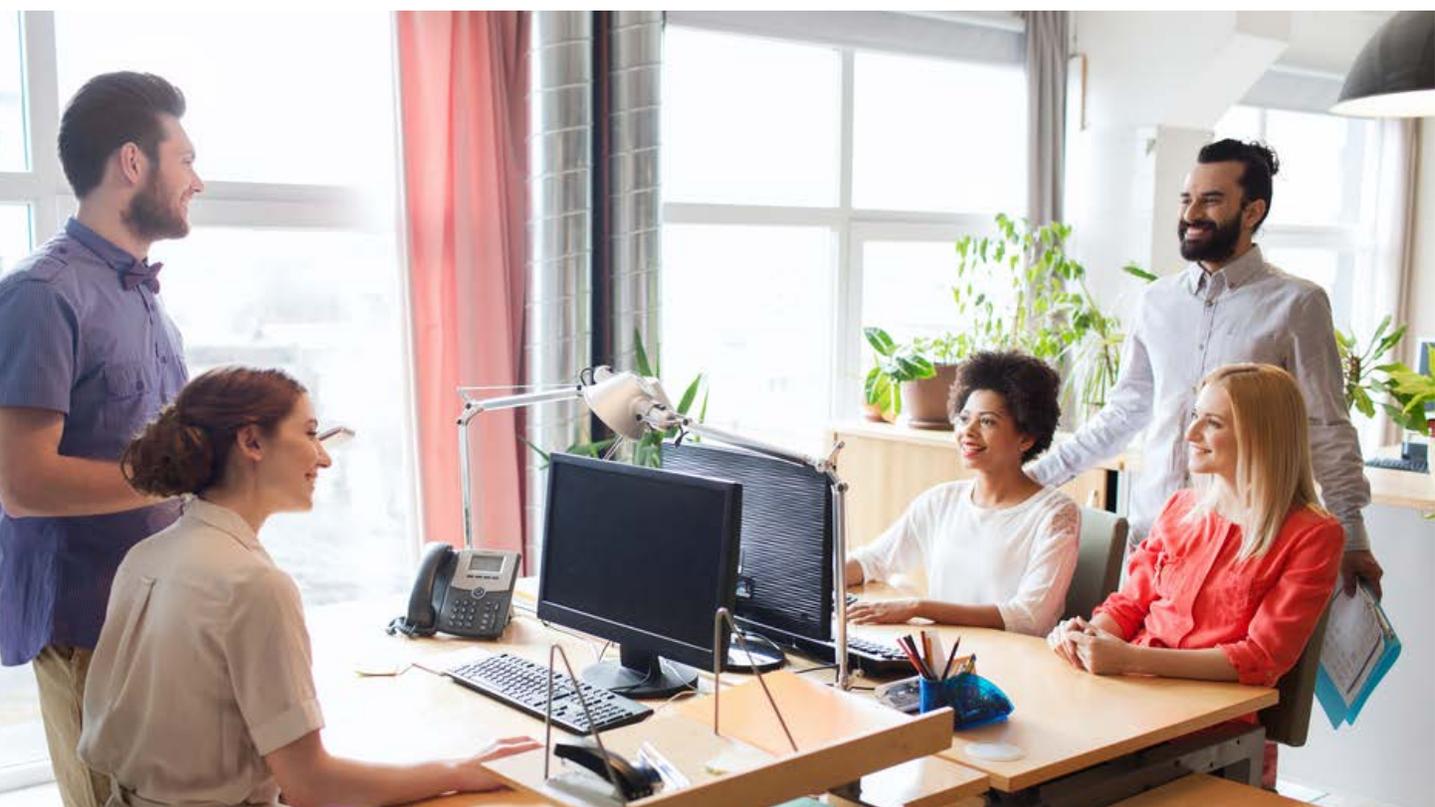
- Cohesive structures - As part of creating a continuous learning culture, companies need to assess the barriers and inefficiencies in their current learning system. It is important that when a new technology is adapted all the pieces are in place to make it as successful as possible.
- Blended learning - When planning the creation of a continuous learning system, in order to increase the chances of success, companies can blend technology with in-person learning. This in-person learning, in the form of advisors, coaches, or mentors, can help support the learning done with technology.

Reward use

In order to encourage use of new technologies in learning, HR can offer rewards and incentives to employees who use the new systems.

When companies are aware of how to create a continuous learning environment with technology in mind, they can then start to explore technologies and the trends in learning and development.

There are many choices in technologies when creating a culture of continuous learning in an organization. Leaders need to learn about all the various ways they can be used and what the needs and skills of their employees are. When they research, plan, and choose the right kind of technology, continuous learning becomes an important part of the culture of the organization, leading to more engaged and higher performing employees.



Create Learning

Experiences

If you look at your current learning and development plan with a critical eye, how efficient is it? How is it shaping the employee experience? Design thinking can help you create a truly useful learning experience that brings real value to both the employee and to the organization.

The movement that started a decade ago continues to revolutionize business practices, making a strong case for human-centered innovation. The two popular bestsellers *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation* by Tim Brown, CEO of design firm IDEO in Palo Alto and *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage* by Roger Martin, dean of the Rotman School of Management in Toronto, talk about using design thinking to improve user experiences, develop new products or services, revamp corporate strategies, and disturb or reinvent industries.

"The more importance an organization places on design thinking and embraces it, the faster the organization grows."

Deloitte²⁶

Design thinking can enable HR to meet the modern employees' demands and create new processes, from a designer's perspective: focusing on improving the experience of the user, rather than past methods.

There is no more *one size fits all* solution to learning and development. Today's employees need and want more individualized learning plans. In fact, psychological studies²⁷ have shown that people have different ways of learning according to their personality. "Strategic learners", "deep learners" and "surface learners" will be more likely to acquire new skills when programs are adapted to fit their personality.

The challenge is creating learning and development programs that can be adapted to individual employees' learning needs.

²⁶ <http://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/focus/human-capital-trends/2016/employee-experience-management-design-thinking.html>

²⁷ <http://www.fastcompany.com/3049270/know-it-all/why-you-learn-the-way-you-do-explained-by-science>

HR as an architect rather than implementer

Design thinking transforms HR from a “process developer” to an “experience architect”, empowering it to reimagine every aspect of work: the physical environment; the way people meet and interact; the way managers spend their time; and the way companies select, train, engage, and evaluate people.

Utilizing design thinking in HR encourages professionals to create new processes based on the needs of the modern employee. Borrowing from UX designers, this is why you may be seeing more and more of your LinkedIn connections changing their title to EX (employee experience) professional.

There are five things HR can do to redesign their learning and development programs to be more employee experience- centered:

1. Become a content curator

HR is in the best position to design and tailor modern learning and development programs that reflect their organization’s objectives. Jason Wingard of Global Trends in HR emphasizes the need for HR to take on a content curator role. While maintaining employee ownership of learning is important, HR should still play a part in crafting learning and development programs that guide and incentivize employees to learn more of the skills that are specific to the company’s needs.

Although they like having options, employees are regularly bombarded with an overload of information, notifications and video clips. Deloitte reported that workers are being interrupted up to every five minutes by workplace applications and tools. Two-thirds of knowledge workers claim they don’t have time to do their jobs. Help them cut through the noise by curating a smaller amount of content and tools that will help them reach your organization’s objectives.

Keep in mind the needs of the modern learner. Most won’t watch a video longer than four minutes and today marketers have only between 5 to 10 minutes²⁸ to catch their attention. With these statistics in mind, be sure to select content that will really speak to your Millennials’ learning needs and address their key concerns in the workplace.

2. Turn your managers into mentors

Today’s managers are often overwhelmed with meeting KPIs and bottom line priorities set for their team by the executive level. At the same time, they’re told to find extra time to spend on coaching their employees. Having a team with a high learning agility greatly increases managers’ ability to reach key objectives, but they won’t spend time on it if their performance is being assessed solely on financial indicators.

Make it easier for your managers to become great mentors by re-designing the process to address their needs and concerns.

Design thinking transforms HR from a “process developer” to an “experience architect”, empowering it to reimagine every aspect of work.

²⁸ <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/HumanCapital/gx-cons-hc-learning-solutions-placemat.pdf>

Mentoring is a two-way relationship, from which both participants have the opportunity to learn from each other. Even though mentoring may begin on the premise that the more experienced person is conveying their knowledge to the less experienced person, this is an oversimplified perspective.

“Organizations today are facing a number of challenges: talent shortages, aging workforce, lack of succession planning and succession development, lack of leadership talent, mobile workforce, disengaged employees to name but a few. Mentoring can play a huge role in addressing most of these problems. Mentoring programs are a strategic business initiative focused on the most important aspect of organizational success and that is your people. Without them you will not achieve the success that you could.

HR can be the delivery arm of the organization but the program needs to be owned by the organization. Mentoring programs fail because of 4 main reasons: 1. Lack of Corporate Support, 2) Lack of structure, 3) Lack of Training, and 4) a Culture that will not support mentoring.

Organizations need to look at including mentoring in the Strategic Business Plan and they need to deliver on the implementation. I always say, “can you afford not to?”

Doug Lawrence - Founder of TalentC@29, International Certified Mentor Practitioner and Facilitator

3. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning

It may seem straightforward but one of the most effective learning strategies today is peer-driven learning. Fifty-five percent of Google’s learning and development is administered through an ecosystem of over 2000 peer learners. The program, “Googler to Googler”, effectively puts employees into

HR’s role of planning and training peers on a variety of different skills. In 2013, roughly 2,000 employees volunteered to teach a class.

The beacon for what all modern companies want to be, following Google’s lead is a difficult task for many. In spite of being eager to learn and develop new skills, Deloitte found that employees only have 1% of their week to spend on learning. Getting peers to actually spend extra time devising training courses may not be feasible, but promoting peer coaching is. If your company is not using 360-degree performance appraisals it’s time to convince your leaders of the benefits.

Encouraging peers to give each other regular performance feedback, whether during 360-degree reviews or informally, will create an environment in which people are more open and attuned to helping their teammates develop.

It’s already estimated that 80% of learning occurs on the job through interactions with others. This will be increasingly essential as teams begin working more and more in a

²⁹ <http://talentc.ca/>

cross-functional manner. It's also less time intensive and more cost effective than setting up formal HR administered training courses.

Allow your employees to explore new options within the company by making learning across departments available. Sourcing talent for open positions within your own company limits the task of onboarding and provides you with a diverse multi-skilled workforce. Giving your workforce the right tools to connect with others will facilitate an

4. Ensure internal knowledge-sharing

Internal knowledge sharing is more important than ever, regardless of your organization's size. With so many HR functions that were formerly performed by humans now being automated, knowledge remains a critical component of maximizing your company talent's potential.

Social technologies have been one of the main drivers of effective internal knowledge sharing. People are using global digital platforms to learn, find work, showcase their talent, and build personal networks. Research from McKinsey³⁰ shows that employees spend 1.8 hours every day - 9.3 hours per week, on average - searching and gathering information online. To think that instead of searching on Google and multiple sites for a piece of industry-related information, employees can use the company's collaboration platform to find relevant and contextual information swiftly, along with a credible source and perhaps practical information left by their predecessors.

By preventing silos from impeding effectiveness³¹ and improving collective thinking, these digital platforms help teams share common knowledge and see the relationships between elements. The most common features that these cloud-based social communication apps offer for better knowledge sharing are

- Descriptive tasks in an organized system;
- Tracking of team members and changes made to any given task and/or document;
- A universally recognized digital language, that makes it intuitive to upload and handle information;
- Integration with other platforms with more specific functions such as Slack, Box, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.
- The possibility to comment on everything, anytime, with real-time notification of your team mate;
- The mention feature that enables real-time conversations and improved productivity;
- A CRM function to manage all customer-related interactions and assign them accordingly.

According to a survey from Digital Business, Rethinking Fundamentals³², by 2018, more than 60% of enterprises will have at least half of their infrastructure on cloud-based

80% of learning occurs on the job through interactions with others.

³⁰ <http://utrconf.com/top-3-reasons-why-we-spend-so-much-time-searching-for-information/>

³¹ <http://www.gethppy.com/employee-engagement/silos-the-insidious-poison-that-stifles-organizations>

³² http://cbs2014.saugatucktechnology.com/images/Documents/Presentations/CBS14_McNee_Keynote_-_Cloud_and_Digital_Business-12Nov2014.pdf

platforms. More and more³³, businesses are transferring their data from computer drives and laptops into a secure, cloud environment, allowing data to be more accessible than ever before.

5. Create a mentorship program

While technology is the main catalyst for this learning revolution, the human and social components remain essential, as an intrinsic part of the way that we, as humans, were built.

Mentors are able to provide practical workplace advice and pass on valuable knowledge, whilst at the same time helping to steer a younger employee's career path, giving it shape and direction above and beyond what they may have considered themselves.

There are three things that define good mentoring programs³⁴: effective matching, effective goal setting, and ongoing peer feedback. When set up with the right people and software, mentoring programs can offer an all-round solution to internal knowledge sharing and talent development.

Mentors are the guides that facilitate career developments; they are the senior figures that can break down perceived barriers to communication and they leverage data to make all of this happen successfully.



Investing in Employee

Onboarding

A good onboarding can determine future performance. Onboarding new employees effectively³⁵ plays a crucial role in employee retention, turnover and performance. In fact,

- 69% of employees are more likely to stay with a company for three years if they experienced great onboarding³⁶.
- New employees who go through a structured onboarding program are 58% more likely to be with the organization after three years³⁷.
- 23% of new hires turnover before their first anniversary³⁸.
- It typically takes eight months for a newly hired employee to reach full productivity³⁹.
- Best-in-class companies are 35% more likely to begin onboarding processes before day one⁴⁰.
- Only 37% of companies extend their onboarding programs⁴¹ beyond the first month⁴².
- Manager satisfaction increases by 20% when their employees have formal onboarding training⁴³.

Onboarding technology

The use of technology can have a huge impact on both employers and new employees. It can create a more efficient onboarding process through automation and it can increase engagement and productivity⁴⁴ in new employees.

On the employer side, technology helps by making forms and tasks more easily stored and accessed in electronic form. For employees, electronic learning platforms and social networks can help them familiarize themselves with the company culture sooner, communicate with other employees more often, and learn from others faster.

³⁵ <http://www.clickboarding.com/18-jaw-dropping-onboarding-stats-you-need-to-know/>

³⁶ <http://blog.octanner.com/editor-picks/an-onboarding-checklist-for-success-infographic>

³⁷ <http://www.recruitingdivision.com/employee-onboarding-matters>

³⁸ <http://hriq.allied.com/pdfs/AlliedWorkforceMobilitySurvey.pdf>

³⁹ <https://hbr.org/2015/03/technology-can-save-onboarding-from-itself>

⁴⁰ <http://www.aberdeens.com/research/9865/RR-twentyfirst-century-onboarding.aspx/content.aspx>

⁴¹ <http://www.clickboarding.com/ensuring-employee-retention-in-a-confident-job-market/>

⁴² <http://www.aberdeens.com/research/9865/RR-twentyfirst-century-onboarding.aspx/content.aspx>

⁴³ <http://www.urbanbound.com/blog/onboarding-infographic-statistics>

⁴⁴ <http://www.fuseuniversal.com/10-practical-ways-technology-can-improve-onboarding-experience/>

Recent technology advancements in integrated wayfinding systems for corporate campuses are enabling HR to create digital workplaces, where employees are in control of their own onboarding.

Automated systems make sure to send essential data such as names and contact details of team members, policies and procedures to follow, or directions to their first meetings. Instead of spending time on administrative tasks: printing and delivering policies & procedures, running orientation training or fielding meeting location questions, HR managers can invest that time in personal one-on-one sessions with new hires and start building trust.

Business efficiency

The ways in which technology can improve the efficiency of the onboarding process can be very important for many businesses. There are multiple ways that technology maximizes employee onboarding.

Processing⁴⁵ – HR managers can organize onboarding forms and contracts in an electronic system, making it easier and faster to send out and have documents signed.

Customization – When employees join various teams it is important to give them information that is relevant only to their job tasks, so that they don't feel overwhelmed and confused. Using electronic systems, HR staff can customize each orientation packet and all onboarding information for each individual employee.

Updates – As trends and company policies change it can be difficult to keep all forms up-to-date. With an electronic system, managers can update onboarding documents quickly and easily. Automatic email notifications⁴⁶ for onboarding process task reminders can also free up HR managers, so that they can focus on the more strategic process elements such as culture assimilation, training excellence, or implementing a mentoring program.

Errors – When employees are able to perform the entire onboarding process digitally, it reduces the number of errors and the amount of lost time spent fixing mistakes. HR staff does not have to enter information from documents, as it is automatically entered into the database from the employee's forms.

Feedback – Technology can help a company figure out what is working and what is not. With continuous feedback about the onboarding process, companies can make almost immediate changes in order to help improve the employee experience.

⁴⁵ <http://kineticsearch.com/how-to-use-technology-to-streamline-onboarding/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/make-business-case-better-employee-onboarding-process-jessica>

Employee engagement

While technology can improve the experience and efficiency of the onboarding process for leaders and HR staff, more importantly, it can improve the experience for new employees.

Overall, technology can help everyone stay connected⁴⁷. New employees are able to receive up-to-date information as leaders and managers update the system. They have the ability to communicate and get information from all employees, as a company social network makes communication easier. Managers are able to track employee productivity and see where new employees are struggling. This proactive approach can help new staff gain needed skills and feel more connected to the company, cared about by managers, and secure in their jobs.

Some companies are creating onboarding apps that can be used on mobile devices. This makes the onboarding process available from anywhere, at any time. Offering employees the opportunity to complete the process outside of the office allows them a better work/life balance through greater flexibility.

Technology can be especially helpful for companies hiring freelancers and remote employees. They can use mobile and online platforms to communicate with employees, no matter where they are in the world. Employees can stay connected with other employees and feel a part of the team, even though they may never step foot in the company office. Virtual onboarding⁴⁸ allows you to deliver the type of interactive virtual learning demanded by the Millennial workforce.

The use of technology is a great way to help new employee acclimate faster and for current employees to stay up-to-date on various onboarding procedures. Both elements lead to happier and more engaged employees⁴⁹.

The use of technology is a great way to help new employee acclimate faster and for current employees to stay up-to-date on various onboarding procedures.

An onboarding checklist

For companies looking to maximize their onboarding process with technology, Fuse International⁵⁰ lists a few ways they have found that it works best.

Make it fun – Create a fun name for the onboarding community that fits with the company brand.

Create contacts – Put experts in active roles in the onboarding community. New employees will know that their questions and concerns will be addressed by experts in the company.

⁴⁷ <https://appirio.com/cloud-powered-blog/how-technology-can-improve-employee-onboarding>

⁴⁸ <https://www.trainingindustry.com/webinars/making-business-case-for-virtual-onboarding.aspx>

⁴⁹ <http://www.humanresourcesiq.com/hr-technology/articles/perks-of-automating-employee-onboarding>

⁵⁰ <http://www.fuseuniversal.com/10-practical-ways-technology-can-improve-onboarding-experience/>

Specify learning plans – Using an online learning platform, employees can create a learning plan that is specific to their role.

Start early – Online learning platforms and social networks allow new employees to learn about company culture and connect with coworkers before they complete the onboarding process or officially start the job.

Chunk information – When using learning systems, the information is chunked so that employees get just as much information as they need at a time. This helps employees retain information better and they will be less likely to feel overwhelmed by all the information.

Interact with video – At Fuse, they have employees make introduction videos that employees can watch in order to get to know coworkers. They also encourage new employees to make an introduction video. These videos are informal and fun ways for employees to express their personalities and get to know each other.

Analyze – Fuse recommends collecting data from digital onboarding tools so that managers can help new employees gain the skills they need to excel in their new roles. These early interventions can help productivity, retention, and engagement.

While implementing and mastering onboarding technology can seem like an impossible task, it can help leaders, managers, current employees, and future employees learn from each other, integrate faster, and improve productivity and engagement. Using technology can not only maximize onboarding but also help the business bottom line.

Using training to integrate new talent

Although Millennials are educated, they seem to lack the soft skills that would make them effective workers.

Millennials are educated; by some accounts, they are the most educated generation in history. But all too often, they are not well-trained. In many situations, it seems that this generation lacks the soft skills⁵¹ that would make them effective workers. This void often gets disguised by complaints about entitlement attitudes, conflicting motivations, or a simple lack of conditioning through experience in a given field.

Part of the problem rests in how degrees are packaged and advertised: typically, going to a university is sold as being key to getting a job. Few schools are nimble enough to keep their curriculum current⁵² with the latest developments in the field. The shelf life of a degree is much shorter than schools (or graduates) like to admit, and as employers know, even the freshest graduate has ground to make up in terms of turning that education into performance on the job.

The most difficult aspect of new talent training is helping them be as productive as possible, as soon as possible. In most companies, it takes a new employee about 8 months to reach full productivity. Many companies are turning to integration and acculturation training to help new talent reach full productivity faster.

⁵¹ <https://www.fastcompany.com/3059940/the-future-of-work/these-are-the-biggest-skills-that-new-graduates-lack>

⁵² <http://www.healthworkcollective.com/etwilson/315212/five-year-medical-degree>

There are many methods that companies use to integrate and retain new talent. These practices have a direct impact on business success, as 69% of new employees⁵³ are likely to stay with a company for at least three years if they have a great onboarding experience. They can also help employees be 50% more productive⁵⁴, compared with new employees at companies without standard onboarding programs.

1. Immersive experiences

In an effort to engage employees in the onboarding process and help them acculturate, many companies are now implementing immersive experiences. Etsy, for example, has new employees rotate through various departments when they first start so that they can form relationships with as many employees as possible.

Other companies have their new employees play board games about corporate structures and regulations, participate in scavenger hunts, and go on outdoor adventure retreats. All of these immersive experiences are meant to help employees form bonds while learning about company culture in a fun and interactive way.

2. Mentoring

Company mentoring programs are also used to help integrate new talent. Many programs match new employees with executives and senior management. Some offer buddies for the first two months of employment.

These programs help new employees develop relationships in the company, increasing retention and productivity.

3. Culture of integration

MailChimp⁵⁵ has woven integration into their company culture by creating job positions such as Chief Culture Officer and New Hire Ambassador. These employees work with departments and managers to ensure that new employees have what they need to integrate successfully. They arrange lunches and different activities to help employees feel a part of the company. After onboarding, the New Hire Ambassador collects feedback so that the next set of new employees can have an even better experience.

4. Online learning

Companies with online learning platforms increase new employee integration as they make learning more accessible, more relevant, more current, and more personalized. This makes learning a continuous process from when an employee first joins the company and throughout their employment.

⁵³ <http://blog.octanner.com/editor-picks/an-onboarding-checklist-for-success-infographic>

⁵⁴ <http://www.urbanbound.com/blog/onboarding-infographic-statistics>

⁵⁵ <https://blog.mailchimp.com/maintaining-company-culture-through-onboarding/>

5. Learning styles

Not everyone learns in the same way. In order to train people and help them integrate more effectively, it is important to organize them based on how they learn. After organizing people based on how they learn, leaders need to create training materials and methods that match that learning style.

Variety is also important. Even when leaders match employees by style, there can still be variety within that learning framework. For employees with a visual learning style, for example, they can watch videos, read documents, examine diagrams, or look at infographics. Auditory learners can listen to songs, presentations, and speeches in order to help them learn.

6. Senior employees

Leaders and managers lead most, if not all, new hire training sessions. This can be an effective way to relay information but, for some new employees, it can be intimidating.

Some companies invite senior employees to training sessions so new hires can meet and learn from employees who have been working at the company for a long time. This interaction often leaves new employees more at ease and allows them to build relationships with coworkers.

7. Positive environment

Negativity is never helpful to the processes of integration and learning. No one likes working for a company or with coworkers who are negative or seem to be in a bad mood all the time.

When training new employees, leaders need to create an environment that builds confidence and offers encouragement. Relaxation, patience, and allowing for mistakes are key in helping new employees have a great first experience. These feelings will help with retention, integration, productivity, and engagement.

8. Resources

New employees need resources. They need to know who they can go to for help and where they can find information when they need it. Part of training needs to cover these topics in order to help employees have some autonomy when they are doing the job more independently.

9. Reminding managers

Google found a quick and very effective way to improve new hire training. They found that when managers were alerted that they had to train new employees that day, the new employees were productive 25% faster.

Now, Google just sends a reminder about 5 things: discuss roles and responsibilities, find a mentor for the new employee, help new employees create a social network, set up a check-in schedule, and speak openly.

When managers are primed for training, they seem to do it in a way that makes new employees integrate faster.

10. Task learning

During and after the learning process, it is good to have hands on activities which help employees make better use of the information. Leaders can give employees tasks to complete that reflect what was learned during the day so that they will integrate all the information better.



Succession Management and Leadership Development

Most CEOs report that their companies are not very effective in developing skills fast enough or leaders deeply enough. Companies are struggling to find employees that can keep up with the pace at which work is changing, but many are not viewing learning and development⁵⁶ as central to their company culture. In order to continue to run successful businesses, leaders need to be continuous learners and they need to create a culture of continuous learning in their companies.

Succession planning and management, leadership development, and employee advancements are intertwined processes that all begin with learning.

Succession management

Succession planning or management is as described by the 2015 State of Succession Planning Report⁵⁷ as:

“Any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department, or work group by making provisions for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time.”

Succession planning is crucial for attracting, retaining, and developing employees so that they can help the organization grow in strength, health, and stability⁵⁸.

The Brandon Hall Group in their State of Succession Management 2015 Report⁵⁹, found that only 3.9% of companies have a highly effective succession culture, while about 48% have limited succession planning strategies in place.

⁵⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-horoszowski/volunteering-is-helping-c_b_9863010.html

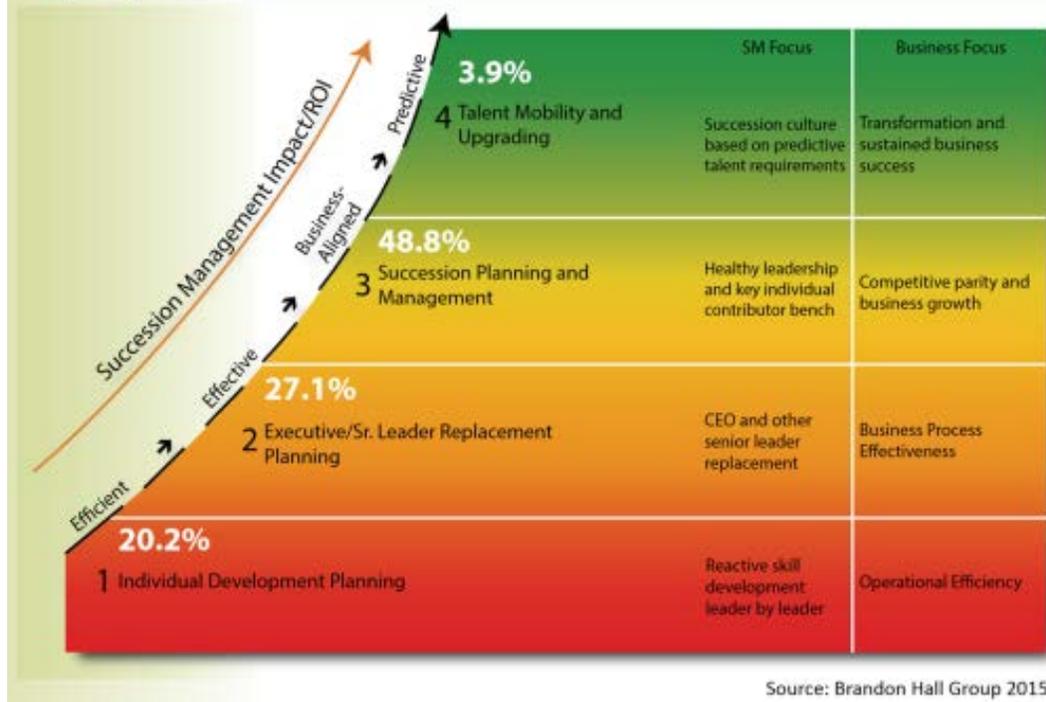
⁵⁷ <http://www.halogensoftware.com/learn/whitepapers-and-ebooks/the-state-of-succession-planning-are-you-doing-enough-to-identify-and-develop-talent-to-build-bench-strength>

⁵⁸ <http://www.halogensoftware.com/blog/8-steps-for-effective-succession-planning>

⁵⁹ http://www.skillssoft.com/assets/research/research_bhg_state_of_succession_management.pdf

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Brandon Hall Group's Business Impact Model for Succession Management



This means that, unfortunately, about 84% of companies⁶⁰ state that they do not have employees ready to move into critical positions. While the results of the research are not the best, there are signs that companies are learning the importance of succession planning.

Companies are learning that they need to use technology and analytics to improve succession management, the importance of lateral mobility, and the need for higher succession management budgets. Overall, successor development is improving and succession management commitment is rising. In time, the above graph should start to skew more toward the top, especially as businesses create plans and strategies similar to those of the top 4%.

Strategies for successful succession

In order to create a culture of succession planning, The Brandon Hall Group recommends the following strategies⁶¹.

Goal setting – Companies need to create measurable goals that will guide the company toward creating a succession plan, while also aligning with their overall strategic goals.

Annual review – Goals should be reviewed at least annually in order to adjust them to changes within the company and to the business climate.

⁶⁰ <http://www.ere-media.com/tInt/how-bad-is-your-succession-management-this-report-may-help-you-find-out/>

⁶¹ <http://www.halogensoftware.com/blog/8-steps-for-effective-succession-planning>

Clear job descriptions – As part of succession employees need to have clear job descriptions so they know what their current functions are and what the functions of leaders and managers are. This also helps employees understand their role and their career path.

Objective competencies – Companies should create models of performance evaluations and competency strategies, defining which ones are vital now and in the future. Employees should be able to get a clear idea of what competencies they should have and how they will be objectively evaluated.

Define roles – Each employee in the succession management process should have clearly defined roles. Everyone who has a role in the process is held accountable for its success.

Talent pools – The organization can create leveled talent pools based on various strengths.

Recognize talent – Employees need to undergo regular reviews so that employers can recognize talent and address areas of improvement. Employers can propose lateral moves, special projects, and training opportunities to help recognize and develop employees.

Program evaluation – Every year leaders should evaluate the current program of succession planning so that they can assess where they need to make improvements.

Through the practices of succession planning and leadership, organizations can create a system of successive leadership.

Successive leadership

Successive leadership is the ideal system in organizations as it incorporates all employees, continuously training and developing employees to create a culture of upward mobility and succession.

This kind of systems has advantages⁶² for both employees and employers.

Employees

Knowing that there is the opportunity for promotion leaves employees feeling more respected, valued, and engaged. They will mostly likely want to work harder and have a more active role in their career development.

Employers

Using this system, employers can trust that staff will respect the values, mission, and goals of the organization. An organization can be sure that there is an employee who can step in case of retirement or reorganization. Business will continue to run smoothly as this system can help retain employees. They will have the training for higher positions and the awareness of what it takes to do other jobs.

Through successive leadership, a system where all employees have the potential for upward mobility and leadership, companies can be sure to attract and retain their best

⁶² <https://www.thebalance.com/succession-planning-1918267>

talent, ensuring that the business will be able to adapt to any workforce changes. As much of the workforce begins to reach retirement age, companies can begin to put more emphasis on training employees. This investment in learning and development can lead to successful leadership development and succession management.

Leadership development

When looking into development, there are actually two related factors: leader development and leadership development⁶³.

When looking at leader development, these are skills that are learned from the bottom up through different content resources. Skills including business understanding, quick decision making, and commercial perspective are highly valued as, according to the High-Impact Leadership Report by Bersin⁶⁴, only 60% of leaders have these vital skills. Employees can learn various leader skills through online learning or from reading articles and discussing them with colleagues. Employees can also observe role models and role play learned skills with others.

Leadership development is the next step. In order to develop leadership, companies need to put leaders to work. Employees can learn to become leaders, but it takes interaction and communication to learn leadership. When companies put a group of leaders together they learn to work as a team, they learn to communicate, and they learn how to review progress. They learn how to use their leader skills in the best interest of the company. Bersin also concluded that companies where leadership is part of the culture saw an increase of 37% in profit, per employee and had leaders who were 5 times more likely to expect changes and react to them successfully.

Learning through volunteering

Companies like Deloitte, Microsoft, and Google promote volunteering⁶⁵ not only as a way of giving back to the community, but also as a way to learn to become a better person, employee, and leader. Research has shown that volunteering is valuable because it provides authentic learning; promotes creativity; and exposes employees to new environments, other learning styles, and different viewpoints.

When companies are able to develop skills that create leaders, as well as leadership, they create a culture of upward mobility and succession management.

Companies where leadership is part of the culture can experience an increase of 37% in profit, per employee.

⁶³ <http://www.ereimedia.com/tlnt/should-we-be-developing-leaders-or-developing-leadership/>

⁶⁴ <http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fmarketing.bersin.com%2Fhigh-impact-leadership.html&h=1AQE4TVmr>

⁶⁵ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-horoszowski/volunteering-is-helping-c_b_9863010.html

As we all continue to adjust to changes in technology, there is no better way to make the process easier than by learning. Technology will not stop, so we cannot stop either. Continuous learning should become an aspect of our lives, of our personal and professional cultures.

In terms of learning, there is an upward spiral when we embrace technology. When we acknowledge that there are struggles when adapting to new technologies and we manage them, we can see how technology can help us learn, develop, and lead in our personal and professional lives. We can discover that when we adapt and share our knowledge, we are helping others become more flexible, satisfied, productive, and engaged.

With continuous learning we can learn to adapt better to technology, in turn using technology to help us learn more effectively. Using continuous learning and technology we can learn to become better leaders, while also helping others discover their leadership potential. We help HR departments create more effective learning and development programs and onboarding procedures. And we help ourselves and our employees develop skills that will lead them not only to become managers and leaders, but also lead them to be ready for whatever the future has in store.



About Hppy

Hppy is an employee engagement insights platform, providing leaders and HR managers information, data and ideas for creating better workplaces.

We provide content and services that support leaders be more efficient in designing, implementing and understanding employee engagement strategies.

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