



2024 L&D TRENDS

 SOUTH AFRICA EDITION

In partnership with

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Contents

03 Introduction

05 Organisational goals & L&D

10 The struggle to find information

15 Time to learn

20 L&D budgets

25 AI & impact

29 The shift to upskilling

33 Career paths and performance



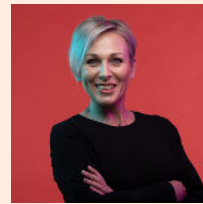
Why L&D has never mattered more

Let's just say 2023 wasn't exactly sunshine and rainbows for L&D teams.



NELSON SIVALINGAM

→ CEO & CO-FOUNDER, HOWNOW



MAUD BOTTEN

→ HEAD OF LEARNING SOLUTIONS, IQBUSINESS

With the economic downturn, cost of living crisis and rise of quiet quitting, you probably faced your toughest year yet - from getting stakeholders on board to engaging your people and everything between.

And 2024 is all about changing that, it's time for more impact - that's why you're here.

But with the greatest will in the world, you simply can't read all the reports or data AND wear all the hats an L&D pro has to wear.

That's where the collaboration with our South African partner, IQbusiness allowed us to create the first HowNow 2024 L&D trends report for the African continent, specifically!

We spoke to 50 L&D Leads at renowned scale-ups, leveraged the insights from our South African corporate partners and scoured dozens of 2023's best reports with three simple aims:

- Break down all the big issues from the latest reports and research.
- Explain how we got there so you understand the trends and avoid the pitfalls.
- Offer practical advice on using this research to your advantage.

Giving you the tools to do more of what works, address your people's concerns, and avoid the traps so many fall into.

Why read 20 reports when one can help you drive more impact? It's that simple.

South Africa: The Statistics

The market insights you need to form your skills and learning strategy for 2024.

Role identified as being in high/low demand, by frequency

EMERGING	1. Process Automation Specialists
	2. Data Analysts and Scientists
	3. Social Psychologists
	4. Management and Organisation Analysts
	5. Business Development Professionals
REDUNDANT	1. Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll Clerks
	2. Client Information and Customer Service
	3. Data Entry Clerks
	4. Administrative and Exec Secretaries
	5. Vehicle, Window, Laundry and Cleaning

Skills identified as being in high demand, ordered by frequency

1. Analytical thinking and innovation
2. Critical thinking and analysis
3. Troubleshooting and user experience
4. Leadership and social influencer
5. Complex problem-solving
6. Systems analysis and evaluation
7. Creativity, originality and initiative
8. Technology use, monitoring and control
9. Quality control and safety awareness
10. Persuasion and negotiation

Technology adoption, share of companies surveyed

Cloud computing	93%
AI (eg machine learning, NLP)	93%
Text, image and voice processing	87%
Internet of things and connected devices	87%
Encryption and cyber security	87%
Big data analytics	87%
Robots (industrial automation, drones)	86%
Augments and virtual reality	80%
E-commerce and digital trade	79%
Distributed Ledger tech (eg blockchain)	71%

Responses to shifting skill needs, share of companies surveyed

Look to automate the work	82%
Retrain existing employees	73%
Strategic redundancies	64%
Outsourced business functions	64%
Hire new temporary staff	64%
Hire freelancers with skills	55%

Projected use of training

56% Internal L&D	16% Online training	10% Private training providers
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Overview: key considerations for 2024

There's no point using AI for the sake of it

So many of us got caught up in the AI for L&D buzz. But does that mean we've rushed in without thinking it through? And what are the ways we can use AI intentionally, to solve problems and drive more impact.

We need tech that removes learner friction

Because, right now, the volume of tools used and their inability to talk to each other is stopping people from finding the information they need in their moments of need.

People want to stay, but they need growth opportunities

Employees say they're not vulnerable to poaching right now, but we need to give them the key reason to stay - growth. All the data points to this being an employee priority, and yet so few companies are getting it right.

The foundations for L&D impact are missing

Whether it's the decline in alignment to organisational goals or the reliance on vanity metrics to measure success, it's clear L&D needs to get the basics right. Defining the problem should be high on the 2024 priority list.

Time and engagement are still learning barriers

They're still cropping up as the big challenges in L&D and HR reports, but 2024 is the year we can end it for good! By bringing learning to the moments where it'll influence performance. Shift your mindset towards skills and away from content.

Trend 1

**It's time to align with
organisational goals**



We're constantly hearing that L&D teams dream of driving more business impact. But in reality, we're getting further away from that.

The past two years have seen a huge decrease in the number of L&D teams aligned with their organisation's goals and priorities.



When that's happening, the last thing you want to hear is that L&D teams are losing clarity about how they add value.

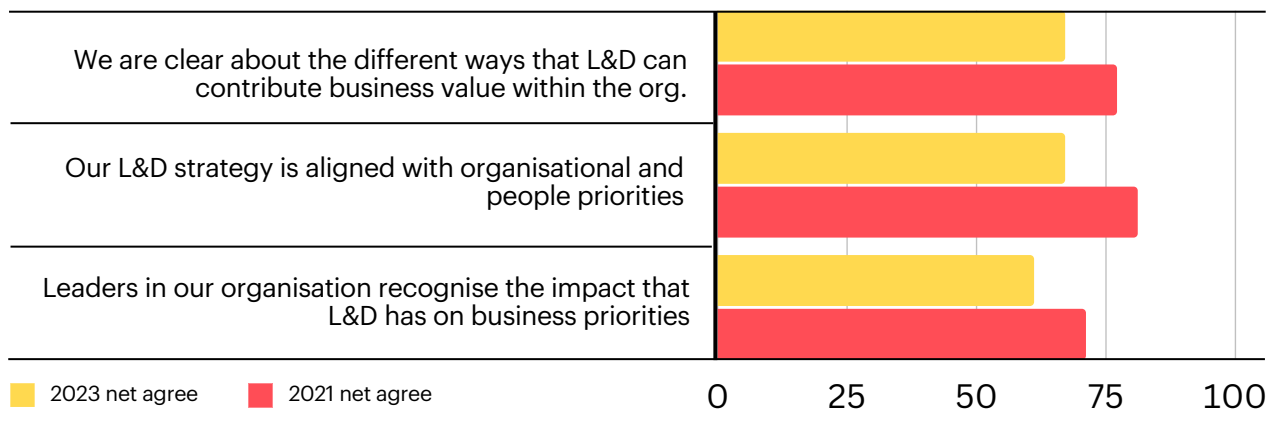
Or that leadership's belief in what L&D brings to the table is declining too. Unfortunately, the data all points in this direction.

But like Liam and Noel, everyone just wants to see you get back together in 2024.

And if you can, an oasis of organisational impact awaits...

Fewer respondents agree that L&D teams are aligned to wider organisational goals

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the key aspects of your organisation's L&D strategy and programmes?



How did we get here?

Measuring success with vanity metrics

If the way we measure success isn't tied to performance, how will we know if we influenced it?

We won't!

And that's where a lot of L&D teams find themselves right now.

LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report confirmed it: 6 of the top 12 success measures are vanity metrics.

That's not to say there's no value in metrics like learner satisfaction.

But the business will be far more interested in how that learning translates to performance and progression towards goals.

The wrong approach to problem discovery

A reliance on vanity metrics doesn't happen by accident, it's a symptom of poor problem discovery.

L&D teams often miss the crucial first step: a deep understanding of people's goals and the challenges in reaching them.

And it's typically because they're caught between two stalls:

1. Churning out content in the hope that more created means more impact.
2. Not knowing how to probe further when people come with problems and ask for content.

Neither get us closer to driving business impact.

Rushing to create a boat load of content before we work out the problems it could solve actually leaves people drowning in content, most of it irrelevant.

A fear of pushing back in order to preserve relationships means we treat symptoms, not root causes, and damage long-term relationships through a lack of value.



Top ways L&D measures success

☒ Vanity metrics

☐ Business metrics

1. Employee satisfaction, measured via survey

2. Employee satisfaction, informal or qualitative feedback

3. Number of employees taking courses or trainings

4. Employee performance on post-learning quizzes or assessments

5. Number of courses or training each employee has completed

6. Improved performance reviews

7. Team or org business metrics

8. Improved employee productivity

9. Improved employee retention

10. Numbers of hours spent learning

11. Progress toward closing workforce skill gaps

12. Number of new skills learned per learner



Recommendations

Interview people, discover their pain points

Speak to as many people as you can, not just leaders, and ask questions that help you work out their goals, challenges, perception of L&D, and skills they need.

Use a consistent list of questions, then map out the answers - this will help you spot common pain points and quick wins for L&D to add organisational value.

Use the Jobs To Be Done framework for better problem framing

A well-defined problem engages the person you're asking to invest their time and effort.

This framework captures it with clarity and gears people towards action and impact.

TRY THIS →

When I am _____ (Sets the context or moment when a problem arises.)
I want to _____ (Identifies the motivation in that moment of need.)
So I can _____ (Establishes the expected outcome.)

Bake impact into every experience using the Bullseye Framework

How do we get the right content, to the right people, in the right moment, to have the right impact?

It begins with impact, right at the middle of the Learning Experience Bullseye!

What impact are you going to measure? Let's say the sales team isn't hitting targets. The metric you're aiming to move is the conversion rate.

By doing this first, measurement is embedded into your learning experiences. It's not an afterthought...

You work backwards to find the right moments and people, then finally you build or buy the content geared towards all of this.

TRY THIS →

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE TEMPLATE OF THE LX BULLSEYE FRAMEWORK RIGHT HERE



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The biggest challenge the L&D industry faces today is the urgent need to evolve from being order takers to transforming into Trusted Learning Advisors. We must be strategic business partners embedded in the business to demonstrate our value, relevance and expertise. Evolve. Or else. The choice is ours.

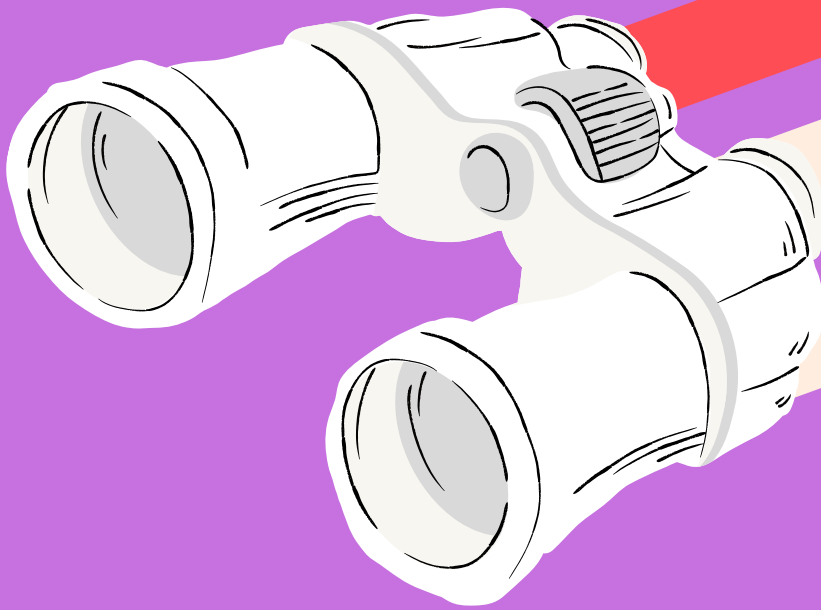
KEITH KEATING

→ CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER AND AUTHOR, THE TRUSTED LEARNING ADVISOR



Trend 2

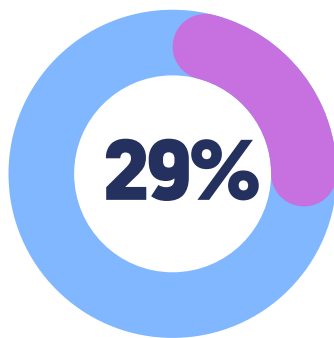
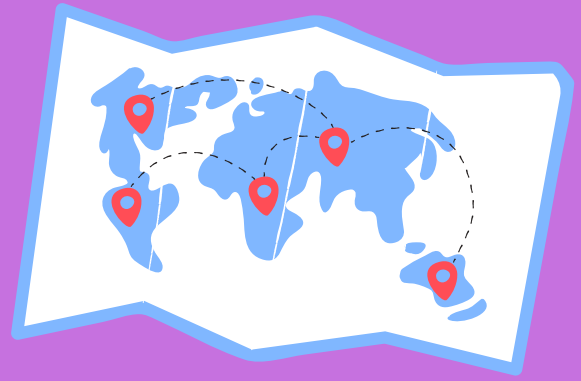
People are struggling to find information



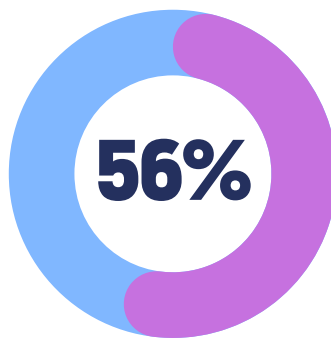
“Nobody’s engaging with our resources, there must be a problem with the content.”

Or, maybe, you’ve got a discoverability issue...

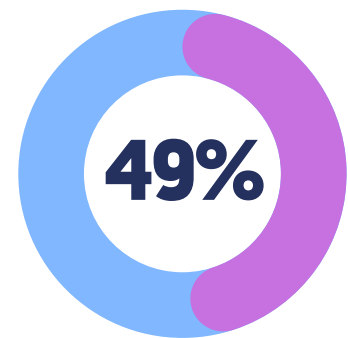
People can’t learn from what they can’t find.



Almost a third of employees are waiting days or longer for vital information (Appspace).



More than half of employees have been unable to find digital documents (Beezy).



Nearly half want to learn at the moment of need (LinkedIn).

How did we get here?

By not bringing the learning ecosystem together

Learning happens in all sorts of places, not just the ones ‘designed for learning’.

From podcasts to blog posts and YouTube videos to our favourite LinkedIn influencers.

And when you add in all the internal tools and storage places, this happens:

➔ Information gets scattered in multiple places, making it hard to find when you need it.

➔➔ If you can’t find it, you have to ask and wait for a reply.

➔➔➔ And if you have to wait, the moment of need has passed by the time you get it.

This is an all-too-common story that builds friction into the search for knowledge, damaging the perception of learning and the likelihood people will do it again.

By using too many tools that people don't exactly love

Employees are explicitly calling out this pet peeve:

- 67% of people “aren’t completely satisfied with their company’s current workplace tools and technologies, and they experience challenges with available solutions.” (Appspace).
- 35% think we should reduce the number of apps and tools needed to do their work. (Appspace).

Just look at these numbers across the page, the biggest employee challenges come from a lack of centralised tools and a failure for those tools to integrate with each other.

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HowNow is the way learning should happen! It’s revolutionised the way we share information and has enabled everyone to learn thanks to multiple integrations.

JADE POTGIETER

→ CAMPUS & LSG LEAD, JUMO

What are the biggest challenges with companies’ workplace tools and technologies. YoY?

2023

No.1

Not everyone in the company uses the same tools and technologies

17%

No.2

They don’t integrate well with other tools and technologies

16%

Employees aren’t happy with the tech at their organisations

67%

Of people “aren’t completely satisfied with their company’s current workplace tools and technologies (Appspace).

35%

Think we should reduce the number of apps and tools needed to do their work (Appspace).

Source: Appspace, 2023.



Recommendations

Map out your tools and tech stack

Visualising the user journey is crucial to understanding the tech stack!

Where do they go when they have problems? What barriers do they have? Where does a lack of integration limit their ability to apply information?

It'll also help you understand which tools still add value and which you might want to ditch.

ASK THIS →

1. Does this help or matter?
2. And to who?

If you can't answer those, it's an indication that the tech is no longer fully fit for purpose or the best bet for solving problems.

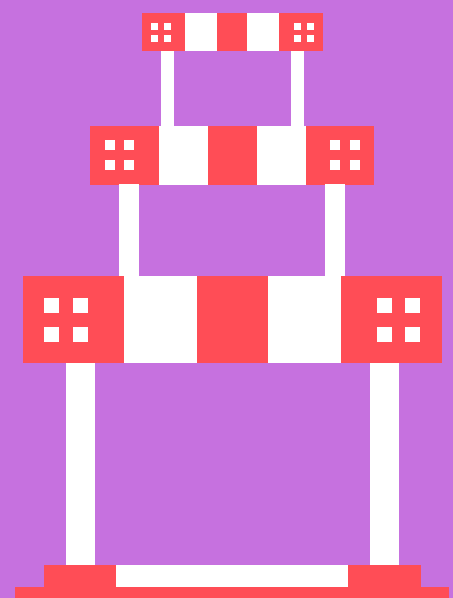
Remove hurdles and friction in the ecosystem to centralise learning

The biggest change you can make here is a mindset one.

You're not trying to build an ecosystem from scratch, you're cultivating the existing behaviour.

And you're not dictating the tools people use, you're bringing the existing ones together.

If someone normally turns to place X for guidance and needs to apply it in tool Y, the task is to remove friction by bringing wisdom X to tool Y.



Recommendations

Build a culture of knowledge capturing and sharing

Remember, a good number of people are asking questions and waiting days for answers.

You can start solving this today!

Capture the answers to repeat questions, bring them to a central place and allow people to search before they ask.

Your quickest win is to identify the questions that cause the most pain and the ones that get asked the most.

Answer them and it snowballs. People see the value in capturing their knowledge and others see the benefit of searching before they ask.



Trend 3

**People don't have enough
time to learn**



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Like many L&D teams, we've found time is the biggest barrier when it comes to people fully engaging with learning opportunities. To combat this, we are building a learning culture based on the 70:20:10 model. We want to change people's perception on what learning is by adopting an agile learning culture alongside formal learning opportunities, such as monthly power skill sessions.

JO SMALLWOOD

→ HEAD OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, SOLDI



Historians reckon the oldest example of writing dates back to Ancient Mesopotamia in 3400 B.C., and you know what that clay tablet said?

People don't have enough time to learn.

Not really, but it might as well have...



The oldest barrier to learning is somehow still making its way into research on L&D challenges.

Alongside another classic, the lack of learner engagement - topping CIPD's list in the 2023 Learning at Work report.

Lack of learner time, engagement and budget are seen as the main barriers for L&D when supporting organisational and people goals

Barriers to supporting organisational and people goals (% of respondents)

42%

Lack of learner time

41%

Lack of engagement

How did we get here?

By treating learning as if it's something separate

The best time and place for us to learn is on the job, in the flow of work. We have a genuine problem to solve = motivation.

There's a chance to apply what we've learned = application.

If we apply it and it influences our performance that = positive reinforcement.

And it also increases the likelihood that we're influencing business goals.

The trouble is, too many companies still drag people out of the workflow to 'learn' things that don't seem immediately relevant, and we won't have a chance to put them into practice for a good while.

Putting content first and making learning feel irrelevant drives lower engagement

Output doesn't equal impact.

And sometimes, with the best intentions in the world, L&D teams rush to create more content with this expectation.

The content gets put first and pushed out to people - meaning they're hit with stuff that doesn't feel immediately useful and disrupts their day.

And because it's not connected to work, it has no impact, leaving learners asking themselves:

Why should I be engaged in learning? It's not bringing me any value right now...



Recommendations

Put skills and problems to be solved first, not content

Learning that truly has impact either:

- Solves a problem for a person or team.
- Plugs a skills gap to get us closer to goals.

When content is created for the sake of it or for a problem perceived by the L&D team, this won't happen.

At the risk of getting scroll heavy, head back to the recommendations for trend one: starting with good problem diagnosis solves a lot of this for you.

When it comes to skills, you need to determine the ones needed to hit targets and the ones you currently have. The gap between the two is where learning can drive performance and impact.

HowNow helps people build skills profiles for every person in your team - on a five-point proficiency scale - and use a mix of self and peer review to ensure it's fair and accurate.

Building an understanding of skills but also giving you the ability to connect learning to performance and measure whether it influenced someone's capabilities.

Check out our quick guide to our skill measuring features.

[LEARN MORE →](#)

[FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN MEASURE SKILLS](#)

“

We've just launched HowNow at Lucid Group... the information is where they need it, at the point of need - integrating into Microsoft Teams as we use it or any other collaboration tool.

HENRY LITCHFIELD

→ HEAD OF TALENT AND LEARNING, LUCID GROUP - AND HOWNOW CUSTOMER



Recommendations

Bring learning to the flow of work

According to LinkedIn Learning, 68% of people prefer to learn on the job, and almost half want to learn in moments of need.

So, in theory, the solution is easy: bring relevant learning to people's day-to-day roles and tools..

In practice, that means figuring out where people go to learn and the barriers they face when applying information to solve challenges.

So, if you skipped over trend two, scroll back to the recommendations there: it's time to map your tech stack and learner journey.

For example, we know that people turn to their colleagues on Slack or Teams in moments of need.

And that they're probably using tools like Intercom, Salesforce and others to perform their role - this is where learning can really influence their performance.

That's why we integrate with the tools people use everyday, so learning comes to the flow of work without someone having to change their existing behaviours.

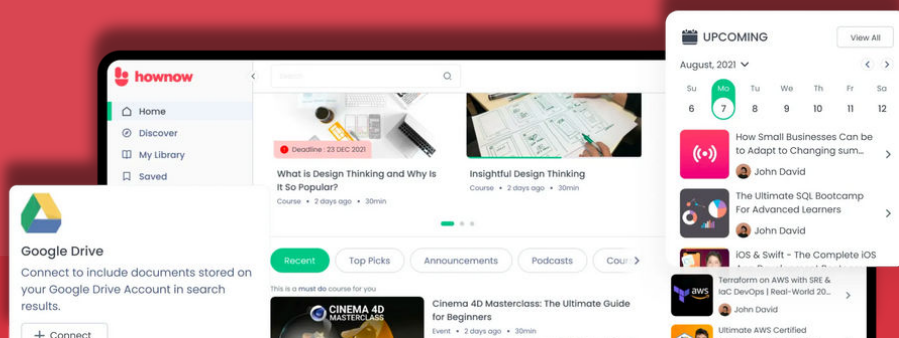
[LEARN MORE →](#)

[EXPLORE HOWNOW'S INTEGRATIONS HERE](#)

Take an on-demand tour of the HowNow platform

Everything you need to bring relevant learning, skills and knowledge to every employee in the flow of work, and track all your L&D in one place.

[SEE HOW IT WORKS →](#)



Trend 4

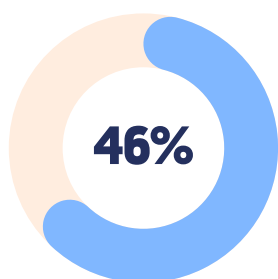
L&D teams don't know how much they spend



ROI: the elusive golden goose for L&D, HR and people teams.

But how can you provide a return on investment if you don't know how much you're investing...

You'd be lucky to get a goose, let alone a golden one.



46% of L&D pros “still do not have a handle on how much they spend per employee in the organisation.” (CIPD)

How did we get here?

The constantly-changing environment is affecting L&D clarity

It's not exactly an easy time to be an L&D pro. The world's changing so fast, and there's so much that we can do, it's hard to prioritise OR get clarity when you're spinning lots of plates.

And that impacts the ability to track spend and budgets.

- 53% feel their workload has increased, so it might be that they're swamped!
- Practitioners reported a decrease in external suppliers, so that shift might be behind the lack of clarity.

- A quarter say their reliance on in-house expertise has increased, which is more difficult to put a price to.
- Close to a third say their increased workload had a negative impact on their physical and mental wellbeing - so it could be that they're struggling.

Interestingly, people don't fear a huge drop in spending - so we're at a crossroads: the budget won't drop, but we've got to do more with it...

Despite all that, budgeting confidence remains high

Where the budget's being spent is a puzzle, but there is certainty and confidence around L&D's spending power.

The same CIPD report showed that 69% of respondents had seen their learning and development budget increase or stay the same (24% net increase and 45%



stayed the same), while just 20% had seen a decline, and the remaining 11% were unsure.

And LinkedIn research showed that 41% expected to have more spending power, lower than last year's 48%, but the third-highest response in the past seven years.



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One of the things
that the team loves
about HowNow is
that learning is
exactly at the point
of need. It's really
accessible!

HARRIET PERKS

→ LONDON ACADEMY & ONBOARDING LEAD,
AND DIGITAL

69%

of respondents had seen
their L&D budget increase
or stay the same

20%

of respondents had seen
their L&D budget
decrease

41%

expected to have more
spending power (down
6% from last year)



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We have to ensure Leaders and Managers are enabled consistently to guide career progression effectively, holding them accountable for fostering measurable growth in their teams.

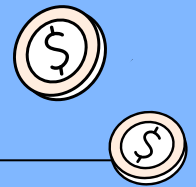
The true impact of L&D shouldn't be seen as a measurement of promotions, but as centre of continuous skill development, retention, and practical application that actively future-proofs the organisation for the challenges ahead of the curve.

BONITA MATTHEE

→ FOUNDER, FUELD LEARNING



Recommendations



Define what ROI means to you

Impact is what you define it as. And for L&D teams, that means establishing what a return on investment means in the context of their business.

The expected outcome of any investment is the influence it has on performance.

We should be looking at performance improvement that happens off the back of initiatives and the influence that has on teams and companies reaching their goals.

Remember to be specific: which internal metrics indicate our positive influence?

Audit your spending

If almost half of L&D pros don't know what they're spending per employee, a spending audit has to be one of the first steps.

Get to the bottom of what you pay for on a per user basis and what you spend at a company or team level. Then work out what that equates to for the individuals using those tools or subscriptions.

Once we're clear on spend we can ask ourselves: does this pay for itself in terms of the benefit it brings? If so, it's a ready-made business case. If not, ask the tough questions.

Build a commercial understanding of your business

Knowing how the business makes money will help you understand where L&D can support the bottom line and build better alignment to profitability.

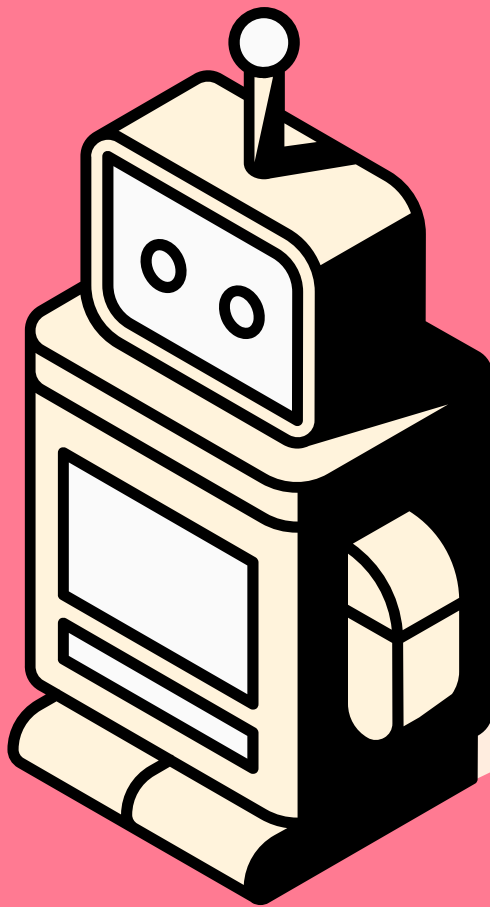
Don't be afraid to ask people the financial implications of not solving a challenge. This won't just help you prioritise actions that have performance impact, it'll increase the likelihood of L&D making financial waves.

To do this well, you need to speak to stakeholders on their terms and about the issues they face. Rather than leading with L&D and framing the conversation around that.



Trend 5

AI needs to be used more intentionally to drive impact



During the pandemic, L&D teams simply moved their eight-hour classroom training to Zoom. But they didn't redesign them for the digital format, and we ended up with Zoom fatigue.

We're currently using AI in a similar way - doing the things we're already doing rather than going back to first principles.



"AI's been great for our L&D team! We're creating more content than ever before."

Ok, but what if your people don't need more content?

In fact, right now, their exact problem is that we create too much content that doesn't solve problems.

Now we're just creating more of the stuff that doesn't work or help.

And that's how easy it is to fall into the trap of using AI because you can.

The answer? Using AI in an intentional, structured way that adds value.



How did we get here?

Getting caught up in the narrative and hype

AI-related L&D content is promising the world. More impact, work smarter, free up time, build skills.

When a buzz gets this big, we get FOMO of epic proportions, and end up diving into using it because everyone else is.

The trouble is, we don't know why we're doing it! How is it meant to help us in the context of what we do!?

Here's why that happens...

Neglecting the fundamentals in favour of the shiny new thing

AI is a little bit like the fat burning pill you buy when the rest of your diet is a mess.

Unless our L&D efforts involve good problem discovery, remove friction, influence performance and build the skills we need, AI just scales our problems.

And that ultimately damages your L&D brand and reputation in the business, reducing your long-term chances of driving impact.

Recommendations

Understand the real business need and context

In conversations with a small group of learning leaders, Egle Vinauskaite discovered that AI adoption in L&D is typically driven by the business and not the other way around.

You can lead a horse to water, but they won't drink if they're not thirsty.

And it's the same with AI. People won't use it just because you bring it to their door, it has to solve a problem - that's the only way you can quench your thirst for AI impact.

Like so many things, it comes back to effective problem discovery and a rational, practical approach to building a solution.

You don't want to be the person with an AI hammer who views every L&D-related problem as a nail.

Use first principles thinking to solve old problems in new AI ways

During the pandemic, L&D teams simply moved their eight-hour classroom training to Zoom. But they didn't redesign them for the digital format, and we ended up with Zoom fatigue.

We're currently using AI in a similar way - doing the things we're already doing rather than going back to first principles. This shift would allow us to explore the ways in which AI can solve problems in ways that weren't possible before.

Our recommendation would be to use AI to solve the hard challenges that help us make meaningful learning a part of everyday work.

For example, use AI to generate a skills framework tailored to your organisational context. Surfacing the precise learning experience for the moment of need rather than sending a whole list of courses.

Recommendations

Build the environment needed for L&D to flourish

Ever shown a person in a bad mood something you're really excited about?

Your enthusiasm meets a stony face that has no interest in hearing about this great new idea.

Now imagine you're taking a bunch of AI-generated content to people who've lost their interest in learning, don't have the motivation or quite simply can't see the point?

You are putting the cart before the horse.

Are your people engaged? If not, why? And what can that tell you about the cultural changes you need to make before you even get to the point of using AI...



Trend 6

A shift from hiring to upskilling

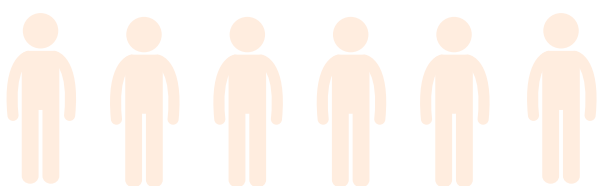


In a world where there are six open roles for every qualified person, the harsh truth is you can't fill every skill gap by hiring external talent.

Winning the talent war isn't all about bringing in all the skills you need, it's about helping people build the skills that matter in the shortest amount of time.



6 roles open for every qualified person



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Hence the shift we're seeing towards upskilling, internal mobility and looking more at skills needed as opposed to job roles to be filled.

How did we get here?

Focusing on the right HR and talent skills at the wrong time

Udemy's top seven surging skills for workplace and human resources were dominated by recruitment and hiring, according to the 2023 Workplace Learning Trends Report.

That means recruiting, hiring and talent management content saw the highest increase in consumption.

Of course, these are still useful skills in a

competitive landscape where it's hard to recruit talent.

But the scale of vacancies companies need to fill, and the sheer volume of opportunities for each qualified person (six) means hiring only gets us so far.

Companies who are capable of spotting skills gaps and potential - and then deliver relevant learning to upskill and drive performance - they're the ones who'll thrive in this difficult time.

Top 7 surging skills: workplace & HR excellence

Ranked by increase consumption



Source: Udemy, 2023 Workplace Learning Trends Report



Short-termism in a world where sustainable approaches are needed

The pressure is on L&D teams to provide value and impact right now.

And that can cause us to focus on quick wins and take actions we feel deliver value fastest.

Yes we can bring in someone with the skills we need now and hope they hit the ground running...

But that person lacks contextual knowledge around how the business works.

If we resist that mindset, we might find people internally who have the desire and foundational skills to plug gaps for us and are aligned to our goals.

And in a volatile world, you're better off having the skill of helping others build skills that keep you and your company relevant.

Rather than the skill of hiring to plug gaps, because you never know when the next big change or disruption is coming...



“
You’ll get people who don’t want to say they’re struggling with an area, but with HowNow, they will search for knowledge, find the questions & answers themselves - and then progress!

MARIA TEMPLE

→ TRAINING MANAGER, CHARLTON MORRIS



Recommendations

Adopt a skills-first approach

We spoke about the pitfalls of putting content first earlier. This is how you make learning feel like an irrelevant interruption that leaves people feeling disconnected.

The skills-first approach changes everything. It starts with identifying skills gaps and the demands people have for knowledge - to solve problems and drive performance.

This gets you out of the silo of just thinking about learning content and into the mindset of: What can we pluck from the learning ecosystem to give people that knowledge or skill?

It could be a YouTube video, capturing content from an SME, or curating something that already exists. Because that learning is based around real problems, centralising it means people can search and find it in moments of need.

And it also automatically shifts your view to performance-led metrics rather than vanity metrics like time spent learning or completion.

Audit your current skills and build a company skills profile

Skills gaps, we've got to close them! You've probably heard this a million times...

The trouble is, it's pretty hard to do when you don't know which skills you have and need.

Enter the skills profile.

The exercise of mapping which people have which skills and to which proficiency.

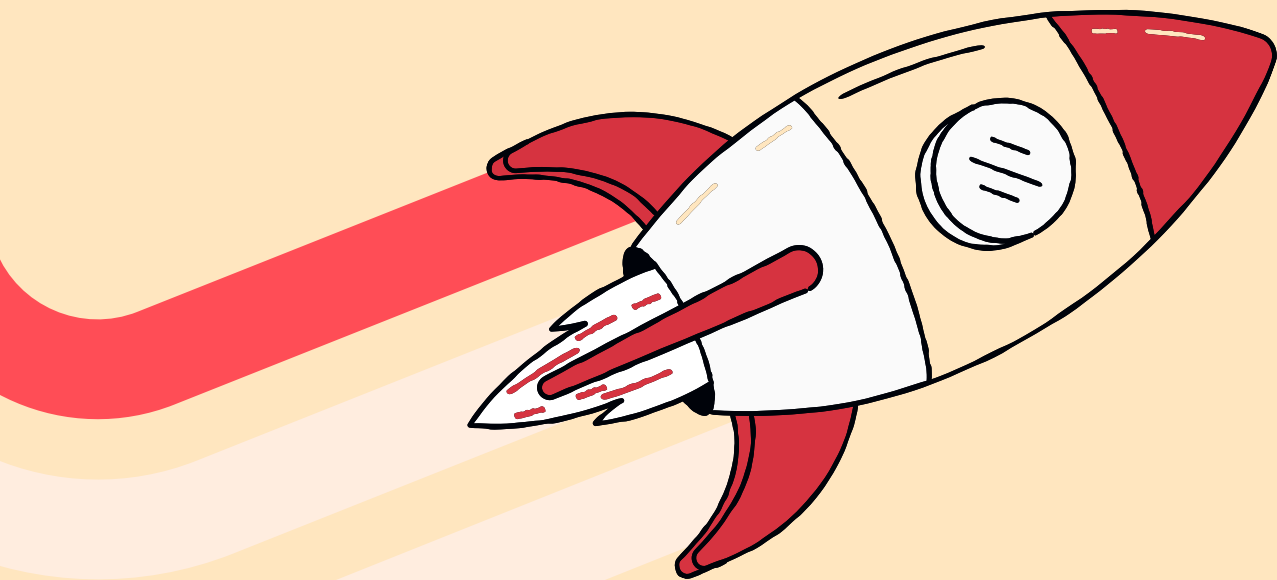
In HowNow, we do this on a scale of one to five (novice to expert) and use a combination of peer and self review to build a better picture.

Combined with good problem discovery, which tells us which skills we'll need, we're already on the path to meaningful learning.

We either have the skill and know the right person to connect them with, OR we need to build the skill in order to reach the goal.

Trend 7

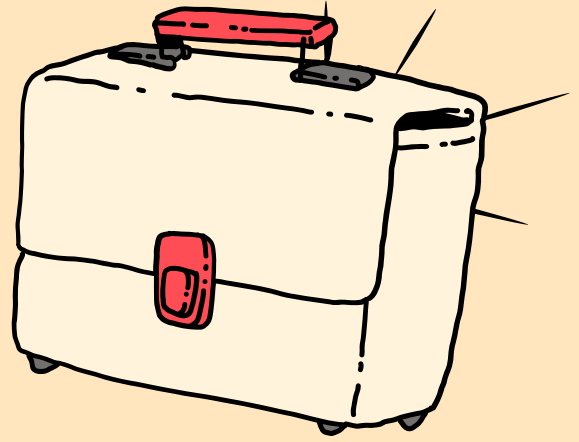
We need better career paths and performance conversations



What a sad state of affairs...

At a time when people really don't want to leave companies, most aren't giving them the biggest motivator to stay.

Growth.



To meet the future of work, companies must help employees to see a clear and fair path for growth.

Just 9% of employees stated they were vulnerable to poaching in 2023, down from 22% in 2022, according to Betterworks' Global HR Research Report 2023.

When it came to what mattered to employees, career goals and purpose saw the biggest increase - jumping from 20% last year to 35% in 2023.

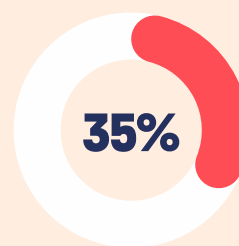
And in case it wasn't clear enough, three in four employees said they would prefer to advance at their current company.

So, what's the problem?

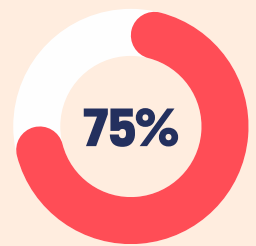
A huge proportion of employees just aren't getting this box ticked:

- Only 48% see a path for advancement in their current company.
- And only 46% feel supported in their career aspirations.

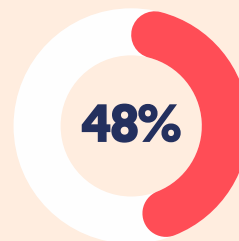
What mattered most to employees in 2023?



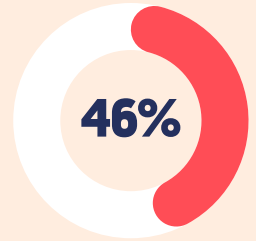
Career goals saw the biggest increase - jumping from 20% last year to 35% in 2023.



Three in four employees said they would prefer to advance at their current company.



Only 48% see a path for progress in their company.



Only 46% feel supported in their career aspirations.

Source: Betterworks, Global HR Research Report 2023

How did we get here?

Different priorities for a post-pandemic and hybrid world

First things first, there's no foul play here and it's not like people teams have purposely neglected development.

In fact, it's actually that they've been supporting people's wellbeing and work-life balance.

A recent survey of 1,000 UK employees by Lattice and YouGov asked which benefits were provided by their employer. Topping the list were:

- Flexible working policies: 47%
- Access to mental health/wellness support: 42%
- Flexible personal time off: 37%

Between the cost of living crisis, general economic downturn and post-COVID adjustments, this all makes sense.

The trouble is that it's been at the expense of benefits that satisfy those cravings for growth and purpose:

- Regular career growth conversations (at least once per quarter): 15%
- Clear career growth path: 13%
- Budget for professional development: 11%

A performance management and review process people don't trust or value.

Performance management is about gearing employees towards adding maximum value, and the review process should set the foundation for how we get there.

The trouble is, too many employees just don't believe it works right now:

37% of workers said performance management is an outright failure in their company.

64% view their performance review process as always or sometimes a waste.

And only 1 in 3 believe the process helps them perform better.

There's also concern about how fair and equitable the process is, and that has a direct influence on people's productivity, engagement and feelings of belonging.

37%

said performance management is an outright failure in their company.

64%

view their performance review process as always or sometimes a waste.

13%

have a clear career growth path offered by their employer.



Recommendations

Don't just have more career conversations, do them better

If your career conversations and performance reviews aren't tied to clear business and development goals, doing more of them won't help.

And if we're not enabling people with the skill to understand where they want to be and what gives them a sense of purpose, we're not helping them get the most from work.

In a fast-changing and complex world, you're better off having a consistent and repeatable process that's geared towards purpose and performance.

5 UNIVERSAL QUESTIONS YOU CAN USE →

1. What does success look like for our team and company?
2. How does our employee contribute to that goal every day?
3. Which skills and knowledge would they need to do that?
4. Do they have it, and to what extent?
5. How are we measuring progress towards those skills and goals?

Enable your managers: they are the single person with the most influence

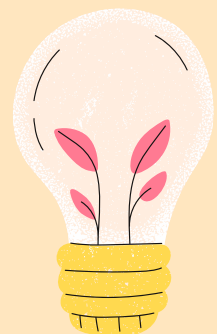
Don't you hate it when boring old cliches are right? 'People don't leave companies, they leave managers' is a true classic. But the data supports this!

More people say they like working for their manager (48%) than their company (39%).

And when you consider the influence leaders have on our career path, our performance and our satisfaction, we should be investing in them.

6 AREAS MANAGERS WANT SUPPORT IN →

1. Coaching performance: 41%
2. Reviews, assessments and ratings: 40%
3. Helping employees develop skills and career paths: 38%
4. Setting and tracking goals: 34%
5. Giving feedback: 34%
6. Providing support and empathy to employees: 32%



“

In a hypergrowth company, what often happens is that you hire, mid-level, operational staff early to help the company start its journey. However, this tends to mean that managers usually lack people management experience. This is risky, as it may mean lack of fairness and consistency, low awareness of legal obligations, motivation issues for employees, and much more. Therefore, it is paramount for any start up or scale up to provide managers with skills training as soon as possible, in order to protect the company, create a better working environment for all, and maximise the productivity of the organisation.

HELEN PERICLEOUS

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Speak to one our our experts today!

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