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## How Can Organizations Integrate and Connect Learning with Work?

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## How Can Organizations Integrate and Connect Learning with Work?

### Abstract

[Excerpt] Over the last few decades, workforce management has evolved to become complex and dynamic due to an increasingly competitive business landscape, the digital revolution and the mix of employees that now includes a multigenerational workforce. Work roles are expected to keep evolving requiring employees to keep up with new knowledge and upskill to remain employable; and as this happens, the ways of learning change as well. Research has also shown that companies that invest in the development of their employees are 2.4 times more likely to hit their performance targets, hence, organizations need to be proactive about adopting effective strategies that will enable them to manage the development of their employees in a way that supports the business priorities.

### Keywords

Human Resources, HR, learning and development, L&D, learning, development, career, transformation, multigenerational workforce, agile, human talent, human capital, retention

### Comments

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## Executive Summary

### Research Question

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How can organizations integrate and connect learning with work?

### The Current State of Learning and Development

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Over the last few decades, workforce management has evolved to become complex and dynamic due to an increasingly competitive business landscape, the digital revolution and the mix of employees that now includes a multigenerational workforce. Work roles are expected to keep evolving requiring employees to keep up with new knowledge and upskill to remain employable;<sup>1</sup> and as this happens, the ways of learning change as well.<sup>2</sup> Research has also shown that companies that invest in the development of their employees are 2.4 times more likely to hit their performance targets, hence, organizations need to be proactive about adopting effective strategies that will enable them to manage the development of their employees in a way that supports the business priorities.<sup>1</sup>

### Best Practices and Effective Methods for Learning and Development at Work Today

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The changing nature of today's workforce and technological advancements now require organizations to transform their corporate learning strategies to focus on blended-learning solutions in order to keep pace with these changes. Although there is still huge value in immersive classroom learning experiences, employees, especially leaders, report not having the time to sit in a classroom to acquire knowledge; besides, without regular reinforcement, people tend to forget what they have learned in class.<sup>1</sup>

With the growth of user-friendly digital-learning platforms employees can now take more ownership of their professional development and utilize virtual learning when the need arises rather than waiting for a scheduled classroom session.<sup>1</sup> Organizations are now shifting from the standard classroom learning programs and designing learning journeys that involve continuous learning opportunities that include *fieldwork, on-demand or pre- and post-classroom digital learning, social learning, on-the-job coaching & mentoring, shadowing, lunch-and-learn sessions, secondments, and short workshops* (see exhibit 1).<sup>[1][3][4]</sup> **Learning journeys** are intended to help employees develop new competencies aligned with business needs in the most effective and efficient way that supports the application of knowledge on the job. Many organizations adopt a framework known as "70:20:10" where 70% of learning takes place on the job, 20% through interaction & collaboration, and 10% through formal learning such as classroom and digital training. These percentages are only general guidelines and vary by industry & organization; however, the key here is for organizations to ensure that their learning and development strategies support informal learning at a higher proportion than formal learning.<sup>[1][5][6]</sup>

### Measuring the Impact of Learning Programs on Business Performance

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Measuring the impact of a learning strategy helps to determine continuity and identify areas for improvement (see exhibit 2). Although many organizations still rely on traditional metrics such as program satisfaction and completion scores to measure the impact of their learning programs, High-performing organizations focus on outcomes-based metrics like *impact on individual performance, employee engagement, team effectiveness, and business-process improvement*.<sup>1</sup>

### Company Case Studies

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**Boston Consulting Group (BCG):** BCG uses a customized learning tool called "Learning at BCG" (LAB) available to all employees worldwide, where they have a consistent 24/7 global access to learning resources and content covering over 20 areas of BCG-related expertise. This tool caters to the specific development needs and interests of every employee and includes virtual classrooms with up to-date knowledge for different functions and industries related to the business, newsletters that help employees learn from BCG peers how to succeed as a consultant, professional, and individual, 10,000-plus online on-demand training courses and approximately 1,100 archived recordings with an average of 20 to 25 new classes added per month. Training recommendations typically come from a case team leader, advisor, manager, or colleague.<sup>7</sup>

**Deloitte:** With its online program, Deloitte Leadership Academy (DLA), Deloitte provides learning resources for its employees and clients; and by embedding missions, badges, and leaderboards into the user-friendly platform that includes video lectures, in-depth courses, tests & quizzes and gamification, users have become engaged and more likely to complete the online training

programs. This also includes interactive forms as well as PDFs, that enable interactions between learners, allowing them to leave questions or comments. Added to that, each learner's home screen receives news feed updates from the users they follow.<sup>8</sup>

**Citi Group:** Citi also uses the same mechanism as Deloitte with the adoption of 'Degreed' as their employee learning platform.<sup>9</sup>

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### Recommendations

Currently, there is no known one-size-fits-all solution for learning and development at organizations. Therefore, the emphasis for a learning solution should be to help employees learn not only specific skills but also the ability to think critically about how to adapt and extrapolate those skills on the job. To go beyond the traditional classroom system to connect learning with work for its multi-generational workforce, This CAHRS partner company should consider the following: <sup>[2][10][11][12][13]</sup>

1. **Incorporate learning in the daily workflow:** Over time, experiential learning has proved to be the most effective means to acquire skills.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, depending on employee needs and where they are on the learning S-curve, adopt programs like, coaching, mentorship, secondments, platforms for social learning & knowledge sharing and immersive simulations which provide experiential learning for employees that links skill development to their day-to-day work.<sup>2</sup>
2. **Provide on-the-job performance support:** Digital learning platforms that allow on-demand & mobile access to resources, or lower-tech guides that offer step-by-step help, job aids, and pointers to reference material. <sup>[15][16][17]</sup>
3. **Offer other opportunities across functions or geographies:** Rotations or mobility programs like temporary placements in other departments/functions, or job shadowing may be useful.<sup>15</sup>
4. **Communicate options and adopt a learning contract:** Notify employees of the various resources and channels accessible for learning and outline the ways in which they and the organization will share accountability and benefits and align on the pathways and skills to be acquired in that learning journey.<sup>2</sup>
5. **Provide tangible or intangible incentives:** Incentives have been found to increase engagement and encourage behavioral change. This can be done by recognizing effort with badges that mark progress on multi-part learning tasks, or the completion of a program or providing certifications that indicate employees' valuable professional accomplishments within and outside the organization (see exhibit 3).<sup>2</sup> Digital nudges like push notifications are also effective tools to encourage people to take desired learning actions.<sup>[18][18]</sup>
6. **Measure results and keep improving:** In addition to the effect on business performance, consider using metrics such as level of engagement among users, number of power users on the site, learning completion rates among users, satisfaction rates among users, the correlation between engagement, achievement levels and individual promotions, and other external career progressions among users.<sup>8</sup>

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### Implications for Recommendations

**Resources:** Integrating technology in the learning program may turn out to be expensive and a lengthy process but the benefits and cost savings thereafter will be substantial. This can be eased by integrating learning technologies with the overall human capital management system instead of running a separate system.<sup>1</sup>

**Complexity:** Personalized and adaptive learning can be complicated to manage when a variety of skills, mediums and preferences must be considered in the program design. The organization can mitigate this by first understanding how their employees like to learn (e.g. visual, auditory, reader, and kinesthetic learner) and design programs/content that combines all these methods for each solution. <sup>[19][20]</sup> Partnerships with external providers like ATD or McKinsey may also be helpful here.<sup>21</sup>

**Low Adoption/Engagement:** Like change programs, learning and development efforts can fall short of their objectives from being overlooked by employees or a lack of personal motivation. Engagement strategies, incentives and rewards should be utilized in this case (see exhibit 3). <sup>[15][22]</sup>

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### Conclusion

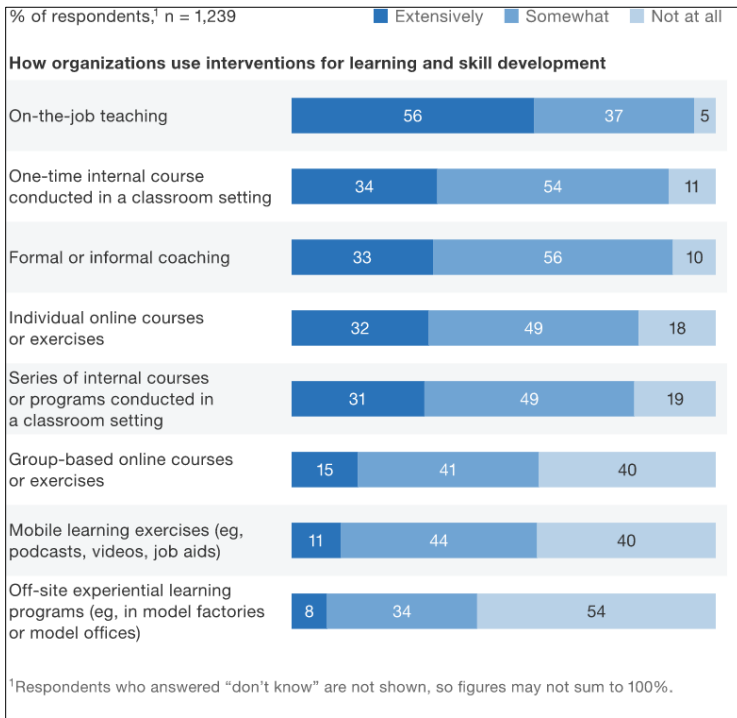
As companies consider transforming their learning programs, it is important to create a learning strategy that aligns with business strategy by identifying and enabling the capabilities needed to achieve success. The most effective companies invest in innovative learning and development programs that cater to a multigenerational workforce, remain flexible and agile, and build the human talent needed to master the digital age. These changes entail some risk, and perhaps some trial and error, but the rewards are great once a solution that works is identified and applied.<sup>1</sup> This also serves as value proposition to attract and retain employees.<sup>2</sup>

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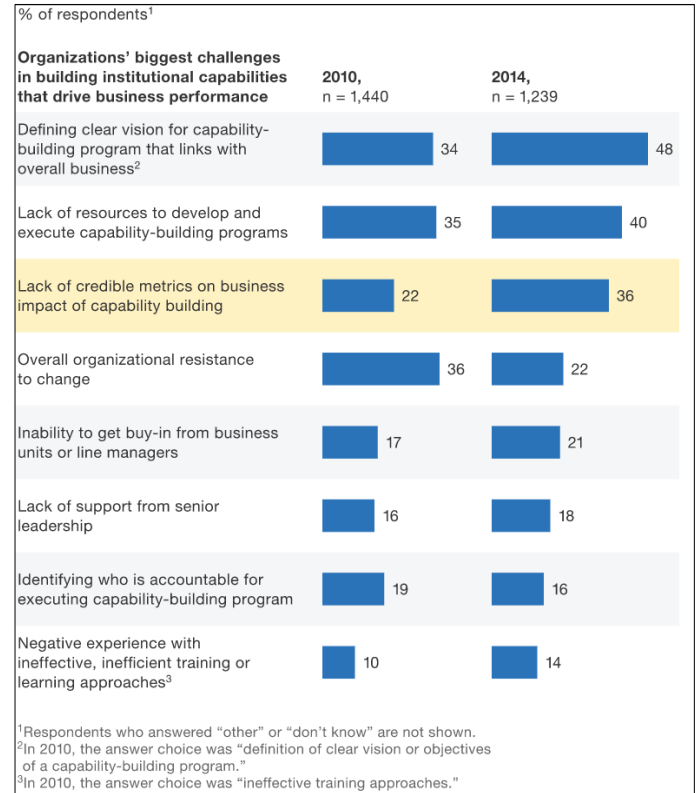
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**Exhibit 1<sup>3</sup>**



**Exhibit 2<sup>3</sup>**



**Exhibit 3<sup>15</sup>**



**Exhibit 4<sup>3</sup>**

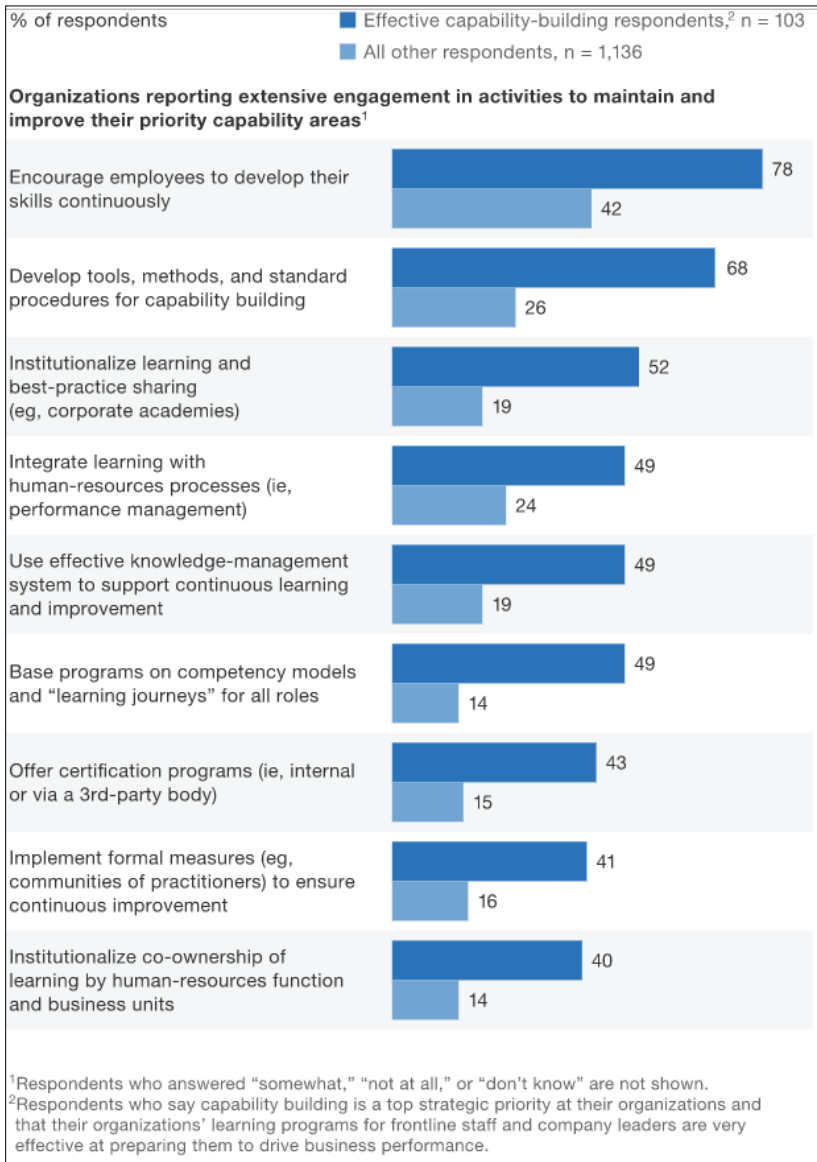




Exhibit 5<sup>23</sup>

**Updated eLearning Trends in 2019 to Help You Enhance Your Learning Strategy and Maximize Returns (Part 1 of 3)**

As we hit mid-year, you are possibly looking at accelerating your training investments in CY 2019. In this infographic, we share our updated predictions of eLearning Trends in 2019 that you can use to enhance your learning strategy and maximize returns.

The trends are banded into 4 sections and split into 3 Infographics.

<p><b>Section 1</b> The trends that help learners learn and apply this learning to show better performance or behavioral change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mobile Learning.</li> <li>2. Digitalization of ILT (to Blended or Fully Online).</li> <li>3. Performance Support Tools.</li> <li>4. Informal Learning.</li> <li>5. Social Learning.</li> <li>6. Self-Directed Learning.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Section 2</b> Learning strategies with a proven track record of delivering a better engagement quotient and higher training impact.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Microlearning.</li> <li>2. Gamification.</li> <li>3. Video Based Learning (Videos and Interactive Videos).</li> <li>4. Mobile Apps for Learning.</li> <li>5. Personalization.</li> <li>6. Curation and User Generated Content.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Section 3</b> The trends that organizations must invest on to measure, enhance, and maximize the impact of their training.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning Engagement Platforms – LXP.</li> <li>2. Learner Analytics.</li> <li>3. Big Data-Reporting and Analytics.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Section 4</b> Other notable trends to watch out for—the future is here!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AR/VR and MR for Immersive Learning.</li> <li>2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Learning.</li> </ol>
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### Section 1 - The trends that help learners learn and apply this learning to show better performance or behavioral change.

**Trend #1 - Mobile Learning**

This trend is still on the top position as Mobile Learning continues to be the preferred choice for learners. It provides tremendous flexibility and control to learners as they can take the training on the go, anytime, anywhere, and on the device of their choice.

The value Mobile Learning provides for L&D teams is as follows:

- ✓ Flexibility to use Mobile Learning for most of the corporate training needs.
- ✓ Ability to use Mobile Learning to meet learning needs for Formal training, Performance support intervention, Informal training, and Social or Collaborative learning.

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**Trend #2 - Digitalization of ILT (to Blended or Fully Online)**

The acceleration for Digitalization of ILT to either Blended or fully Online will continue in 2019. The push from the learners is on account of:

- ✓ The flexibility to access online resources at the moment of their need.
- ✓ They can consume the online resources on the go, when they have the time.

The reasons for L&D teams to adopt a Blended or a fully Online approach continue to be:

- ✓ Reaching a wider audience in a shorter time.
- ✓ Shorter training seat time.
- ✓ Consistent messaging and impact (that is not dependent on the quality of the instructor).
- ✓ Online assessments that generate reports quickly and can be used to tailor the learning journey.
- ✓ Cost reduction.



### Trend #3 - Performance Support Tools

Today's learners need a quick time resolution to their problems or challenges. These instant learning aids or job aids or Performance Support Tools should be available at the moment of their need, in their workflow. They do not want to log on to the LMS and hunt for this!

The Performance Support Tools address their wide-ranging needs, including:

- ✓ Help them apply their learning on the job.
- ✓ Learn more (deeper dive).
- ✓ Learn new concepts.
- ✓ Solve a problem.
- ✓ Address a bottleneck.



### Trend #4 - Informal Learning

Organizations are acknowledging the need to offer multi-channel based training. This reflects the shift of using training budgets only for Formal Training to a more balanced approach that features avenues for Informal Learning and Social or Collaborative Learning.

This trend will continue to provide a strong support to Formal training.



### Trend #5 - Social Learning

When we were young and all through our formative years, we learned by observing others. It stands to reason that Social Learning (or learning from others) would continue to be a significant channel for learning even at work.

This fact is being acknowledged and used by L&D teams to support users. This too aids in creating learning as a continuum.

We are witnessing a churn in traditional LMS platforms, and they are getting edged by next gen LMSs as well as LXPs (Learning Experience Platforms). The latter offer platforms that can leverage Social Learning.

This trend will continue and certainly see an acceleration in its adoption this year.



### Trend #6 - Self-Directed Learning

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is a new channel of learning that is being seen as an effective method to facilitate learning where the onus is on learners. Not only does this empower learners, it gives them complete control on being able to "pull" the learning assets or other resources rather than being "pushed" through the LMS.

A highly learner-centric approach, it enables learners to create their preferred learning path.

While this is not something many organizations are currently focusing on. We strongly feel that it is worth a closer look as this investment can help them in creating a culture of continuous learning.

We hope this Infographic helps you understand the relevance of each eLearning Trend in 2019 and why you should adopt them.

**Do check our other 2 Infographics (Part 2 and 3 of this series) that feature the balance 11 trends under Section 2, 3, and 4.**

Want to learn more? Reach out to us at [www.eidesign.net/contact-us/](http://www.eidesign.net/contact-us/)