



Learning Insights 2014

adding Business value through Learning

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LEARNING THAT DRIVES PERFORMANCE**

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Introduction

This is the third annual Learning Insights survey that e.learning age and City & Guilds Kineo have undertaken together. As the new Managing Director of City & Guilds Kineo, it's my first opportunity to introduce the report. In doing so I want to say a big thank you to the many clients and contributors who've taken the time once again to share their views in the spirit of helping others. I hope we've done your views justice.

I've spent my career helping businesses make and measure impact through digital communications and learning, so I'm really heartened to see the themes of metrics and impact come through so strongly this year. You know the old joke about advertising – we know 50% of it works, but we don't know which 50%. Could the same be said about learning too – and what would the percentages be?

Those leaders expect L&D professionals to draw that line and drive those results. Hence the theme of applied learning that drives performance. I know when we deliver measurable results for McDonald's, BP, BMI or any client, it reminds us why we are here.

**“MORE THAN EVER
BUSINESS LEADERS EXPECT
A STRAIGHT LINE BETWEEN
OUR EFFORTS AS LEARNING
PROFESSIONALS AND
TANGIBLE COMMERCIAL
RESULTS.”**

Of course, we don't achieve these results alone. Many contributors highlighted the power of peer learning, 'colleagues as coaches' and the line manager as the lever for performance. Learning technology has evolved to provide us with so many

channels to share and support – but of course, it's people that make the most difference to performance.

I'm joining City & Guilds Kineo at an exciting time – both for us and for the industry. Learning technology has given us more scope than ever before to drive performance, measure it, and – in the words of one contributor – let L&D have its 'L'Oréal moment' and show it's worth it.

I hope you enjoy this year's report. I'm looking forward to working with you, and we're looking forward to your feedback.

Matt Johnson
Managing Director
City & Guilds Kineo



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Executive summary

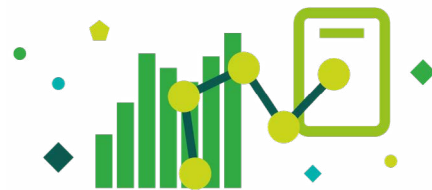
The aim of the research is to explore the challenges facing L&D departments and to chart the trends and developments taking place. This year we interviewed 35 directors and managers responsible for learning in 29 different organisations. We would like to thank everyone that participated and shared their insights this year. The full list of participating organisations is in appendix 1.

The context for corporate learning in 2014 continues to be significant business change, typically driven by technology, budget pressures, tighter regulations, global workforces and competition for talent.

New business models made possible by digitisation and the internet are being deployed faster than before. Both customers and staff are having to adapt to new business models and to learn to use new technologies. Customer service for example, is increasingly a Twitter exchange rather than a face-to-face exchange.

Many businesses are driving down cost as a competitive strategy, which is impacting on corporate training. Budgets are being reduced in many businesses and scrutiny is increasing, putting pressure on learning

departments to prove value for money. It is no longer good enough (if it ever was) to reduce costs; learning departments have to prove the value of learning in improving business performance.



The key challenge for learning departments in the current business context is *proving value*. They have to demonstrate they can drive 'behaviour change' and make *an impact on performance*. To do this they need to act *consultatively* to design *learning that is rooted in real business challenges*.

“THERE IS MONEY FOR TRAINING BUT IT HAS TO SHOW THAT IT IMPROVES SALES OR PERFORMANCE. IF IT DOESN'T IT'S NOT CONSIDERED IMPORTANT.”

The survey highlighted a number of priority learning areas:

- Onboarding
- Compliance
- Leadership
- Sales/Product Training
- Customer Service

The key challenges in each area can be summarised as follows:

Onboarding

Key challenges here include creating a consistent and centralised onboarding process in large companies that are often global and multicultural, with increased remote working. The balance of global consistency and local relevance also remains a big challenge for onboarding.

Compliance

This was listed as the key driver for over half of the businesses interviewed. However, compliance training was considered to have a reputation for

being dull and not engaging. This was particularly the case with generic off the shelf courses. The main concern was that “compliance training is still seen as a task rather than a learning opportunity.”

Leadership

There was concern in many organisations about a 'leadership skills gap' and a disconnect between the understanding of the importance of leadership training and reluctance to do more in this area. Learning managers report that leaders are the first to drop off courses and the hardest to be released from day-to-day activities for training, which begs the question – are the activities the right kind?

Sales/product training

The pace of product change in some industries is challenging. In one telecoms area three new products are released every single week. “This means that development timescales for creating product training are extremely challenging.” There is also a challenge of providing a consistent level of customer service from stores and call centres.

Customer service

This has emerged more strongly this year as an area where learning should be more focused. In a competitive market, companies are trying to create differentiation. “It won't be with product or services, but with communication and customer care.” Core to customer care is consistency: “we need to create a consistently great customer experience.”

L&D response – applied learning

The L&D response to proving value and driving performance has been to focus on *applied learning*. Learning has to be linked and applied to real world experiences. Learning needs to be relevant to their workplace, job, role, and task. Applied learning is learning that:

- Is based on real scenarios with resources that can be used on the job
- Is designed in close consultation with staff in the field
- Utilises managers to deliver and support learning
- Is embedded, open and accessible
- Embraces peer learning and colleagues as coaches
- Tracks the impact on performance

It is through applied learning that departments are improving performance and delivering value to their businesses.

Blended learning grows up – open, connected and embedded designs

Blended learning designs are the norm, but they have evolved. From being linear sequential experiences, they're moving to becoming more embedded, open and connected; and by the use of technology acting as an enabler.

Blended learning designs are being influenced by the business context. For

example, businesses want to reduce training time and ensure learning is focused on real scenarios to help transfer application to the workplace. The applied nature of learning means content has become more resource driven, shorter, more focused, supportive and performance related. We are also seeing many good examples of *peer learning and coaching* included in the blend.

Learning is becoming more connected. Social learning is now seen as part of the blend and not a standalone channel. This year we have seen many examples where Yammer is an accepted learning tool. Trainers and facilitators are learning new skills to facilitate learning via social learning channels. L&D teams need to evolve too.

Learners have been influenced by consumer technology and expect learning to be *open and accessible* at work just as it is at home when accessing YouTube, Google and Social Networks. L&D managers are adjusting to meet these needs and are *embedding* online learning resources via portals and applications that are freely available to learners. Learners want content and information to help them with their job – 'learners do not search for elearning'.

The changing nature of the workforce has also led L&D departments to adopt approaches such as gamification to engage younger learners and mobile technology to reach dispersed workforces. Technology is seen as an enabler that allows corporates to create wider and richer resources with higher production

values. Technology itself is also becoming more freely available and more accessible – Open Source, Cloud and Market Provided Services are now being embraced and adopted by corporates and individuals to meet the needs of businesses.

We are seeing more innovative models of learning adapted and applied in corporates. A good example, is the MOOC (massive online open course) business course launched by Marks & Spencer with Leeds University. The MOOC is a free course on business innovation, which uses case studies and video from the company and support from university academics.

Learning assessment

Assessment continues to be more sophisticated, continuing the trend we identified last year. This year we saw greater use of pre-assessments to design and tailor learning and to reduce the learning required. We also saw more post-learning reviews to help ensure learning is being embedded and is making a difference. Line managers continue to be critical in making sure learning is embedded and applied.

Measurement tools are being embedded into learning to help create rich data for analysis. The growth of the Tin Can API is supporting these approaches.

The L&D skills challenge

A major challenge for L&D departments is having the range of skills and experience to design and deliver an increasingly wide range of learning interventions. One person commented:

“WE ARE NOT GROWING L&D TALENT FAST ENOUGH, IN THE BUSINESS, OR IN THE UK PLC IN GENERAL.”

The irony shouldn't be lost on L&D teams: while they focus on skills development of their workforces, they also need to turn the mirror on themselves and reset expectations of the L&D professional operating in a new context. Outsourcing is also not an easy solution as L&D departments need vendors with a more holistic view of learning delivery. A number also questioned whether vendors can actually deliver the quality and integrated learning solutions that they now need.



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Context

So what's the state of the united nations of learning at the end of 2014? We heard a chorus of shared challenges, including budget constraints, the increasing global and virtual audiences, endless changes in technology, the wars for talent. And we heard a key look in the mirror challenge: how skilled up is L&D to shape the future?

Budget pressure leads to business focus and innovation

Budget reductions and scrutiny

Corporate learning departments continue to be under pressure to prove their value as training budgets are reduced and tightly scrutinised. The majority of interviewees this year reported that budgets are static or decreasing and that cost is a major driver. Many referred to increased competition in their markets leading to lower prices, margin pressure, reductions in investment in learning and constant pressure on budgets. Typical comments were:

"Cost reduction is a big driver of change in the business."

"Budgets are always decreasing. Budgets are always a concern."

In some cases budgets are heavily down; on one case there was a budget reduction of 40% and a staff headcount reduction of 25% in a single year. How to do more with less is an ongoing challenge for corporate learning departments. The 'more for less' mantra took hold during the Global Financial Crisis, and shows no signs of reversing during recovery. There is a need to be increasingly efficient and work with fewer resources.

Business focus

Budget pressures and scrutiny have led to a much clearer focus on the business impact of learning. Most departments reported that there is budget available if you can prove the business impact. Typical comments included:

"There is money for training but it has to show that it improves sales or performance; if it doesn't it's not considered important."

"BUDGETS ARE TIGHT AND THERE IS MORE SCRUTINY BUT A WELL-CONSTRUCTED BUSINESS CASE, ARTICULATING THE BENEFITS WILL HELP WIN THE CASE."

Budget reductions are not happening everywhere, but it is important to demonstrate a clear return on training investments. Increased scrutiny can be positive by making a case for increasing learning and development, not cutting back. In one business it was pointed out that contrary to a decrease, business challenge "has meant an increase in support and willingness to invest in development of staff and improvements to ways of working." There was a particular recognition for the need to invest in digital skills.

There appears to be more focus on developing and proving a clear business case for each learning intervention. Elearning was seen as a key component of most blended learning programmes as it remains a very cost efficient element of programmes. As with every area of business, the ROI hammer is falling on training and L&D teams. If you can't

draw a line between business results and training interventions, you're on shaky ground in a cost-conscious landscape.

Thinking creatively

The other impact of budget pressures and having to do more with less is that it has "accelerated the process of thinking differently".

"MARGINS ARE GETTING TIGHTER SO OVERALL THE BUSINESS IS FOCUSING ON WHAT WE SPEND OUR MONEY ON. THIS DOES NOT MEAN MONEY IS NOT AVAILABLE BUT IT HAS TO BE SPENT WISELY."

Concerns were raised about falling back to passive learning and tickbox management, rather than learning that changes behaviours. Departments appear to have been thinking very creatively about how to maximise their use of resources to support the business and change behaviours. This has resulted in many new and creative learning approaches including curating content, peer learning and line manager coaching. Technology is the core enabler.

Delivering to global and virtual audiences

The challenges of delivering to global and virtual audiences came up a lot in the interviews this year.

Global challenges

Many larger businesses are global so training departments have to deliver global programmes of learning. These global programmes create many challenges such as:

- Language challenges; one business operates in over 100 countries and commented that “developing learning across languages is a continual headache and costly”
- Cultural challenges; there are challenges not simply in language but designing learning for different cultures especially in the Asian market
- 24/7 operations; global businesses are increasingly 24/7 operations, which brings challenges and opportunities. Learners, for example, expect learning to be there for them when they need it

Virtual challenges

This year there was a noticeable increase in departments that reported managers having to manage virtual teams and remote teams. Many companies are actively promoting remote and virtual working, and reducing office space. For example, one training manager commented:

“We are actually running out of space in the buildings we have. A shared desk arrangement has been created. We are asking 2 people to share a desk throughout the week – one person will have it for half the week and then the other, the other half. With that, over time, it is really going to increase the population of people working remotely.”

Remote and virtual working is creating a number of challenges:

- New skills: “we need to build the skills in people to work and manage in virtual teams”
- Delivery: how to best reach and deliver learning and support to remote and mobile workforces
- Tracking and assessment: deciding what to track in a world where 8 Adding business value through learning line managers have less day-to-day visibility of how staff are performing
- Tools and technologies: there are many mobile and remote delivery options but the technology is more complex and changing quickly
- Union challenges: many organisations continue to be in discussions on what learning outside of normal work hours and settings means in practice for union member employees



Technology driving business change

There was a real sense this year that businesses are going through significant technology change. It is not simply learning departments that are adopting new technologies; many organisations are using technology to transform how they do business from banks to restaurants to retailers. This is reshaping organisation structures, job roles and skills.

For many years there have been predictions that industries could be hollowed out with a database and an API. This is beginning to happen with the internet supporting radically new business models where Amazon can become the largest bookseller without ever owning a bookstore or Apple

can become the largest music retailer without ever selling a CD. Industries such as property (Zoopla), recruitment (LinkedIn), travel (AirBNB/Uber), retail and finance are being transformed by new service delivery and operational models. Arguably the MOOC could have a similar impact on traditional university models.

Talent recruitment, development and retention

Talent recruitment and retention was seen by many as a major challenge. In part this reflects the rapidly changing nature of businesses including new products, new regulations and significant technology change. Many businesses referred to new digital channels requiring new skillsets, for example:

“There is a huge and growing need for new employees with digital skills from all backgrounds.”

“There is a particular shortage of talented and experienced tech savvy people.”

The business changes are creating skills gaps. As one learning director pointed out “you have two options with skills gaps – build or buy. First takes a long time, second is more expensive. You have to do a bit of both.” The skills gap is an issue for the wider economy not just individual businesses.

Many companies felt they were in a “battle for talent”. Those interviewed reported that talent retention is becoming harder due to competition for staff, which it was felt would increase due to a general skills gap.

Many people surveyed referenced difficulties in recruiting. “It is harder to attract talent. There is more movement now in the marketplace so more job opportunities.” One company said they focused more now on trying to recruit experienced people but:

“FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE REMAINS TOUGH – FROM GRADUATE ALL THE WAY UP.”

A number of companies referred to a move away from experience/skills based recruitment to behaviour towards an

aptitude recruitment strategy. In essence a “will not skill” approach. This has led to a need to define clear talent development paths and to upskill staff.

There appears to be a skills gap not simply in areas like digital skills but in management and customer service. Many companies see customer service as increasingly important. “Getting the customer service right gives businesses a competitive edge. However, it’s always a challenge to find the right people to deliver the customer experience at all levels”.

There were also a number of specific issues raised such as a growth in the employability skills required such as basic English, maths, digital skills and customer service. There was also a growth in demand for approved (or regulated) prior learning.

As a consequence of the above factors, talent retention is an ongoing challenge for many businesses. Many complained that once they have trained up staff, these staff become targets for poaching. In the research conducted for our Onboarding Guide, we highlight the link between staff retention, particularly in the first year, and the adequacy of onboarding programmes. Those that invest in onboarding, and do it well, to have been shown to retain more staff and reach competency faster. There’s also a greater focus on internal development and internal certification as a means to reinforce quality and help retention. McDonald’s report a fivefold increase in talent retention where staff have gone through their internal apprenticeship programme.

The changing nature of L&D

Business change and the role of L&D

As we have seen there are many significant changes taking place in businesses driven by new products, technology, competition or regulation. Common business drivers include:

- Reducing costs
- Adopting new technology service and operational models
- Improving customer service
- Meeting new regulations

Some interviewees argued that their role was not really L&D but Organisational Development.

“It’s not just about upskilling; it’s transforming the business through learning.”

There is also a dichotomy as whilst the importance of training is recognised there is a strong desire in many businesses to reduce the time spent learning.

The nature of learners and the role of L&D

The nature of learners is changing. For example:

- The digitisation of the business has “changed the ‘profile’ of our learners and the expectations of the L&D team”

- Staff are being expected to take more responsibility for their learning and their careers
- There is no longer an expectation that staff should know everything but rather they should be able to access the knowledge for themselves as they need it (so more just-in-time)

This changes the services that learning departments have to provide. For example, the move to more just-in-time learning changes the nature of the content L&D departments produce. The focus is less on the course and more on learning resources.

The learning services proposition also changes as it moves from a highly face-to-face model to a more digitised resources model.

It was argued by some that learning in the current environment has to be more practical and job focused. One manager argued the whole learning terminology needs to change from workshops and courses to “Prepare, Practise and Perform”.

In some areas such as product L&D managers said their strategy is to “get out of the way of the learner” and set up behaviours so that they “do it for themselves”. “When the competition is about the speed of product to market then we need to take the trainer out of the way.”

Engaging with learners about change has got more difficult according to some. "The space of time between major windows of change within the business is getting smaller all the time and there's an element of 'change fatigue' among the workforce."

Changing skills required by L&D teams

L&D teams are having to provide a wider and more complex range of learning services as a result of the changes highlighted above. The focus on more structured interventions such as courses is just one part of a much bigger L&D strategy.

This has an impact on the skillsets required by L&D teams. Traditional instructional design skills are not going away but there is an increase in consulting skills required. The learning team has to consult with the business on how to improve performance because it is "no longer about the learning team delivering improvements through training". One L&D manager argued "learning team members need to be able to talk more about 'learning strategies'."

The skillsets required within L&D are changing as learning becomes more integrated with the world of marketing and communications – knowledge management and communications are now key skills.

Whilst elearning courses have been developed for a while, they're often written by the same facilitators who would have delivered the face-to-face course, and "that group doesn't necessarily have the right

skills to design a digital offering and the language used is not right either." The use of learning technologies from interactive learning content to social learning requires different skillsets.

The increasing importance of curation skills was acknowledged by many interviewees and job adverts now include 'curation skills'.

Changing skillsets is a big challenge for L&D departments especially finding people who can consult and lead changes as one manager put it:

"I have money and vacancies. I want to find people who can manage change in businesses through OD – but I can't find them."

Tip:

L&D staff need the ability to present and communicate with individuals. They must be able to sell your vision



3

The L&D response

It's up to L&D to rise to these challenges and add value. Through our interviews, we identified 8 areas to focus on. If there's an ubertheme in here, it's blended learning that works. The phrase isn't new, but its potential is renewed through innovations in learning technology. New blends need to consider social, peer learning and gamification options, while never forgetting the basics to deliver an efficient and engaging experience.

Real learning that can be applied

One consistent theme that emerged this year was the need for learning to be applied, to make sure learning is clearly aligned with business needs and "to make a difference". A number of interviewees talked of learning being irrelevant if it doesn't improve business performance.

There was an increased focus on the need to design and deliver learning that can be applied in the workplace. One person talked of "improving the effectiveness of learning with a deeper knowledge transfer."

To do this a number of L&D departments are re-examining how they design learning. A number talked of learning that draws as much as possible on attendees experience and examples.

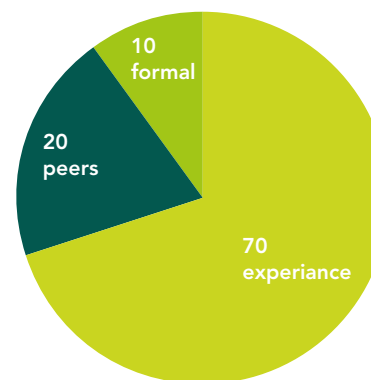
"We get people who are working directly at the coalface to fully take part in events and give their experience and insights."

To change behaviours it was felt by many that real scenarios and practice helps. This can include elearning if it's sufficiently experiential and scenario based. There was a real focus on "making learning relevant to the context of the learner". One common comment was that generic training doesn't really work because it loses context.

"People need to relate to training, to see themselves in it so that they will apply the learning."

There was a strong emphasis on making learning relevant to learners.

"70/20/10 – BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE"



"We must make the learning relevant to people and their roles otherwise they switch off/don't see it as important."

Involving learners in the design and making it relevant is all about getting people to buy-in and to really adopt the learning. Rather than telling people how to act it is about getting understanding around the need to change.

To improve performance, learning has to change behaviours in some form. This focus was very clear in one company which said "we instil in our trainees the need to be a change leader and that

this is what changes cultures. We use leadership models and psychology in helping people to understand that it is more than just training – it is a mindset."

The ability to deliver and apply learning in the workplace at the point of need was also seen as key. Context matters here, especially in leadership where it's very difficult to get managers to commit to time away from work. Leadership is situational and needs to be in the moment:

"The learning we design is more at the moment of need".

There is a new partnership model between L&D and operational managers emerging where L&D are becoming consultants to those that are driving performance, rather than coming in to deliver a course. This drives alignment with the business and helps L&D to have their "L'Oreal moment – because we're worth it."

Tips:

- To create applied learning "Walk in the shoes of your business people. Don't stay on the outside"
- "Track where employees fall on the performance spectrum and ensure that they are given the right support/training"
- "Understand the business needs and focus the training on those needs"
- "Get buy-in from the business groups for training programmes to be successful"

Blended learning grows up

Almost every person surveyed this year said that blended learning approaches work best. One L&D director summed it up as follows:

“The single modality learning approach is definitely going by the wayside. It just reflects changes in society and technology in general.”

There is a wide variety of blended approaches and perspectives, and these have evolved from 1.0 versions of linear programmes to more multi-channel, self-directed experiences.

“We have very different demographics, so catering to their different need is important.”

“As we hire more millennials we need different approaches; our more tenured employees prefer a classroom experience.”

“A blend works best when coaching is included. When you have the right person doing the coaching – it can really bring the training alive.”

“We leverage technology to make the training as engaging as possible.”

“Our blend has elearning, a 3 day course, and workplace assessment. Bringing these things together makes it successful.”

“Incorporating classroom and webinars in the blend works well.”

“WHAT WORKS BEST ARE BLENDED PROGRAMMES OF LEARNING.”



There was also a general consensus around blended learning designs and moving to a 70:20:10 model, with a greater focus on supporting informal learning. However, the move to 70:20:10 model has its challenges, for example:

1. It links learning closely to performance on the job. This requires managers with the ability to make these links and to support and drive this approach through the behaviours they adopt

with learners e.g. moving to more reflective practices on-job.

2. It requires the right infrastructure and knowledge/information in place so that people can be empowered to 'self-service'. At least one organisation felt their knowledge management wasn't up to speed to enable this to happen.

Impact on learning design

The core message this year was about focusing on learning that engages learners and that makes a difference. If you want learning to make a difference through behaviour change, you've got to first make an impact to get noticed. For example, in elearning people talked of moving away from page turning to engagement through applied scenarios that are real to learners. In classroom training people also talked of creating real scenarios and role plays to apply learning. There were also a number of themes that emerged around learning design including:

- Simple, focused messages
- Campaign approaches
- Piloting and flexibility
- Shorter interventions
- Peer learning
- Using technology in areas such as gamification and social learning

Come back to KISS

There was a concern that too much information is made available to learners. This combined with the amount of messaging people constantly get via different channels and devices can be confusing. Your messages will just get lost if they don't stand out. Go back to keeping it simple.

“Simplification seems to be a lost art. Fewer charts, words, shorter sentences and more disciplined comms is more impactful.”

Campaign approaches Somehow L&D also need to make their message heard above all the noise. Learning needs to take more of a marketing approach – selling learning to end users. ‘Campaigns’ has certainly entered the learning lexicon this year. A number of businesses are taking more of a campaign or change management approach. One L&D manager said it is no longer “one and done” but rather “building on key messages and taking people along through a communication strategy”.

Rather than trying to build a single course, campaigns involve engaging hearts and minds early on, so that when the change comes, hopefully they are a little more open to it. Taking a marketing-like approach, rather than leading with learning, it can then involve follow-up communications and success stories, and links to learning resources, tools, tips and other elements of the blend. The key is for campaigns to look good and feel good, and directly target the audience.

And of course, as every good marketer knows, you have to measure engagement with the campaign through metrics.

These are less about assessment and more around who's viewed content, who's shared it and so on. So it's another skillset to add to the new L&D professional – get smart around marketing and metrics.

CAMPAINS: PASS IT ON KEEP IT SHORT MAKE IT REAL

Tip:

- Encourage word of mouth sharing. One company had a campaign called 'Pass it on' to try and encourage more people to share and access learning – once you completed the learning you passed it on to four people who were then entered for a prize

Flexibility and piloting

There was a feeling that learning departments need to try different approaches but to do so quickly and at low cost.

"We need to be nimble and agile and focus on new ideas."

"We adopt a prototyping approach – we test out new design approaches very quickly so that we can get end user (industry feedback) and be as inclusive as possible re-shaping the future and about any changes to our services."

Shorter learning interventions

In line with a more campaign approach, L&D departments are responding to the desire in most businesses to reduce the time spent learning. This means prioritising and targeting learning to the places it's most needed.



"We made the information shorter, sharper and easier to access on a just-in-time basis."

There is a need for shorter interventions to be reusable in different contexts. However, there is a real skill required to design independent content elements that can work in multiple contexts. Quite recently there was a reusable learning objects movement that tried and failed.

L&D departments are responding with shorter, bite-size learning, which is frequently linked to supporting 70:20:10 approaches and a resources not courses approach.

"We provide a variety of resources that can be accessed just in time."

This approach is very much linked with providing learning that is practical and can be applied on the job to improve performance. Changes in job roles and the nature of jobs have also encouraged the use of shorter learning content.

"Lots of managers do job shares or work flexibly, and they spend a lot of time in meetings so they like short content."

There is evidence of demand for shorter learning interventions from learners including short animations and videos.

"The most popular digital learning content that we ever rolled out were the 'Skill Pills', which were short animation/ videos. These were quick, performance support aids – everything you need

to know about any given topic in two minutes."

In terms of learning design there was a growing view that elearning modules should be kept down to a maximum of 40 minutes, and that the role of learning professionals is to find quicker ways of getting content across, and of compressing learning time. If modules really need to be this long, we also need to find ways to filter by prior experience, role and location so that the experience is more personalised and efficient.

Tips:

- "Deliver the learning to reflect the culture of the organisation, or the culture that you want to achieve"
- "Keep it short, make it real and authentic as possible"
- "Where appropriate give choices. Allow people to opt out if they have prior knowledge or capability"

Peer learning

One of the ways learning departments are ensuring that learning is relevant and job focused is using peer learning. This means using peers in a number of ways from designing learning, to supporting learning and in coaching. In one example learners had three coaches – the facilitator of the programme, their own manager and a peer. It was felt that both the peer coach and the learner get a great deal of value from coaching and sharing experiences.

One company took a very systematic approach to peer coaching. They had all learners complete a questionnaire on various topics such as digital skills. Where learners scored highly in a topic area they were invited to be a mentor and coach to other learners. Those learners who received lower scores were paired up with a coach by location. Thus they had someone nearby who they could meet regularly for a coffee and share knowledge.

Overall peer-to-peer learning emerged as a distinct trend this year and it was felt that it was the best form of training in some areas. It also extended the reach and leverage of learning departments.

Tips:

- “Make learning content accessible, enjoyable, straightforward, and pragmatic”
- “Engage staff with energy and passion”

Application of learning technology

In some organisations learning technology is already used extensively. One L&D manager said “over 95% of our learning is already online. Not sure how much more we can put online. We only do classroom when there is a specific need for it.” However, we found an increasing adoption of learning technology and its application in new approaches such as gamification and social learning.

Advances in learning technology were

generally seen as positive as they offer opportunities to meet many of the challenges such as doing more with less, reaching remote workers, supporting change and tracking progress. They were not without challenges in terms of cost and understanding how best to apply the technology, but overall they were seen as positive.

Below are some of the comments about how technology is supporting learning departments:

- “Video conferencing makes a huge difference” – referring to both the reach and cost-effectiveness of the technology
- “iPads are saving us circa £36 per student on paper”
- “User generated content” – using staff to create learning resources such as “videoing themselves on how to tackle a customer objection” makes learning real and practical
- “Global portal delivers marketing collateral and point of need learning” – referring to online resources and just-in-time materials
- Social learning – “I find out more from Yammer than any other communication channel in our business”
- “One of the ways we reach partners and resellers is via mobile phones” – mobile learning is providing new opportunities to address remote challenges



- Game based designs – “we use games that generate leader boards covering areas such as handling customers appropriately and managing queues”
- Elearning – “employees want more elearning, because they can’t take time out to attend a classroom-based course”
- Mobile and tablet learning – to deliver learning at the point of need. “It is no good having to go to an office where a PC is located”
- Global roll-outs – learning technology was seen by many as essential in helping roll out learning globally

Last year we reported on how standard web technologies were being adopted by users often in advance of learning departments such as social networks and sharing of user generated content. This year we saw more examples of how learning departments are experimenting and deploying new technologies.

There were many good examples of applying technology to support learning including more examples this year of gamification, social learning and user generated content.

This year we also saw the launch of a MOOC business course by Marks & Spencer with Leeds University. The MOOC is a free course on business innovation, which uses case studies and video from the company and support from university academics. The MOOC has been developed using the UK-based FutureLearn platform, which was set up by the Open University. The British Council has also produced an English language teaching course, also on FutureLearn, and more than 100,000 students have signed up. It is still early days but we can expect to see more corporates develop massive open online courses. It has brand benefits in that it shares content beyond the organisation, and of course supports a skills agenda.

Social learning and user generated content

There were a number of powerful examples this year of using Yammer for social learning and support.

In one retail business Yammer was seen as a core part of the learning platform. “Stores have really embraced it – section managers love it, people get back much more quickly, e.g. ‘Anyone got a fault with a zip on this jacket?’ ‘Yes, this is how you fix it’. People share pics of how they’ve laid

out merchandise and ask for feedback, e.g. 'I just moved this to be beside shoes' etc. People respond much quicker on Yammer. No way you'd get that response on email." Yammer is also being used for communication and keeping staff updated as well as providing specific support. One manager commented "I find out more from Yammer than any other communication channel in our business".

The development of social learning is also closely allied to peer learning, where learners can provide support and guidance to each other. We saw many examples this year where learning departments are actively encouraging peer learning via social learning.

"We are very keen for people to share their own learnings with each other and we are giving people the tools to do this."

We also saw examples this year of users generating content to support the learning of others. It was felt that providing simple ways of capturing, uploading and sharing content was key to the success of user generated content. We came across a number of examples this year where companies were adopting platforms such as Fuse specifically for this purpose.

Anecdotally, there was a feeling social learning may work better at non-management levels. Senior staff and managers appear to fear that asking lots of questions on a social media platform is like admitting you don't know enough.

Gamification

In addition to social learning we also see a significant increase in the use of game based learning this year. For example:

"A great feature we use are 'gamification' techniques in our traditional training approaches."

"Across 16,000 trainees we design our course as a competition. A 'leader board' is used within the course."

"We use 'gamification' techniques at Leader level (company managers)."

"Gamification has gone from zero to massive in a few months. People are talking about it a lot."

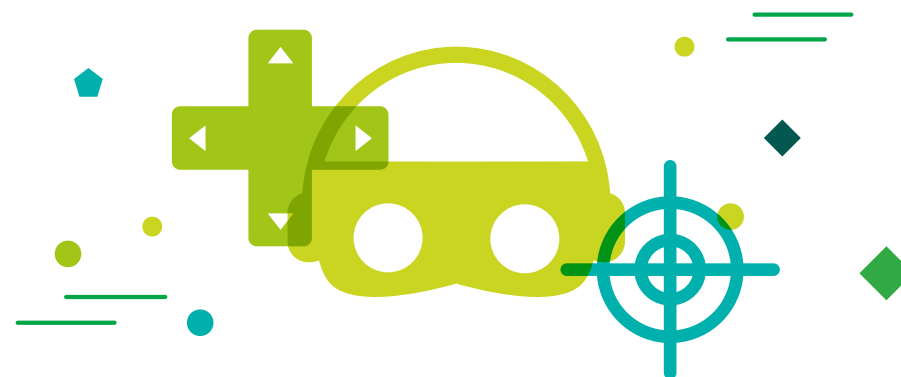
"Gamification is gaining a lot of ground in marketing."

"People want to be acknowledged and then rewarded like they hit a 'rush' in Candy Crush."

"Targets and competitions work well."

It was felt by many learning professionals that adding game based features to learning was making a real difference to engagement from simple scoring and leaderboards to levels and rewards. One manager commented "there is a real opportunity for training to be entertaining, to cut through and be remembered."

In areas such as compliance elearning we saw many examples of games-based



elements to make the learning more engaging. In one case, every time the learner completed something, they saw an animation of themselves jumping out of a plane, which proved remarkably popular.

Concerns about technology and the proliferation of technology channels

Whilst technology was generally seen as positive there were concerns. One key risk identified was simply the amount of messaging people constantly get via different channels and devices. "There is a real challenge to cut through the 20,000+ messages individuals are receiving every day in and out of the workplace."

Some learning managers had concerns about the potential noise and confusion from multi-channel approaches and the volume of communication and learning opportunities. "The fragmentation of messaging with so many programmes

and comms means learning is being devalued by not allowing for learners to focus and understand messaging." On face value, this runs counter to the 'resources not courses' argument. For some organisations, having a single version of the truth is preferable to a wider range of alternative messages in different channels. This is especially true for compliance and technical content.

Many learning strategies reinforced the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own development. This was supported by a survey by one business that found "over 60% of staff said that they would learn at home on their own devices." Whilst broadly positive there are concerns that "over personalisation and customisation is leading to message fragmentation and not everyone pointing in the same direction".



The move to more mobile forms of delivery, with shorter resources and performance support was also broadly welcomed but there were some reservations, for example:

“The problem with mobile learning is that training is not given quality time and focus, if done on the move in short breaks.”

“Not sure though that making the content more widely accessible on the move on mobiles is better in terms of embedding the learning.”

“There’s a risk that key messages are not retained as well as should have been and to impact on behaviour needs lots of practice and/or role plays.”

Interestingly some businesses actually felt the use of social learning was ‘slacking off’. “It could be that there are so many

different online comms tools around (Yammer, Google Circles etc.) that users are feeling a bit fatigued by it all or just not clear about the purpose of the different tools.”

Assessment

We took a more detailed look at assessment this year as many companies were reporting that they had to prove the value of learning. For some, assessment is still a low level exercise such as a 10 question quiz or a self-attestation where a learner needs to tick a box to confirm that they’ve read something. However, we found many that were keen to thoroughly assess learning and to prove its value through:

- Pre-assessments and diagnostics
- More rigorous assessments

- Scenario based assessments
- Post learning reviews
- Qualifications and certification

Pre-assessments

We’ve seen increased use of confidence checkers combined with rigorous pre-assessment to enable people’s prior knowledge and ability to count. This is particularly important with compliance elearning, which needs to be regularly retaken, so efficiency and focus is good for the learner and for the time saving organisation.

Diagnostics are used to test what learning needs to be undertaken and to avoid learners having to go through material they already know. Diagnostics are also used to improve the learning. For example, online tracking can highlight common areas that people don’t understand and identify areas for learning to focus on. In other cases, the technology supports learners where they score low on an assessment or diagnostic and allows them to flip immediately to elearning on a particular subject where they have scored low.

More rigorous assessments

In the US in particular, there is increased scrutiny by regulators of the quality and rigour of the assessment and overall learning experience. Just having elearning is not enough: effectiveness counts and it’s not sufficient to provide a

tick box exercise. “If the training is weak, so will your defence be in a lawsuit. If the employee wasn’t trained effectively, it’s the firm’s responsibility.”

Scenario based assessments

“We are increasingly looking at scenario-based assessments. We are focusing on the need to apply the knowledge in this way rather than just fact-based.”

Post learning reviews

One company was using post-learning assessments and reviews rather than built-in assessments to help achieve behavioural change and application in the workplace. They ask each learner “What will you commit to do differently because of the training?” They also get learners to work closely with managers to agree a plan of action and to demonstrate that they are applying training. This approach was used rather than a traditional LMS online quiz assessment as it was felt this would be more of a tick-box exercise whereas they wanted learners to focus on applying their knowledge and skills.

One company had a “cultural adoption approach” following learning interventions where they measure:

- Learners understanding of knowledge and concepts
- How well the learning was being applied (they ask them to specifically identify examples)
- The ROI of the learning

Qualifications and certification

Demonstrating competence through qualifications and certifications is an important part of the learning process in many businesses.

“You cannot underestimate the value that bringing in qualifications brings. There are many spin-offs in terms of learning benefits and the motivation it gives to staff.”

“Offering qualifications provides a sense of achievement.”

“We celebrate success through a graduation dinner and ceremony. At this dinner industry leaders attend to congratulate the graduates.”

“Qualifications have helped us create a reflective culture because our own staff are also the job-based Assessors. Thus they need to collect evidence and talk more about performance with the staff member who is undertaking the assessment.”

Some felt that introducing qualifications can be daunting for many businesses due to the level of bureaucracy it can entail. However, you can start off simple and quickly learn the admin side of things. Many companies in the UK had designed their own qualifications for different job roles and for managers.





The big 5 in focus

We have set out below how the context and design approaches are being reflected in real examples in the 'big five' areas where most L&D spend goes:

- Onboarding
- Compliance
- Leadership
- Sales/Product training
- Customer Service

For each of these, let's look at what's changing, and what's working to create blends for results.

Onboarding

Many people highlighted the challenges of a creating a consistent and centralised onboarding process in large companies that are often global and multi-cultural. The balance of global consistency and local relevance is a big challenge for onboarding.

"We onboard a large diversity of people in terms of experience and it's ongoing in 80 geographies. The volume and

making sure that people actually get relevant onboarding is a big challenge – something we are working hard to address."

People want to provide a consistent 'welcome' experience but in reality it is variable. Even within an organisation with a well planned process some staff follow the timetable and process, whereas with others, it is months before staff get everything.

This year it was noted that people are increasingly working remotely which also creates challenges. "How do you make them feel 'welcome'?" Many companies were still trying to figure out the most appropriate ways to do this. The strong advice from L&D professionals was to try to keep onboarding simple – focus on building empathy and a warm welcome, not asking people to 'drink from the firehose' and drown in too much information.

"People don't want too much detailed stuff to begin with – it is too overwhelming. Their induction journey goes on for about 6 months not just first couple of weeks."

Yet there can still be a trend for information overload and overly condensed onboarding programmes.

It was felt important to set expectations and appropriate goals. For example:

"Here is what typically needs to be done in the first 7 days, first couple weeks, first 6 weeks... Talking them through the job description."

"It is also very important to set out during the onboarding process what good performance will look like."

Since there's high scrutiny around investments for learning, structure and scheduling of onboarding blends count more than ever. Onboarding can, of course, start before someone starts their first day, to prep them and welcome them:

"A week before they arrived, as soon as they hit their desk – videos from each of the senior leaders, events, meetings."

And as a hiring tool, some organisations use onboarding elements such as 'Days in the life of employees', welcome videos, company history tours, and career maps to attract in the right talent and cultural fit in the first place. But it's not just about starting it early, and spreading it thinly over weeks or months. Quality and blend count for a lot in onboarding. There is evidence that good onboarding brings high returns to businesses: in staff retention, speed to competency, and performance. One company with an extensive well planned process, including materials sent before arrival through to videos from senior managers once they hit their desk, tracked feedback from the onboarding process including meetings with managers. They commented:

"The feedback we have chronicled is that it is the best experience we have ever come through. The feedback has been phenomenal."

"PEOPLE DON'T WANT TOO MUCH DETAILED STUFF TO BEGIN WITH – IT IS TOO OVERWHELMING. THEIR INDUCTION JOURNEY GOES ON FOR ABOUT 6 MONTHS NOT JUST FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS."

"Although it is "too soon to tell if we have retained people because of it."

Our research highlights that whilst elearning, portals, videos and other technological devices aid new starters and help with consistency, the role of people (managers, buddies, mentors) and tactics like jobshadowing, story-sharing and group-learning can make a big difference to new starters' sense of connection with the company and chances of making the most of their new job. Conversation and being able to ask questions – on or off line – should not be forgotten or underrated.

Tips:

Some of the tips that L&D managers were keen to share included:

- Keep it simple – don't overload
- Balance local and central content
- Balance different channels and types – blend is key
- Set clear expectations including performance expectations
- Start as early as possible – before day 1 ideally



"PEOPLE DON'T WANT TOO MUCH DETAILED STUFF TO BEGIN WITH – IT IS TOO OVERWHELMING. THEIR INDUCTION JOURNEY GOES ON FOR ABOUT 6 MONTHS NOT JUST FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS."

Compliance

Compliance was listed as a key driver and critical issue for over half of the businesses interviewed. Many businesses have an annual compliance programme for staff across senior roles and junior roles.

Compliance training has a reputation for being dull and difficult to make engaging. Some companies are concerned that their compliance training has a very low reputation. This is particularly the case with generic off the shelf courses. Which, when combined with the fact that staff have to do the training to satisfy the regulatory requirements, brings down the overall perceptions of compliance training.

This can lead to low completion rates. One company reported only 60% completion rates in the UK compared to 100% completion in the US. They put this down to differences in culture.

"In the UK there's previously been no follow up to poor completion rates. So a big change in culture is required with clear consequences if training is not completed."

One company gave an example of their escalation route for staff that failed to do compliance training namely an email follow up, a warning, call from Director, followed by a disciplinary process. Making training mandatory and with strong follow up does generally ensure that compliance training is done but there

are concerns about how well it is retained and how effective it is. Fundamentally "compliance training is still seen as a task rather than a learning opportunity."

Some other compliance training challenges identified included:

- Updating compliance training as things change
- Tailoring for the appropriate markets
- Personalisation, taking role, level and prior knowledge into account
- Translation of compliance content
- Consistency of training
- Tracking of training
- No centralised training programmes

As a consequence people are reviewing how they deliver compliance training.

"We want to place a lot less emphasis going forward on the facts and more about common sense scenarios. We want to move away from thinking about being compliant and more about assessing the risk – so being risk savvy."

As with other training there was a strong feeling that compliance training has to be contextualised and that generic training works less well.

“Compliance training is more effective when it’s make personal e.g. personal cases of personal fi nes for being anti competitive.”

One company aims to reinforce and make stronger some of the emotional connections – basically the ‘why’ we do things this way, so staff understand why it is we do this – to keep them safe, etc

What is working best for one company is short learning interventions regularly reinforced:

“Making learning available in short, sharp, crisp learning bites, which are simple. This we have found is the best way to do this. The executive team have fed back that staff seem to understand the principles of compliance more now than ever before.”

“We rolled out 6 new compliance modules, and the challenge was to get everyone to complete them. We got the learning right – short punchy modules which got good feedback and high completion rates.”

There was a move away from covering everything in compliance training and being too comprehensive.

“People have common sense and have the skills to look things up. They don’t need to know every single detail – in fact we should question what it is they really do need to ‘know’ and what ‘skills’ they need to do their job.”

This resonated with other moves to provide more resources rather than

comprehensive courses. Overall we were pleased to see companies trying a range of different tools and techniques to improve compliance training including mobile assessments, testing through scenario based testing, more audio and video, gamifi cation of assessments and delivery in smaller, performance focused resources.

Refresher compliance training was identified as a particular challenge:

“How do you engage people 2nd, 3rd, 4th time?”

It is important to think beyond this year’s training to what you are going to do in a year. How will refresher training work and how are you going to deliver the refresher training?

Everyone is keen to get faster completion of compliance training and to reduce the time taken. One manager argued it is important to “establish a routine or rhythm so it becomes second nature. This makes it easier and easier each year.”

Tips:

The tips that L&D managers wanted to share included:

- Shorter resources – don’t default to courses
- Think about the shelf life – make it easy to refresh
- Create context – use real examples and scenarios

- Make it two way – provide channels for debate and discussion
- Design for engagement using games and scenarios

Leadership

There was a lot of discussion around leadership training this year and a ‘leadership skills gap’. There was a consistent message about a shortage in leaders coming through and it was felt a shift in approach to management training was required.

Many managers reported a disconnect between understanding of the importance of leadership training at the senior level but a reluctance to do

more in this area. Despite a very strong link to delivery and culture it was felt management and leadership training was not prioritised.

In many ways senior leadership behaviour can be the hardest to change. Addressing this challenge through training can be hard as they are often the fi rst to drop off courses or not see the value of training. L&D managers reported consistently that senior leaders are the hardest to be released from day-to-day activities for training.

“There is a ‘Do as I say not what I do’ culture – and this is the challenge in the senior space.”

“HOW DO YOU ENGAGE PEOPLE 2ND, 3RD, 4TH TIME?...MAKING (COMPLIANCE) LEARNING AVAILABLE IN SHORT, SHARP, CRISP LEARNING BITES, WHICH ARE SIMPLE.”

Compliance: blended learning that works
Three elements for effective blend design

kineo
A City & Guilds Group Business

Key challenges in leadership training in addition to engaging senior leaders were identified as follows:

- Behavioural change. “How do you monitor that to make sure they are going to perform the way you expect them to when they are not in the building?”
- Transfer of learning into the workplace
- Accessing remote managers
- Supporting managers that manage virtual teams
- A need for more commercial skills. “The biggest gaps are on business acumen at all levels”
- Managers need time management skills not only managing their own time but also their team’s

“OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS GETTING NEW MANAGERS ON TO THE INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME WITHIN THEIR FIRST 90 DAYS OF JOINING. THE PROGRAMME IS REALLY GOOD. SO IT’S MAKING SURE WE GET THEM ON THE PROGRAMME.”



Leadership approaches – what works in leadership?

One company reported they had changed the focus of recruitment and were now measuring more formally the potential of interviewees. In many ways this was just seen as the start of the challenge.

“How do you grow people and engage them to be future leaders?”

One consistent message was the need to get senior leaders engaged and leading by example. It was felt that ‘visible leadership’ was critical.

“Get that right and transformation of learning will happen.”

One clear focus was on getting senior leaders to share their learning stories and how they are developing themselves and changing their behaviour.

The interviews highlighted divergent approaches to leadership training. One company talked of moving away from traditional content suppliers to more academic approaches as part of a desire to establish the credibility of their leadership programmes. By contrast others talked of a more practical ‘learning by doing’ approach.

For areas such as team leader development one company got participants to take responsibility to deliver learning. A facilitator delivered the first couple of modules but more experienced participants then took responsibility for developing and delivering additional modules. It was felt this worked well and gave the training a very practical focus.

Leadership training was one area where informal learning supported by coaching and mentoring worked well and ensured practical application back in the workplace. There was a strong focus in a number of companies on embedding behaviour through capabilities, values and behaviour based training.

Other companies created a centrally driven programme aimed to create consistency both of the message and the experience. It was felt this worked well but required a large investment to achieve the goals

Tips:

The tips L&D managers were keen to share around leadership training included:

- Get executive sponsorship. “The philosophy comes from the CEO – they demonstrate this in what they do (values based culture)”
- Get senior leaders engaged and leading by example visibly – “Get that right and transformation of learning will happen”
- Focus on transfer of learning into the workplace – “How do you monitor to make sure they are going to perform the way you expect them to?” This includes going to where people will find and make use of content
- Focus on learning by doing – get the participants involved in real scenarios and get them to deliver modules to each other
- Focus on commercial skills “The biggest gaps are on business acumen at all levels”
- Managers need time management skills not only managing themselves but also their team
- Get senior leaders sharing their learning stories and how they are developing themselves

Sales/product training

The pace of product change in some industries is very fast. In one telecoms area it was reported that three new products are released every single week.

“This means that development timescales for creating product training are extremely challenging.”

Keeping up to date with all the new products and solutions in these circumstances is a major challenge. Very often the training is being developed alongside the product development. In order to keep pace one company argued it was easier to keep development of the elearning in-house. In their experience it was quicker and more flexible to develop in-house than to use elearning vendors.

These demands on product training have seen a shift away from elearning in some areas. Many are using product information on internal sites to brief staff rather than designing elearning.

“The volatility of the product sets and information means that this has been moved to our Intranet.”

Technology has helped significantly with product training and videos in particular. It was felt videos are quick to produce and engaging. There was more evidence of self authored, short videos by staff, which were shared and viewed by teams. Whilst production values were sometimes lower it was felt the learning was very real and authentic.

It was reported that many younger sales staff want more games-based learning. Elements such as leaderboards and rewards were reported to work well.

“DIFFERENTIATION WON'T BE WITH PRODUCT OR SERVICES, BUT WITH COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER CARE.”

Product training accessed by sales staff tends to be mobile. Mobile was seen as a key solution for many companies from self-help guides available via mobile to short video clips and product briefings. Many companies also provided product training via webinars led by sales leaders. Multi-device solutions are needed to reach salespeople wherever they are:

“How can you make this content accessible to people who are on the road or standing in a store all day? Their role means that they are not sitting at a desk.”

As with compliance training there is a shift to 'need to know' training rather than providing comprehensive training on all features.

“For product training we need to start asking what is it that people really need to know. We need to focus on behaviours – ask the questions about what they need

from the point of view of 'recall, commit to memory and application'.”

“In a time poor environment we need to be smarter – so we are honing in on what the experience really needs to be for our learners.”

Companies are feeling the challenge of creating the right content, the challenge of getting it to the right people and the challenge of making sure learners are using the learning and are competent.

The core advice on product knowledge was to keep training short and to the point – it's more disposable than other types. There are three parts to product knowledge training:

1. Basic awareness and information
2. Getting the sales person motivated and able to sell it
3. Additional more complex how-to guides and further product details

One L&D manager argued you need to integrate the sales process alongside the product knowledge rather than separating the two out.

“As people are learning about a product you also need to get them to think about how they are going to sell it.”

L&D managers were at pains to point out that you need to follow up with managers to make sure that sales people are correctly applying the learning and that it is making a difference.

Tips:

The tips L&D managers were keen to share for sales and product knowledge included:

- Stay focused – What is it that people really need to know? Focus on behaviours and how they are applied
- Encourage sales to produce user generated content including self authored videos
- Use product information to brief staff rather than designing learning where timetables are tight
- Games-based learning works well for sales staff to build core skills
- Make sure it is mobile accessible – “these people are not sitting at a desk”
- Keep learning interventions short in a time poor environment. “Keep it short and to the point”
- Integrate the sales process alongside the product knowledge rather than separating the two out. “So as people are learning about a product you also get them to think about how they are going to sell it”



Customer service

As highlighted above companies are trying to create differentiation through customer service. Customer service was seen as a key business driver and a source of potential competitive advantage if it's demonstrably better than others. Consistency was seen as the key to customer service:

"The challenge is getting a consistent level of customer service in stores and call centres."

"People want the same experience globally in their stores."

"We need to create a consistently great customer experience." "It's the holy grail. They have to get it right every time."

This consistency challenge applied not just inside organisations but also with extended product teams and resellers.

"A big challenge is that a lot of these people are franchises."

It was felt L&D are responsible for designing, developing and delivering the right training but that support by the manager was critical to embed the right behaviours, as customer service is always in the moment.

"The manager has to provide ongoing support and coaching around the training messages."

The move to more digital channels and ways of delivery was seen as a significant challenge for many businesses.

"There is a huge change in culture taking place. We are using digital channels to interact with our customers to provide a better service."

"To help our customers with this change we need to train our employees to help our customers with these new channels."

Tips:

The tips that L&D managers were keen to share included:

- Make sure managers are involved. The manager has to provide ongoing support and coaching around the training messages
- Train both staff and customers on new digital channels
- Keep up the pace – little and often reminders of good practice and stories of great service are better than lengthy courses



Your 2015 checklist

Now what? To help you bring good practices from this report into your business, here are seven habits of highly effective L&D professionals that we think you should cultivate in 2015

1 BE A CONSULTANT, THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN ON THE LIST

but if you're going to create learning that's aligned and applied to performance challenges, you've got to be really close to the beating heart of your business. Sniff the wind, know what's causing the pains for your internal stakeholders, and come up with the solution.



2 BE A MARKETER IF YOU'RE GOING TO STAND OUT

in noisy communication channels. Look at how multi-channel advertising campaigns work. Concepts like retargeting and social signals – these should become part of the new professionals' extended vocabulary.



3 CUT THE FAT

"I wish that compliance course was 20 minutes longer" said no one, ever. Set a goal to lose 20% of your content weight next year. Can't do it? Get an editor.



4 DESIGN FOR YOUR EXTENDED TEAM

Virtual and remote working is the new normal. Make sure you're considering these audiences fully in how and where you place learning and communications



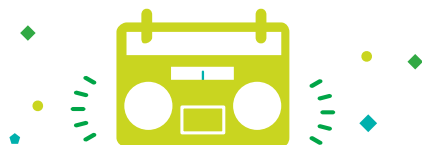
5 POWER UP YOUR PEEPS

You have an army of coaches waiting to be awakened. Create an environment that supports peer learning. Equip people with tools to support and share with each other – Yammer costs nothing to try.



6 ... BUT WATCH THE SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO:

More channels and more resources means more noise. It can be hard to hear best stories if there's too much interference. Learn how to curate and use tools (like RSS feeds) to help.



7 MEASURE UP: SET KPI'S FOR TRAINING

ROI does not matter. Don't wait for anyone else else to define your L'Oreal moment. Prove you are worth it by investing in measurement. Yes, it takes time. But it matters. Work backwards from the change the business wants to see and find the metrics you can influence. It should define everything you do. If you can't measure the change, why do it?



Thank you

During our research for this report we spoke to a number of companies, those who were happy for us to include their names here included:

- Unilever
- ASB Bank
- Philips
- Mondelez
- Pizza Express
- Serco
- Vodafone
- KPMG
- KFC
- AXA
- TUI
- UK Ministry of Defence
- Barclays
- Tesco
- Xerox
- Capita
- McDonald's
- Prudential
- AbbVie
- BNZ Bank
- Virtual College
- Xero
- B&Q
- NZ Post
- SiteSafe

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