4th Annual

2020 Workplace Learning Report

L&D in a new decade:
taking the strategic long view

Linked in Learning

Contents

Introduction

We asked L&D pros, people managers, and learners globally about their priorities, challenges, and what really inspires them to learn. What we found may surprise you.

After years of being under-resourced, L&D budgets are expected to continue to grow—shifting from Instructor-Led Training (ILT) to online learning—and executive buy-in continues to build.

Because of these factors, L&D pros are newly positioned as critical strategic business partners —key to growth and innovation. As we enter 2020, talent developers are focused on finding innovative ways to drive engagement, activate managers, and measure the business impact of learning. Simultaneously, they are looking ahead, preparing for the upskilling and reskilling revolution coming in the next 3-5 years, when digital transformation and automation are expected to have a greater impact on the workforce globally.

One thing is for sure—the stakes have never been higher for getting it right.

In this report, we will explore the answers to four questions:

How are learning leaders resourced to scale learning and engage executives to create a culture of learning?

How do L&D pros measure the impact of learning and define learner engagement?

What can talent developers do to transform managers into learning champions?

How are your peers upskilling and reskilling employees to prepare for what's ahead?

You'll also hear from learning leaders from Kraft-Heinz, Verizon, MGM Resorts International, Kellogg's, LinkedIn, and Novartis, about how they are harnessing these trends to drive engagement today and develop the skills needed for tomorrow.

# L&D continues to garner both budget and buy-in

L&D budgets continue to grow and shift to online learning

It wasn't that long ago when the L&D department's sole focus was compliance training. It is an incredibly important and necessary box to check. But over the last decade, the L&D discipline has become so much more. A leadership and management development engine. An onboarding pro. A master of Instructor-Led Training (ILT). An expert in scaling learning across the organization by offering online learning programs. Most importantly, it has become a growth engine for career trajectories and meaningful business impact.

Senior leaders understand the value that L&D delivers to their organizations. That's why the constant struggle for budget and resources has diminished over the last few years. In fact, in the LinkedIn Learning 2019 Workplace Learning Report, only 27% of L&D pros cited budget constraints as a top concern, down from 49% in 2017.

This year's findings bring more good news about learning budgets. Consistent with previous years, L&D budgets and online learning investments are on the rise. More than a third of L&D pros globally are expecting their budgets to grow year over year (and it's much higher in India); 57% of talent developers plan to spend more on their online learning programs; and 38% expect to spend less on ILT.
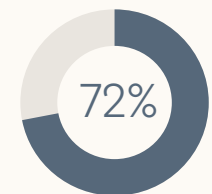
% of L&D pros who expect their budget to grow

2018	2019	2020
35%	43%	37%
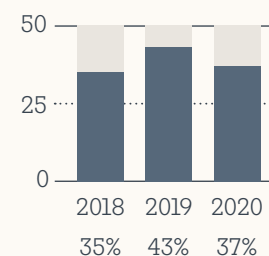
% of L&D pros who expect to spend more on online learning globally

57%
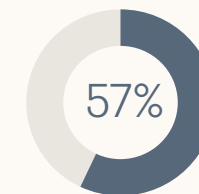
% of L&D pros in **India** who expect to spend more...

72%

Budgets continue to shift from ILT to online learning in 2020, helping L&D scale learning globally

⬇ ILT budgets decreasing	⬆ Online learning budgets increasing
38% Spend less 27% Spend the same 21% Spend more	9% Spend less 18% Spend the same 57% Spend more

L&D pros spend most of their time building and sourcing content

Some say that the way we spend our time defines who we are. The same is true for talent developers. Based on survey results, they wear many hats with building and sourcing content being the biggest percentage of their time. The rest of their activities are a mix of both strategic and tactical activities—from creating learning content to working with managers and executives. By having large libraries of content to help quickly curate and personalize learning recommendations, we expect that the time spent building and sourcing content will go down over time.

% of time that L&D pros report they…

- 29% Building or sourcing learning programs and content
- 17% Building and delivering compliance training
- 16% Promoting learning programs to employees
- 15% Identifying skills gaps
- 15% Spending time with managers to identify learning needs
- 10% Championing learning programs to executives

We know that blended learning, or a mix of in-person and online learning, is foundational to many learning programs. That's why we asked L&D pros how much of their time is spent managing their online learning solutions and in-person training. Based on data we've gathered over the last three years, we found that talent developers are spending more time on online learning and less on instructor-led training initiatives, indicating that online learning is playing a bigger part in blended learning programs.

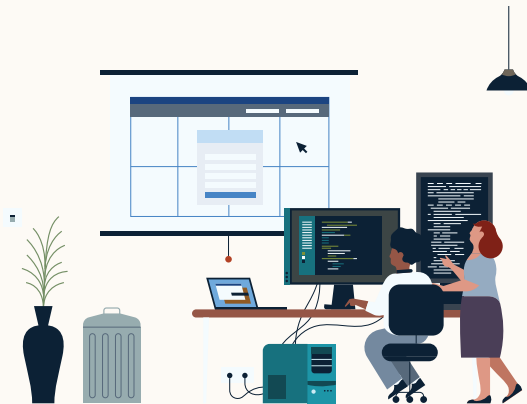57% of L&D pros report that they spend more time with online learning than they did three years ago.
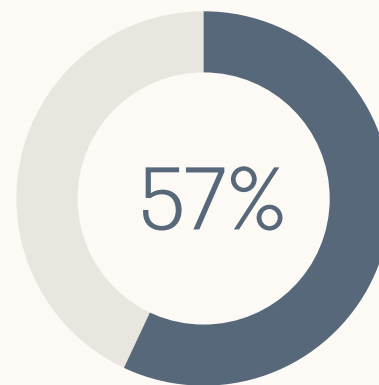
37% of L&D pros spend less time with instructor-led training than they did three years ago.

57%

37%
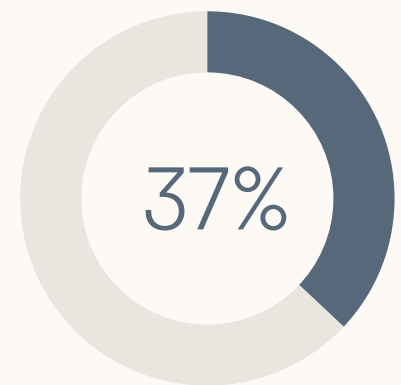
L&D has executive buy-in, but championship is the next big opportunity

According to the [2019 PWC CEO Survey](#), "79% percent of CEOs world-wide are concerned that a lack of essential skills in their workforce is threatening the future growth of their organization. This compares to just 63% in 2014—confirming that concern over skills has risen in line with the advent of new technologies over the past five years."

Our research is consistent with those findings. 83% of L&D pros said that executive buy-in is not a challenge. Yet, it's one thing to buy into a strategy and quite another to champion it across the organization. Here's where the opportunity lays. Only 27% of L&D pros report that their CEOs are active champions of learning, even though CEOs spend 20% more time learning soft skills than their employees.

Percentage of L&D pros said that executive buy-in is not a challenge — **83%**

Percentage of L&D who use executives to encourage learning — **55%**

Percentage of learners whose executive team encouraged them to learn — **34%**

Percentage of L&D pros who report that their CEO's are actively championing learning — **27%**

Percentage of time that C-level executives spend learning soft skills — **20%***

Percentage of L&D who use executives to encourage learning — **17%**

*more than the average learner according to Linkedin Learning data

How to get your executives involved in learning? Encourage them to teach a course

Create and curate executive content

If your CEO taught a course on leadership, then your employees would be inspired to take that course because of two words: proximity and relevancy. Because your CEO is both known to every employee and learning more about his leadership advice is highly relevant for career advancement. It's also a great tactic to get your executives more engaged in actively championing learning.

Communicating to drive action

LinkedIn Learning Course

If you're having a challenging time encouraging your executives to create learning content, then it may be time to bone up on your persuasion skills. Alexia Vernon helps you develop the mindset and skills needed to see results.
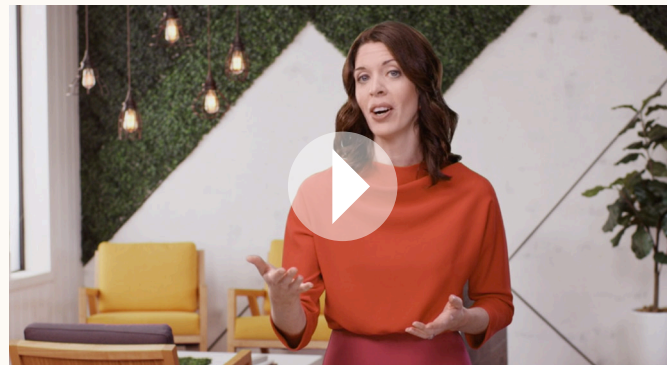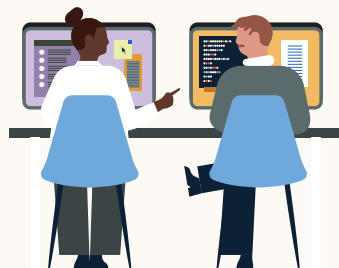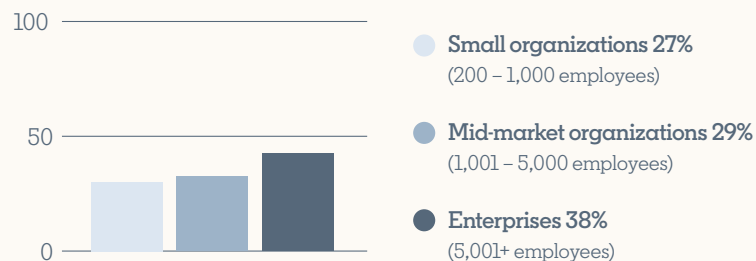

Watch course >

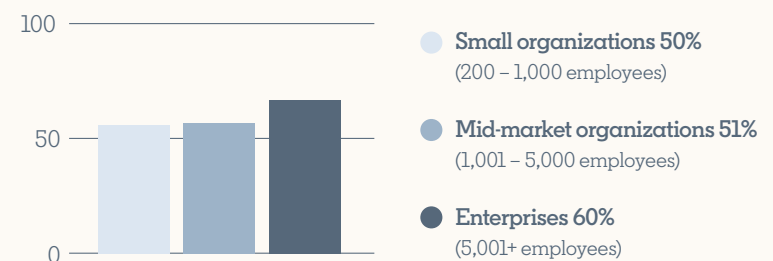# Executives in large companies are leading the way

Given that enterprises are generally more impacted by global economic shifts, digital transformation, and automation, it makes sense that executives at these larger companies understand and value the impact of learning. And, L&D leaders are leveraging these decision makers to champion learning in new and exciting ways. These executives in particular believe that closing skills gaps is an urgent business priority. Although the numbers are not as big, it's encouraging that companies of all sizes are leveraging their executives to cultivate a culture of learning.

Percentage of L&D professionals who stated that their executives believe that closing skills gaps is an urgent business priority

Small organizations 27%
(200 – 1,000 employees)

Mid-market organizations 29%
(1,001 – 5,000 employees)
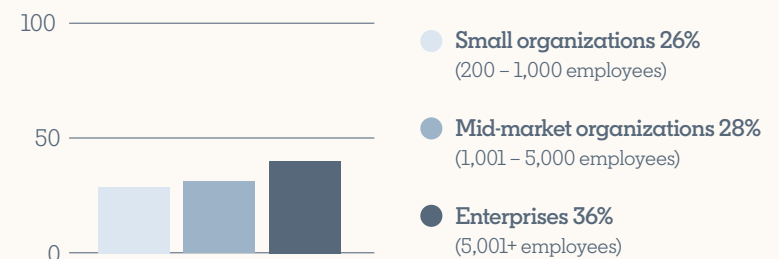
Enterprises 38%
(5,001+ employees)

L&D professionals at enterprise companies understand the power of the C-suite. Still, the numbers are much lower than expected, given the urgent need to upskill and reskill their workforce.

Percentage of L&D professionals who leverage executives to champion learning

Small organizations 50%
(200 – 1,000 employees)

Mid-market organizations 51%
(1,001 – 5,000 employees)

Enterprises 60%
(5,001+ employees)

To encourage learning across the organization, senior executives in enterprise companies are more likely to create mandatory learning.

Percentage of L&D professionals who create corporate initiatives or executive mandates for employees to learn

Small organizations 26%
(200 – 1,000 employees)

Mid-market organizations 28%
(1,001 – 5,000 employees)

Enterprises 36%
(5,001+ employees)

3 takeaways from the "LinkedIn Learning Challenge"

At LinkedIn, our L&D team likes to dream big and try out new ideas to drive learner engagement. Last year, we hosted a LinkedIn Learning Challenge, a week-long, company-wide competition where each executive's organization competed to be the team who learned the most.

Here's what we learned:

1. Build your internal marketing campaign around a big prize.
It's important to have a visible prize that is truly a showstopper—in our case, it was a giant, gleaming silver trophy that we could center our marketing campaign around. Our campaign included digital signage, videos of executives encouraging learning on their teams, and a video of the cup around our California campus that went viral.

2. Executive championship effectively drove engagement.
Guess what inspired employees to spend more time learning? Executives recommending specific online courses. For example, our CEO Jeff Weiner recommended leadership courses—including one of his own.

3. Use data to encourage a friendly competition.
During the competition, everyone wanted to know how their team was performing and whether they were inching closer to the top spot on the leaderboard. This led to teams at all levels having higher overall engagement.

The LinkedIn Learning Challenge: By the Numbers

(Compared to 2018 LinkedIn Learning Challenge Week)

We doubled each employees' learning goal—from 15 minutes to 30 minutes—and blew last year's numbers out of the water. Our Global Talent Organization took home the victory this year with an incredible 76% engagement across the department. We also saw most of our departments' engagement increase, with the top three all achieving over 50% engagement—a new record.

44%	more engaged learners
53%	more hours viewed
50%	more courses viewed
365%	more custom content viewed

LinkedIn

KEVIN DELANEY
VP of Learning & Development
LinkedIn

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"When it comes to activating executives, my approach is that I don't treat them like executives. I ask them what they are learning and to share their excitement about what they have learned with the organization. That energy is what creates buzz and inspires people to learn."

"We know that activating executives is a proven and powerful way to drive higher learner engagement. For example, in the LinkedIn Learning Challenge, the courses taught by our executives were the most watched in the library, hands down."

KEVIN DELANEY

VP of Learning & Development

Industry standards for measuring impact and engagement have yet to emerge

Top strategic areas of focus in different countries

When we asked L&D professionals globally what their most important area of strategic focus was for 2020, evaluating the effectiveness of learning programs topped the list. This is an interesting shift, given that the top strategic focus area of 2019 was to identify and assess skills gaps (which fell to the fourth spot t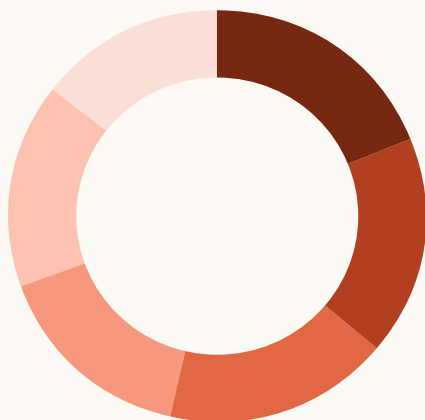his year.) Given that the top six focus areas had a distribution of only 10 percentage points, it means that talent developers have a lot of priorities that are both urgent and important.

Strategic areas of focus differ slightly based on region and country—from increasing engagement in the United States to enabling self-directed learning in Germany, India, and Australia.

Top strategic areas of focus globally:

% of L&D pros who identified their top 3 strategic priorities

- 38% Evaluating the impact of learning
- 35% Increasing learner engagement
- 35% Enabling self-directed learning with online learning solutions
- 32% Tracking skills gaps and development
- 32% Activating managers to encourage employees to make time for learning
- 29% Integrating learning into other talent programs

Top strategic areas of focus in different countries:

Canada: Evaluating the impact of learning

UK: Identifying, tracking, and closing skills gaps

US: Increasing learner engagement

Germany, India, and Australia: Enabling self-directed learning with online learning solutions
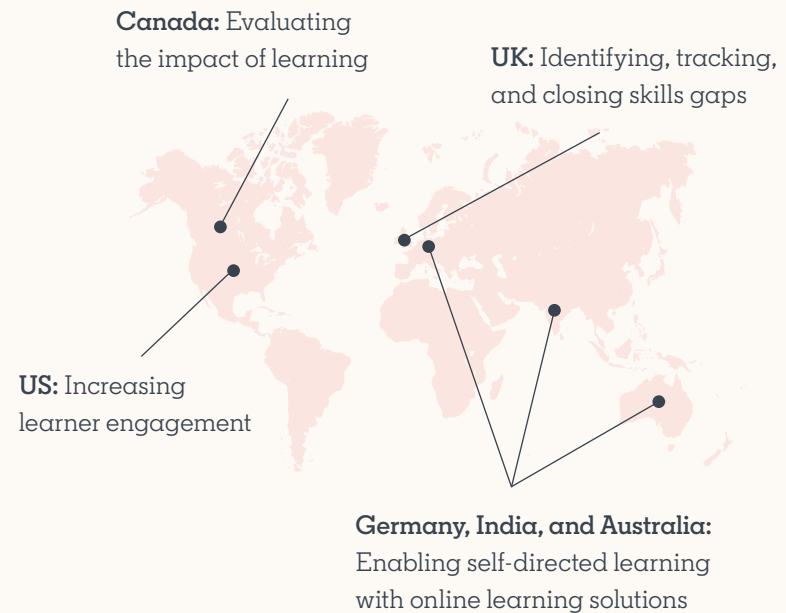
The myriad ways to measure the impact of learning

While the top strategic focus area for L&D this year is to measure the impact of learning, the survey data indicates that there isn't an industry standard. Talent developers rely on both quantitative data from online learning solutions and qualitative feedback from learners to prove the value of learning.

When it comes to metrics, explore the possibilities
Course completions are the most common way of measuring an engaged learner. Explore a variety of ways to measure engagement, such as repeat visits, frequency of visits, or time spent learning.

94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their learning and development.

(Source: LinkedIn Learning 2019 Workplace Learning Report)

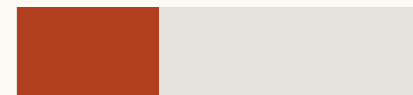## Ways that L&D pros measure the impact of online learning

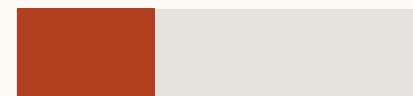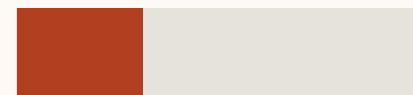| %	Metric
38%	Number of online courses completed
35%	Number of employees who consistently learn online
43%	Qualitative feedback from employees
34%	Employee satisfaction
31%	Qualitative feedback about behavioral change

A standard learner engagement measure has yet to emerge

Driving higher learner engagement is a consistent challenge for all talent developers, but—as with measuring impact—the industry has yet to converge on a true north metric for engagement. Surprisingly, nearly a quarter of L&D pros globally don't measure learner engagement. This underscores what we already know: measuring learner engagement is a hard nut to crack.

How L&D currently defines an engaged learner, in rank order

1. Course completions

2. Learner satisfaction surveys

3. Minutes learning per month

4. Repeat visits (2x) per month

24%
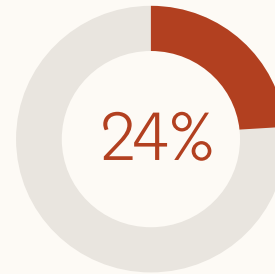
Global percentage of L&D pros who don't measure learner engagement based on online usage data

People Analytics

Recommended LinkedIn Learning Course
Josh Bersin explains people analytics, a powerful tool for tackling talent challenges.

Watch course >

3 conversation starters about how to define an engaged learner

Because the industry has yet to converge on a true north engagement metric, here are 3 questions to get you thinking about what measure would work best for your organization.

1. Are course completions the right engagement metric?

Course completions topped the list as the most popular quantitative way that talent developers measure engagement, but that fails to account for the fact that effective learning can happen in small bites. If an employee learns how to create a pivot table in Excel in 10 minutes—without completing the full course—then it's still engagement, right? That employee would rate that learning experience highly as it gave her what she needed without having to spend 30 minutes to complete the course. Another way to look at it is measuring video completions instead.

2. What should we think about learning minutes per month?

The answer is that "it depends."
The answer is that "it depends." What really matters here is the learner's objective. If they want to learn an entirely new skill set, such as learning to code in Python, then the time spent metric does really matter. Conversely, if the learner is just trying to take a few "refresher" courses, such as public speaking tips in the week leading up to a big presentation, then their total minutes learned should look quite different. At the end of the day, it all comes back to the learner's objectives—and how they can apply those learnings to get better at their current job or grow their careers.

3. Why aren't repeat visits a more popular way to measure engagement— and should they be?

Repeat visits came in at the bottom of the list as an engagement metric this year, but it may be time for that to change. Repeat visitors is a strong metric for online marketers to measure brand affinity. When a consumer consistently visits a website, that means they've found value in the first-time experience and every one after that. In marketing, it's called a "sticky experience." L&D can replicate this, using repeat visits and a "sticky learning experience" as a valuable metric to gauge engagement and the learning habit.

LOU TEDRICK
Global VP of L&D
Verizon

"**We have a very disciplined way** of measuring the impact of learning at Verizon. We do the work on the front-end, really understanding the business problem we're trying to solve or the behavior change that we want to see. Once our goals are clearly defined, then it makes it easier to determine the effect of learning programs after they're completed."

"The key is having strong relationships with business partners who are open to sharing performance data and with finance who can help us monetize the value of KPIs. By looking at both, we can measure the impact of learning on the business and the financial ROI."

"In terms of measuring learner engagement, we track learner NPS scores—or how likely they are to recommend a course to a friend—and how employees interact with online courses. But, we go way beyond that when we're getting ready to launch new products or services. We consider learning complete when employees finish a course, take an assessment, and then demonstrate their new knowledge in a product demo."

LOU TENDRICK
Global VP of L&D
Verizon

Tap managers to drive engagement and create a culture of learning

L&D's 3 biggest challenges this year

When we asked L&D pros globally about their three biggest challenges, getting managers to make learning a priority for their teams topped the list, above creating a culture of learning and driving engagement. Although, if you take a step back, the top three challenges are inextricably linked. Talent developers know that the key to driving higher learner engagement and creating a culture of learning is transforming managers into learning champions.

We asked talent developers globally what their top three challenges are this year and here's what they said:

49% Getting managers to make learning a priority for their teams	**22%** Understanding what skills to build or courses to recommend
42% Creating a culture of learaning	**22%** Making sure that learners know where to find learning resources
36% Increasing employee engagement in learning	**21%** Demonstrating the value of learning
31% Teaching their employees to use technology more effectively	**21%** Identifying skills gaps
26% Scaling learning across the organization	**17%** Getting executive buy-in

Integrating learning into the rhythm of the business is the most effective way to activate managers

Given that transforming managers into learning champions is the #1 challenge that talent developers face, let's dive into which engagement tactics work well and where there are pockets of opportunity. We asked both L&D pros how they promote learning programs to managers and then asked managers how they find out about learning programs. Aside from the tried-and-true approach of sending emails, managers find out about learning opportunities when they

are integrated into performance reviews and onboarding programs. The one area that was surprising is that only 11% of managers find out about learning resources during new manager training. This indicates that there is a big opportunity to raise awareness about learning programs in new manager training—consider a blended approach to help create a learning mindset at the beginning of their journey as a people manager.

How L&D pros promote learning programs to activate managers

43%	Integrating learning into onboarding
42%	Flexibility of online learning programs
38%	Integrating learning into performance reviews
31%	Email promotions
31%	Corporate initiatives/executive mandates
24%	Lunch and learns
22%	Learning groups for managers (virtual chat channels or meetings)
13%	Team learning competitions
7%	EVS scores
15%	We don't have a great way to get managers involved in learning resources

How managers find out about learning programs

32%	Email promotions
31%	When learning is integrated into performance reviews
25%	When learning is integrated into onboarding
25%	Word of mouth
24%	When my manager informed me of learning resources
24%	When my executives recommend learning resources
20%	Lunch and learns
17%	Learning groups for managers
11%	New manager training
8%	Learning competitions

Learner marketing tactics that break through and those that fall short

Driving engagement is a perennial challenge for talent developers and, according to LinkedIn Learning survey data, it was the #1 trend that will impact learning programs in 2020. However, talent developers only spend 15% of their time raising awareness about the learning offerings that are available to employees across their organizations. So how can L&D pros make that small amount of time as effective and efficient as possible? We asked learners. As it turns out, employee intranets are far and away the best way for employees to explore learning programs, followed closely by email. Chat programs, such as Microsoft Teams and Slack, are working better than expected, while lunch and learns and physical signage are less effective.

How L&D pros promote learning programs in their organizations

56%	Employee intranet
55%	Managers or executives
53%	Email campaigns
48%	Existing talent initiatives
35%	Lunch and learns
31%	Physical posters or signage
29%	Promoting employee success stories
25%	Competitions or challenges
20%	Working with marketing to create/execute programs
19%	Chat programs
16%	Seasonal learning campaigns

How learners find out about learning programs

56%	Employee intranet
47%	Email campaigns
44%	Managers or executives
39%	Existing talent initiatives
34%	Word-of-mouth
25%	Chat programs
24%	Lunch and learns
15%	Physical posters or signage
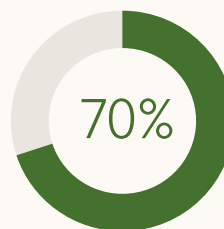
70% The percentage of learners in Germany who find out about learning programs on their employee intranet

Tapping into a growth mindset is one key to manager activation

We wanted to understand what makes managers and their teams tick and to pinpoint their motivations. The good news is that we found that both managers and employees are inspired to learn for the same reason—career growth. One tip: encourage managers to recommend specific learning opportunities and courses. Over half of learners said that they would spend more time learning if they did.

Tie learning to career growth to drive engagement with both managers and learners.

Why do managers recommend learning to their teams?

54% Grow their career
32% Get better in current role
6%   Learn a new skill
3%   Solve a problem
5%   Other

54%
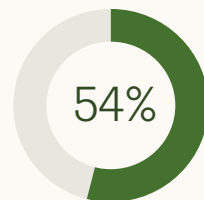
Percent of employees who would spend more time learning if they had specific course recommendations to help them reach their career goals.

According to LinkedIn Learning data, managers spend 30% more time learning soft skills than the average learner.

Tactics for Learner Engagement

Recommended LinkedIn Learning Course
Learning leaders Naphtali Bryant and Jason Mulero how you how to inspire "boom" moments for your learners.


Watch course >

Employees want highly relevant learning experiences

Unsurprisingly, the top factor that prevents employees from learning is that they don't have time to learn at work, but nearly all learners do see the career benefits of carving out time to learn. It's also important to note that most learning happens during the week, according to LinkedIn Learning platform data.

Given that time is of the essence, learners are craving a highly personalized learning experience that serves up the right learning at the right time, without having to dig for it. Learners across all generations also want to learn with their colleagues to exchange ideas, share insights, and ask questions.

49%
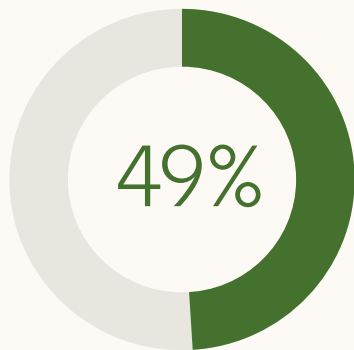
Percent of learners who said that they don't have time to learn at work
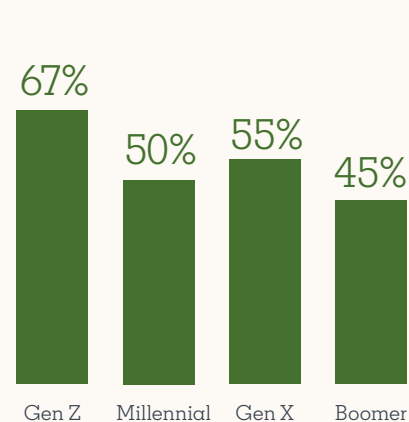
94%
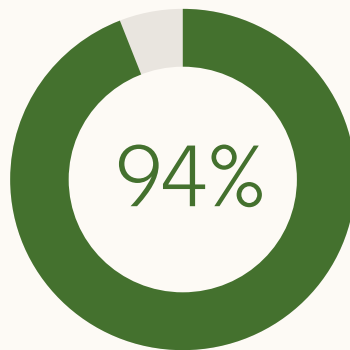
Percent of learners who said that they see the career benefits of making the time to learn

## The majority of professionals want learning experiences that are…

Social and collaborative

Learners of all generations feel motivated to learn in a social environment — with their colleagues — while taking a course.

67%	50%	55%	45%
Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer

Personalized

Over three-quarters of each generation of learners value receiving personalized course recommendations based on their career goals and skills gaps.

80%	79%	78%	77%
Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
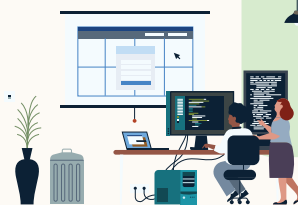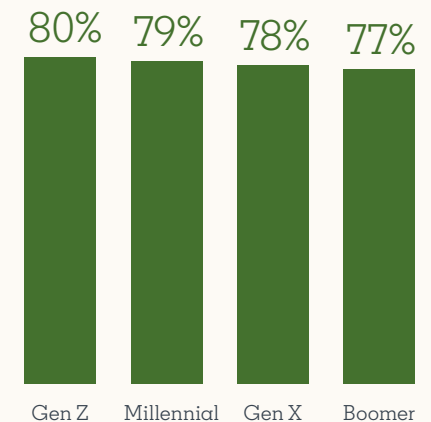
According to LinkedIn Learning data, 83% of online learning happens during the work week.

How Kellogg's is transforming their culture of learning

Opportunity:

Kellogg's Global Learning Director, Thor Flosason, has a vision to create a truly aspirational learning culture for Kellogg's employees.

When Thor joined the company, he inherited a very traditional approach to learning—one he described as "classroom heavy, resource heavy, events-driven" that "was not delivered when it was needed."

He realized the challenge stretched beyond simply changing the course curriculum or bringing in different workshops. Thor needed to evolve Kellogg's learning culture from one-size-fits-all to one-size-fits-one.

Actions:

Kellogg's used a multi-prong approach to shift their learning culture. Key tactics included:
• Getting leaders to advocate for learning
• Creating an internal marketing campaign: #IGotThis
• Creating a shared experience with a friendly competition that included prizes and recognition

Results:

Kellogg's employees watched an astounding 450,000 LinkedIn Learning videos and spent 6,403 hours learning on the platform.

Watch how Kellogg's transformed a traditional learning program into a thriving culture of learning. Play video >

"We wanted to encourage learners to complete courses and then share what they learned, to share insights. That really helped create that community of sharing. It's very powerful, very simple, and we got phenomenal reach just through those simple activities."

THOR FLOSASON
Director of Learning, Kellogg's
Battle Creek, Michigan

PAMAY BASSEY
Chief Learning Officer,
The Kraft-Heinz Company

"**I think that L&D's value proposition** includes a 3-part expectation from all employees: First, seek out high impact learning experiences. Second, commit to a learning practice. And, the third, encourage others to do the same. If managers and leaders commit to those three things every day, then they serve as a model for their teams and the entire organization. Those three things can transform a learning culture."

"That commitment piece is really the most important. It's a commitment to explore different learning experiences and find something interesting every day—whether it's a podcast, an article, or a course on LinkedIn Learning. Sometimes it's hard to make the time. I personally made a commitment to do 365 days of learning and I encourage others to make a commitment for a week, a month, or a year. It's important for me—and for managers and leaders to model learning from the top down."

"We are also scaling an initiative this year called 'manager excellence' for new managers. It is designed to help them through the transition from an individual contributor to a people manager. We also remind new managers that they are responsible for developing their teams and giving them the tools to do it, in addition to delivering the results that are expected of them."

PAMAY BASSEY
Chief Learning Officer
The Kraft-Heinz Company

Digital transformation is catalyzing an upskilling and reskilling revolution

The era of upskilling and reskilling has arrived

L&D is taking the long view when it comes to skills development. Over half of talent developers (51%) said that the most valuable information they need to identify skills gaps is what skills will be most in-demand in 3-5 years. Why? Because nearly all talent developers agree that if those skills gaps aren't closed by then, it will negatively impact the business in areas like growth and customer satisfaction. And, in a world where nearly half (42%) of L&D pros believe that the global skills shortage will impact L&D programs, the need to upskill and reskill current employees becomes even more mission critical.

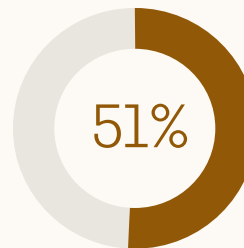## What's the difference between upskilling and reskilling?

Upskilling
when an employee learns new skills to enhance their abilities within the same job function
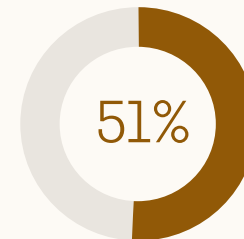
Reskilling
when an employee learns new skills for a job in a different job function

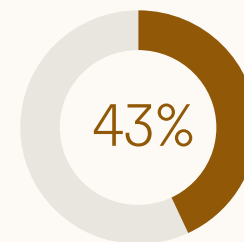## As the pace of technology advancement accelerates, the era of upskilling and reskilling is upon us

51% of L&D pros said that the most valuable information to help them identify skills gaps would be to know what skills will be most in-demand in the next 3-5 years

51% of L&D pros plan to launch **upskilling** programs in 2020

43% of L&D pros plan to launch **reskilling** programs in the future

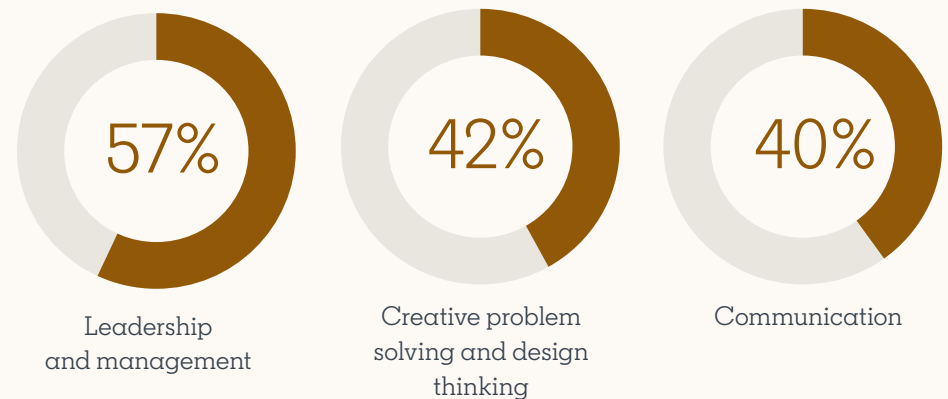# In the age of robots, soft skills will reign supreme

This year, talent developers are laser focused on building soft skills—interpersonal skills that can't be automated and that are foundational regardless of an employee's role. These human skills will only become more critical as we enter a new decade of rapid digital transformation. It's creating a sense of urgency for L&D pros in every industry—and in every geography—to ensure that their workforce is not only digitally fluent, but also elevating their people skills that robots can't replicate. Given the importance of becoming digitally fluent, why did technology skills fall to the bottom of the priority list? We suspect that there are already programs in place to build these skills in the areas of the business that need them.

> What is digital transformation anyway? The use of digital technologies to create new—or change existing—business processes, culture, and customer experiences to take advantage of changing business and market requirements.

Percentage of L&D who are focused on developing these skills

Highest priority skills
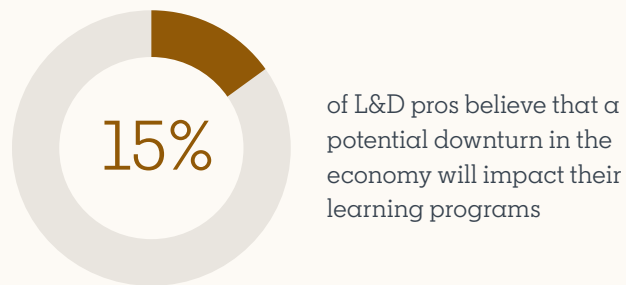
57%
Leadership and management

42%
Creative problem solving and design thinking

40%
Communication

Lowest priority skills

9%
Mobile computing and development

8%
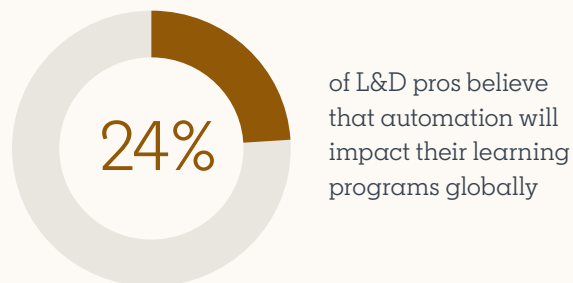Engineering and coding

8%
Cloud computing
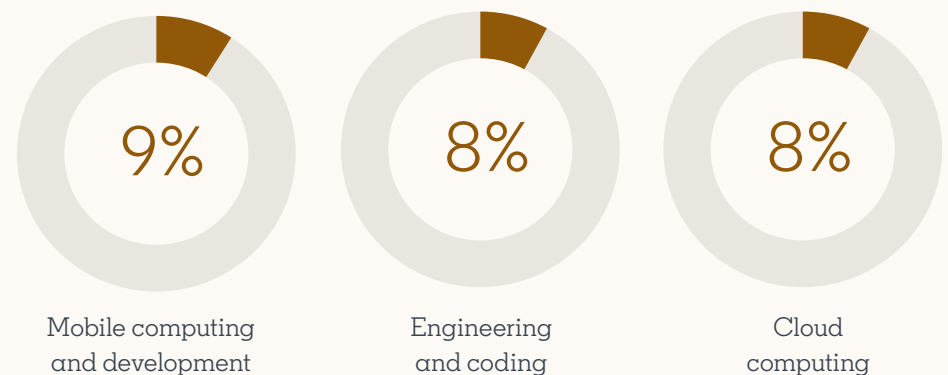
Automation and an economic downturn not expected to impact L&D programs in 2020
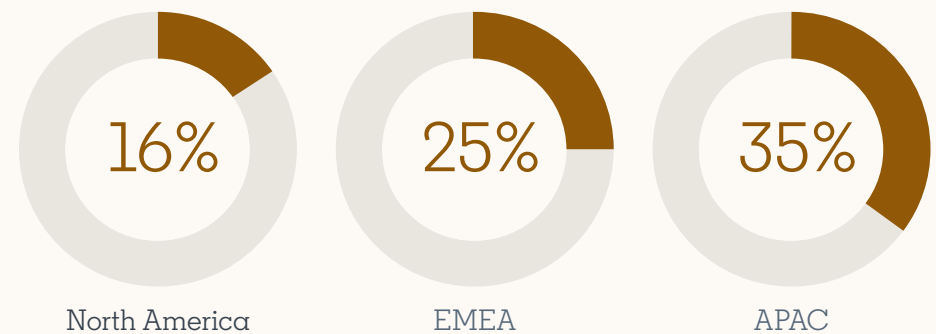
Despite fears of robots eliminating jobs and a looming economic downturn, L&D professionals globally are not as worried about these macroeconomic trends as you might think. With only a relatively small percentage (15%) of talent developers preparing for a dip in the economy, they are driving full steam ahead on their upskilling and reskilling efforts.

Percentage of L&D pros in each region who believe that automation will impact their learning programs

16% North America

25% EMEA

35% APAC

15% of L&D pros believe that a potential downturn in the economy will impact their learning programs

Historically, technology advancements have created more jobs than it destroys. According to the World Economic Forum, AI and robotics will create almost 60 million more jobs than it will eliminate by 2022. Nearly a quarter of talent developers believe that automation will impact their programs in 2020, but that number spikes up to over one-third in APAC, where more manufacturing jobs are at risk of being automated out.

24% of L&D pros believe that automation will impact their learning programs globally
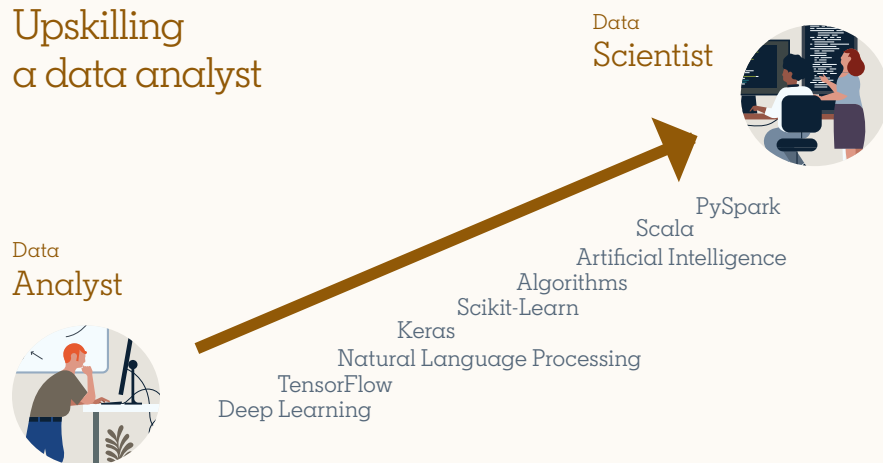
Skills gaps create real business gaps

Virtually every talent developer we surveyed agreed: if critical skills gaps aren't closed in the coming years, then their organizations will be negatively impacted in a variety of ways—from future growth to how they interact with customers.

99% of L&D pros said that there would be a negative business impact if skills gaps are not closed in the coming years.

Upskilling your current employees is a great strategy for filling key roles. For example, Data Analysts typically already have many foundational skills to become Data Scientists. This path shows the additional skills they need to develop to take on the role.

If skills gaps aren't closed in the next 3-5 years, the L&D pros expect that it will negatively impact:

1. Future growth
2. Customer experience and satisfaction
3. Product or service quality and delivery
4. Ability to innovate

Digital Transformation for Leaders

Recommended LinkedIn Learning Path
Learn what digital transformation is and how you can help your organization navigate its challenges and opportunities.

Upskilling a data analyst

Data
Scientist

PySpark
Scala
Artificial Intelligence
Algorithms
Scikit-Learn
Keras
Natural Language Processing
TensorFlow
Deep Learning

Data
Analyst

Watch learning path >

What are the most in-demand skills in 2020?

Every year, we identify the skills that companies need most to give you additional data points to inform your learning and development programs, help LinkedIn members pinpoint which skills will be most valued in the market, and guide our learning content roadmap.

Here are the skills in rank order and how they moved compared to the 2019 list.

Top 5 Soft Skills

1. Creativity	same
2. Persuasion	same
3. Collaboration	same
4. Adaptability	same
5. Emotional intelligence	new

Top 10 Hard Skills

1. Blockchain	new
2. Cloud computing	-1
3. Analytical reasoning	same
4. Artificial Intelligence	-1
5. UX design	same
6. Business analysis	+10
7. Affiliate marketing	new
8. Sales	same
9. Scientific computing	+3
10. Video production	-3

The top soft skills are more human-centric than last year
Soft skills are the essential interpersonal skills that make or break our ability to get things done. We think of them as foundational and every professional should be working to build them.

Topping this year's list are creativity, collaboration, persuasion, and emotional intelligence—all skills that demonstrate how you work with others and bring new ideas to the table. More task-oriented skills like 'time management' from last year's list are notably absent this year. While such skills remain critical to being successful, this year's results signal that companies are gravitating more toward talent with strong people-oriented skills.

Analytical and data-centered hard skills continue to top the list of hard skills
While the most in-demand soft skills are all about how employees work together, the most in-demand hard skills are the ones defining what they're working on.

These skills will continue to evolve as the world of work does and will vary based on industry and country. For example, for the first time this year, blockchain not only made the list of skills we look for, but topped it —highlighting a rapid spike in demand for 2020.

Trending data also reveals that data-driven decision making skills like analytical reasoning (#3), up one spot from last year, and business analysis (#6), up ten spots from last year, are essential in today's workforce. As companies continue to collect and analyze more data than ever before, they need people who can help interpret and take action on that data to drive growth.

Each generation in the workplace wants to build different skills

We all intuitively understand that the skills we want to acquire at the beginning of our careers are much different than the ones we want to build 20 years later. Still, the generational spread of interest in particular skills was wider than we expected. Gen Z is most interested in building their creativity and tech skills more than any other generation. Millennials and Gen Xers are focused on developing their management and leadership skills, as many are becoming new managers or executives. And, everyone wants to build their leadership and management skills.

Employees of all generations want to learn, but their interests vary according to learner survey results

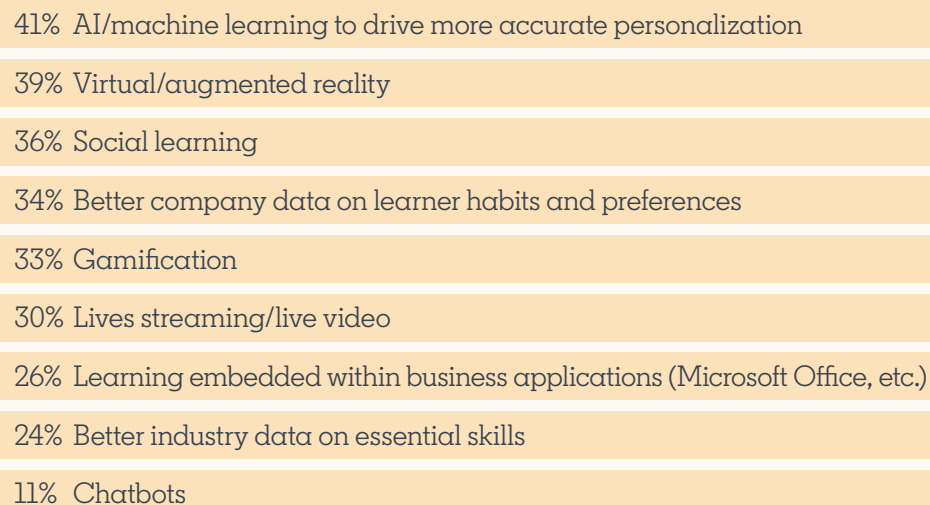|	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Management and leadership	49%	59%	60%	44%
New software related to your role	51%	38%	32%	36%
Engineering/ coding	48%	35%	25%	18%
Creativity	35%	24%	24%	18%

AI tops the list of technologies expected to significantly impact learning

Just as the automation technologies are rapidly changing the skills landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are expected to be the next big technology to impact learning. While only 24% of L&D professionals believe that AI will impact learning programs this year, their perspective is very different when they look ahead to the next 5 years.

Talent developers believe that learning platforms will only get smarter in the future and deliver a more personalized, curated learning experience by leveraging AI and machine learning. Learning leaders in the Asia-Pacific region are especially bullish on AI.

The technologies that L&D pros think will significantly impact online learning in the next 5 years

41%	AI/machine learning to drive more accurate personalization
39%	Virtual/augmented reality
36%	Social learning
34%	Better company data on learner habits and preferences
33%	Gamification
30%	Lives streaming/live video
26%	Learning embedded within business applications (Microsoft Office, etc.)
24%	Better industry data on essential skills
11%	Chatbots

Percentage of L&D professionals who expect AI and machine learning to drive more accurate personalization of recommended learning content

37% North America

40% Europe

50% Asia Pacific
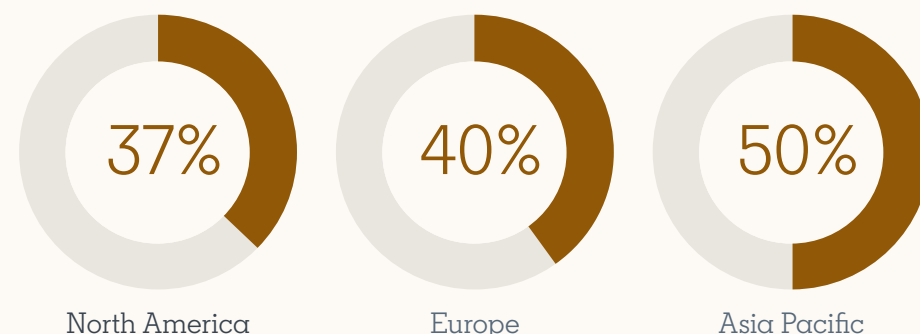
3 reasons to get excited about AI

As AI technologies continue to become more sophisticated — and deliver even more relevant and timely content recommendations — both learners and L&D pros will reap the benefits. LinkedIn Learning leverages network data from 675 million members, more than 50 million companies and 20 million job postings to help deliver highly relevant learning recommendations.

1. Learners will likely spend more time learning

79%
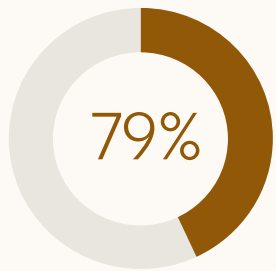
79% of learners said that they would use personalized course recommendations based on their career goals and skills gaps.

When the right learning content is delivered to learners in the right way and at the right moment, they will likely spend more time learning and less time searching—or not learning at all.

## 2. L&D will spend less time curating content

45%
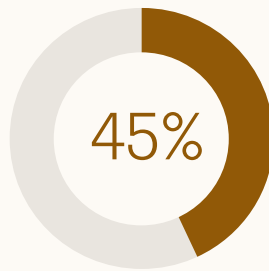
45% of talent developers spend nearly half of their time creating and delivering learning content and compliance training for their organizations.

Curating and building content is a necessary part of the job, but it can often cause L&D pros to spend too much time in the tactical weeds

As AI technologies mature and take on the lion's share of content curation, it will also decrease the amount of time that L&D professionals spend curating and building content.

3. With more time on their hands, L&D can focus on driving engagement

16%
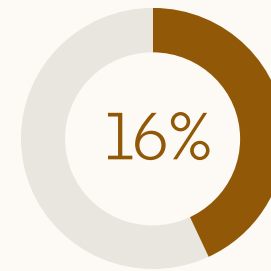
Only 16% of talent developers' time is spent promoting learning programs, even though driving engagement is their top priority.

Even if personalized recommendations driven by AI and machine learning free up 10% of their week, L&D can spend more time on strategic initiatives, including promoting learning programs to help drive higher learner engagement.

MGM is providing upskilling opportunities to 82,000 employees

Because there's so much competition for top talent in Las Vegas, MGM decided that they needed to invest in every member of their workforce—from corporate managers to front-line employees such as the housekeeping staff, dealers on the gambling floors, and the servers at hotel restaurants.

By building their LEAD (Learning Experiences Accelerate Development) program around LinkedIn Learning, they guaranteed that everyone in the organization, regardless of location could access learning opportunities. With a library of 15,500+ professionally produced courses, the MGM team was certain that there was something useful for every employee.

Although the program is relatively new, LEAD graduates are already growing their careers and rising up the ranks.

Lisa Zweber-Smith
VP of Diversity and Inclusion, MGM Resorts

"When you work in an environment like Las Vegas, people have opportunities to choose different employers, but they stay because you invest in them."

LISA ZWEBER-SMITH
VP of Diversity and Inclusion, MGM Resorts International

Watch how MGM Resorts is upskilling their workforce >

Learn more >

Turning Big Dreams into Realities

LinkedIn Learning

"I believe that LinkedIn Learning has had a significant impact on my promotion. WIthout it, I would not be where I am today."

QUAY EADY
Table Games Analytics, MGM Resorts International

Watch how MGM Resorts is upskilling their workforce >

Learn more >

SIMON BROWN
Chief Learning Officer
Novartis

"**L&D's upskilling and reskilling programs** should always be tied to key business priorities. We have two: 1) attracting and retaining the best talent and 2) building the capabilities needed to support the strategy. To help us do that effectively, we have started to embed learning leads into our strategy teams so that we can identify the skills we'll need several years out and create a plan on how to close them."

"Building our digital capabilities is a top priority. To help us do that, we segmented our learning programs to serve three audiences. First, we work with our leaders, using a 'digital immersion', to help them create a digital culture on their teams; shifting from a project to 'product' strategy. Second, we work with digital practitioners who are actively involved in projects that need deep digital skills such as data science, artificial intelligence, and Product Owner capability. Our third audience is all 108,000 associates, who are learning the digital foundations—what it is and why it is important. Once they are aware of their role in supporting our digital transformation, then we focus on inspiring them to be curious and upskill themselves."

SIMON BROWN
Chief Learning Officer
Novartis

Final thoughts

The learning & development discipline has come a long way in the last decade—from deploying compliance training to becoming a strategic business partner. As we enter 2020, they are mastering the art of driving engagement, activating managers, measuring the effectiveness of their programs, and so much more. Simultaneously, they are also looking ahead and calculating what skills they will need in the face of automation and digital transformation, while relying on AI to help them deliver relevant learning at scale.

As we shared in the introduction, the stakes have never been higher. The good news is that talent developers are ready for whatever technology and business changes that the new decade will bring.

Methodology

Global Survey

For the LinkedIn Learning 2020 Workplace Learning Report, we surveyed:

1,675 / L&D professionals

L&D and HR professionals with L&D responsibilities who have some influence on budget decisions—at organizations with over 200 employees

2,000 / Learners

Workplace learners who self-identified as working for an organization that provides online learning to employees

2,932 / Managers

Employees who self-identified as people managers at companies that provided online learning solutions to their organizations

The countries we surveyed include:

North America	Asia-Pacific	Europe
United States	India	United Kingdom
Canada	Singapore	Ireland
	Australia	Germany
	New Zealand	France
	Hong Kong	Benelux
		Austria
		Sweden
		Norway
		Finland
		Denmark
		Iceland

LinkedIn Learning Behavioral and Economic Graph Data
Behavioral insights for this report were generated from the billions of data points created by more than 675+ million members in over 200 countries on LinkedIn today.

2020 Most In-Demand Skills Data
To create the list of the most in-demand hard and soft skills in 2020, we surfaced data from our network of over 675+ million professionals and 20+ million jobs. More specifically, we looked at the skills that are in the highest demand relative to the supply of people who have those skills and are getting hired at the highest rates. These are global rankings, but we only included cities with 100,000 LinkedIn members or more.

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About LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning is a leading online learning platform that helps professionals learn relevant skills and achieve their goals. It combines a library of 15,500+ up-to-date courses with an engaging, intuitive, and personalized learner experience. LinkedIn Learning also includes real-time skills insights that help learning leaders identify skills gaps and learner needs. For more information, visit http://learning.linkedin.com.

Ready to explore how LinkedIn Learning can help you get ahead for what's ahead?

Get in touch with us to schedule a **free live demo** and discuss how LinkedIn Learning can help your employees learn relevant skills, achieve their goals, and make a greater impact.

Here's what we'll cover:

· Library of 15,500+ courses that is continually updated with relevant and applicable content
· Engaging, intuitive learner experience that includes highly personalized recommendations
· Real-time skills insights that will help you identify skill gaps and learner needs

Interested in talking to us right now?
Request a demo or contact sales at 1-844-587-5735.