

LinkedIn Learning's 5th Annual

Workplace Learning Report

2021 / Skill Building in the New World of Work

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Let's dive in



Introduction from the Editor

Michelangelo is quoted as having said, “The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there, I just have to chisel away the superfluous material.” That is exactly the way I felt writing this report. The survey data, LinkedIn Learning insights, and customer stories all felt like they were speaking to me, sharing truths that I now have the honor to share with you to help elevate the #AlwaysBeLearning mindset in your organization and around the world.

According to the **World Economic Forum report** published in October of last year, the rapid acceleration of automation and economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic will shift the division of labor between humans and machines, causing **85 million jobs to be displaced and 97 million new ones to be created by 2025**. It’s a truth that signals an enormous opportunity for us in the learning and development (L&D) and HR disciplines.

We now have the opportunity to create a true culture of continuous learning to build a more equitable workplace, and innovate in ways we can hardly imagine — all in service of creating economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce, our vision at LinkedIn.

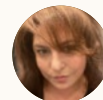
It all starts with skills. We need to help our teams build the skills that will inspire learners, managers, and executives to co-create a culture of learning that rewards what employees already know and the pace at which learn new, high-demand skills.

This is the fifth year of the Workplace Learning Report. We have seen learning move from a relatively new discipline within HR to taking center stage and becoming a must-have strategic role that will help shape the new world of work. **To that point, two-thirds (66%) of L&D pros globally now agree that they are focused on rebuilding and reshaping their organizations** this year. And, we’ve seen a big surge in learner engagement on LinkedIn Learning. From 2019 to 2020, the number of enterprise learners more than doubled, and the amount of learning has also increase by 58% more hours per learner.

That doesn’t feel like a step change — it’s a monumental leap.

Leena Nair, the CHRO of Unilever, said it best at our **virtual summit** in October: “This is the time to ask those big questions and create change — and to disrupt and pioneer and take risks; you need to have that confidence. **You need to have that swagger** that says, ‘I know my function and I can make that difference.’ That is why my biggest advice is: lead! Don’t wait for someone else to tell you to lead. Lead! Lead proactively! **Grab the spotlight! If not now, then when? If not us, then who? This is our time. Let’s make a big impact.**”

In true Michelangelo style, the excess marble has been cleared away, and the report is ready for you to explore. **At LinkedIn Learning, we hope that the insights, tips, and inspiration in this report will help guide your learning programs and inspire skill building.**



Amanda Van Nuys
Group Manager, Marketing Communications
LinkedIn Learning

Top 10 takeaways from this report



#1

L&D in the strategic driver's seat as change makers

66%

of L&D pros globally agree Learning and Development is focused on **rebuilding or reshaping your organization** this year

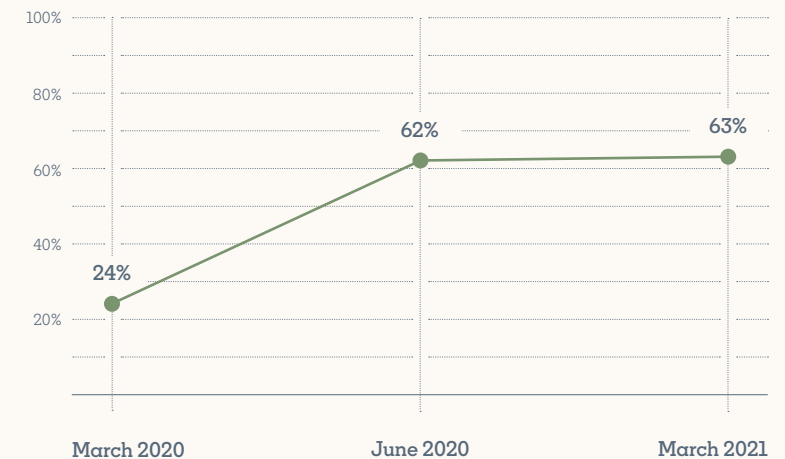
64%

of L&D pros globally who agree that L&D shifted from a “nice to have” to a “need to have” in 2021

#2

L&D's seat at the C-suite table is secure in 2021

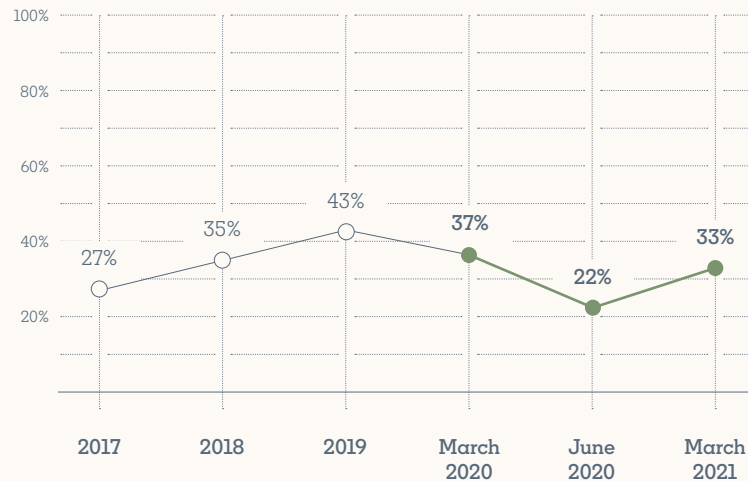
% of L&D pros globally who agree that L&D has a seat at the executive table



#3

The big bounceback: L&D pros bullish on budget increases

% of L&D pros globally surveyed at these times
who expect their budget to increase



#4

Start with yourself. L&D pros should invest in themselves, too.

Check out the five most uniquely popular courses among L&D pros for free and sign up for the [LinkedIn Learning Course Club](#) to get a new list of unlocked courses every quarter¹

[1. Instructional Design Essentials: Models of ID](#)

by Joe Pulichino

[2. Articulate Storyline Essential Training](#)

by Daniel Bringham

[3. Instructional Design: Storyboarding](#)

by Daniel Bringham

[4. Converting Face-to-Face Training into Digital Learning](#)

by Daniel Bringham

[5. Measuring Learning Effectiveness](#)

by Jeff Toister

#5

Upskilling and reskilling is the top priority for L&D pros globally

The top three areas of focus for L&D programs in 2021, in rank order:

1. Upskilling and reskilling

15% increase since June 2020

59%

2. Leadership and management

53%

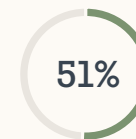
3. Virtual onboarding

33%

% of L&D pros globally who identified these programs as their top priority in 2021

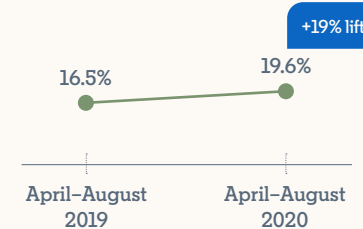
#6

A majority of L&D pros agree that internal mobility is more of a priority now than before COVID-19



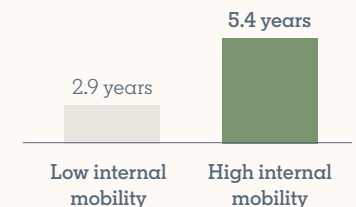
of L&D pros say that internal mobility is more of a priority now than before COVID-19

Since COVID-19, internal hires make up a greater share of all hires.



Internal mobility rates (share of all job changes that were movements within the same company)

Employees at companies with internal mobility stay almost **2x longer**.



Median employee tenure for companies with high and low internal mobility (top and bottom quartile)



#7

We have entered the era of building resilience and digital fluency

According to L&D leaders globally, resilience and digital fluency were cited as the #1 or #2 most important skills across every country we surveyed.

#8

L&D is helping to create a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace

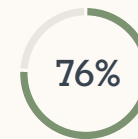
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of L&D pros globally — and nearly three-quarters (73%) in North America — report that their executives have made Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) programs a priority.



#9

Gen Z is learning more than ever and focused on career growth

Gen Z learners watched **50% more hours per learner** of learning content in 2020 vs. 2019.



76% of Gen Z learners believe learning is the key to a successful career

#10

Learning together increases engagement

Learners who use social features — Q&A, course shares, and learning groups — watch **30x more hours of learning** content than learners who don't.

The L&D Connect community asked and we answered

*A few months ago, we asked talent developers in the LinkedIn Learning **L&D Connect** group to share the questions that were top of mind around their 2021 learning programs. Insightful posts quickly rolled in.*

“How do L&D professionals learn and develop themselves? How do they grow in their careers?”

Irina Ketkin,
Founder and Learning Development Coach, Learning Adventures in Sofia, Bulgaria

We were curious about the same thing. So, we asked our incredible insights team to look at LinkedIn Learning data to find out. **Take a look at page 23** to see what your peers are learning to upskill themselves. And, we recently published a report called the **Handbook of L&D Pioneers** that also might be helpful.

“How do you measure the impact of learning on the company bottom line?”

Alessandro Alessandrini,
IM Make or Buy Footprint Evolution Manager, Airbus in Hamburg Germany

This has always been a tough one to tackle. **Check out page 20** to find out how talent developers are measuring the impact of learning.

“With the rapid shift to remote online work, how are L&D professionals supporting workers who are less digitally literate?”

Joshua Egan,
Learning & Development Manager,
Anglicare WA in Perth, Australia



Congratulations for posting the comment with the most thumbs-up! It turns out that digital transformation is the #1 priority in Australia and is either the #1 or #2 priority in every other region we surveyed globally. **Check out page 35 to read more.**

“How can L&D support, develop, and lead employees at all levels to be effective allies and more inclusive?”

Rochelle Livingstone,
Learning Designer & Facilitator, Upskill Digital in London, England

This is top of mind for us at LinkedIn Learning, too. Not only have we unlocked many Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) courses on these topics, but we also asked several D&I questions in the Workplace Learning Survey this year. **Take a look at page 39 to learn more.**

“How will less-skilled workers find new jobs in a post-COVID world that may no longer need them? Will companies see it as their responsibility to upskill their workforce post-pandemic, as many service-oriented jobs are predicted to go away? If the government won’t — or can’t — step in and provide training and education, will employers large and small take it upon themselves to fill that gap to better our society (and ultimately their businesses)?”

Tracy Cote,
Chief People Officer, Zenefits in San Francisco, California

This is one of the most important business questions of the new decade. **We share our point of view on who will help close the digital divide on page 37.** (Spoiler alert: companies and countries will both play a role.)

The state of the L&D industry



L&D keeps their seat at the C-suite table

“2020 has been an incredible year — lots of challenges but lots of opportunity, too. In fact, this year learning has really moved to the forefront. It is now in the spotlight. There’s so much opportunity for us,” said **Kevin Delaney**, LinkedIn’s VP of L&D, kicking off the **LinkedIn Learning Virtual Summit** in October of last year. “People have recognized that learning is no longer a *nice* to have; it’s a *must* have because learning is essential for success. In this changing world, we need to keep growing just to keep up, and for many of the challenges that we are all facing, learning is the answer.”

Kevin eloquently captured the tectonic shift in the learning industry that happened in 2020. As we reported in the **Leading with Learning Report** (June 2020), learning hours spiked, L&D pros finally had a seat at the C-suite table, and executive championship was at an all-time high. That was certainly good news for learning leaders globally, but we wondered: Would the rise of learning in 2020 be a fleeting moment or would it lead to a more permanent shift?



Not a blip: L&D has secured a long-term, elevated role in their organizations

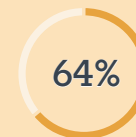
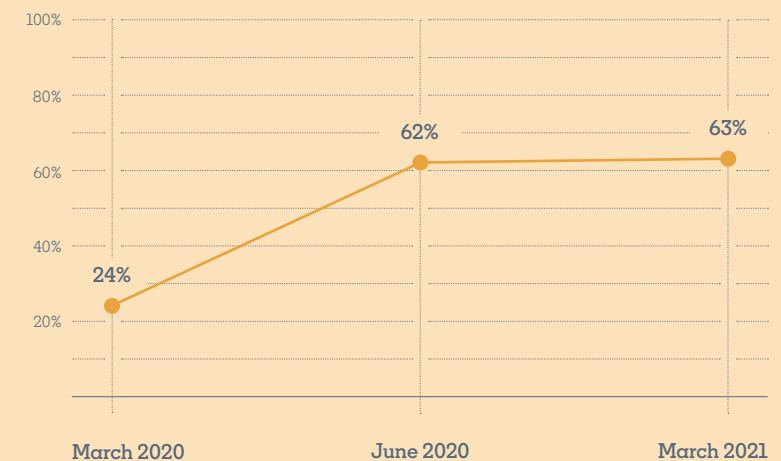
It's remarkable how much change can happen to an entire industry in just 12 months. In last year's **Workplace Learning Report** (March 2020), we reported that "Only 27% of L&D pros report that their CEOs are active champions of learning." We know that when top leadership actively champions learning, it drives higher learner engagement and impact.

Then the pandemic struck. And that's when executives *really* took notice of the positive impact that learning can have. L&D leaders moved at lightning speed to deliver learning programs to help employees manage through the crisis and stay productive from home; 64% of L&D pros globally agree that this was the moment learning shifted from a "nice to have" to a "need to have."

"To get execs engaged, don't do a one-size-fits-all approach, do a one-size-fits-one approach," says **Naphtali Bryant**, Director, Learning & Organization Development, at Netflix. He partnered with HRBPs and Executives to determine the three habits leaders need to effectively lead in a virtual environment and used a blended online learning model to deliver training with pre- and post-work. What started as a customized approach ended up translating to other groups within the organization and added "extreme value": over a six-week period, they took 188 leaders through a one-hour conversation.

L&D's seat at the C-suite table is secure in 2021

% of L&D pros globally who agree that L&D has a seat at the executive table



% of L&D pros globally who agree that L&D shifted from a "nice to have" to a "need to have" in 2021

Avient secured executive support for a “**month of learning**” campaign last May, and learner engagement went through the roof. The executive team sent out email communication to explain the purpose of the campaign and set the expectation that employees take at least one course by the end of May. L&D followed up each executive communication with twice-weekly emails and posts on their intranet, featuring new topics for the week and recommended courses. It worked. During the campaign, activation of LinkedIn Learning licenses increased from 40% to 95%, and engagement hit 95% (and is still going strong).

“We were excited that our leadership team took such a prominent role in this effort and empowered us to do what we were already doing behind the scenes and bring it to the forefront,” said **Renita Jefferson**, Senior HR Manager at Avient in Cleveland, Ohio.

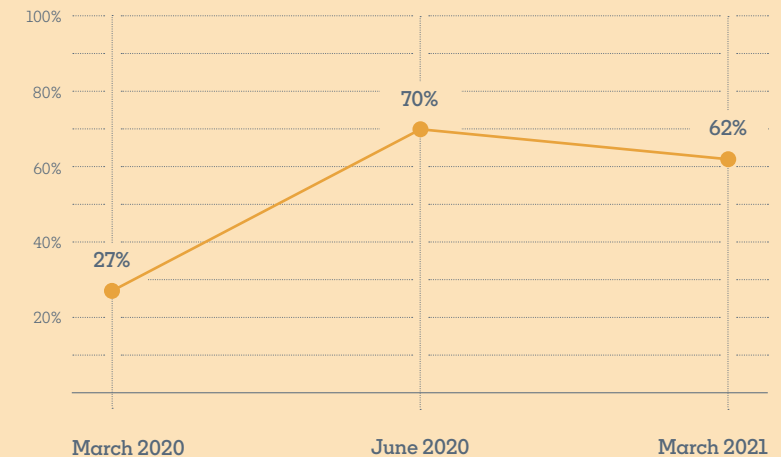
Nearly two-thirds of L&D pros said that they still have a seat at the C-suite table.

Where does L&D stand now? We’re happy to report that nearly two-thirds (63%) of L&D pros said that they still have a seat at the C-suite table — almost exactly the same amount we reported back in June (62%), and a big lift (39%) from what they reported at the beginning of 2020. This is a huge shift in the span of just a year. When taken together, these data points tell us that learning leaders have truly elevated the L&D function and proven the value of their programs.

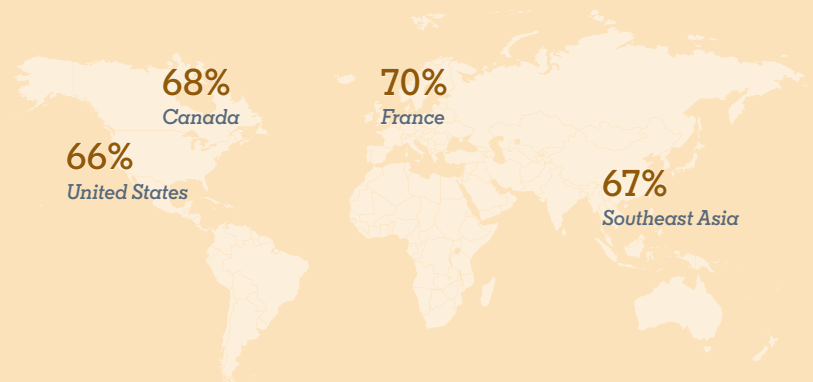
Although there was an 8% dip in CEO championship — from 70% in June 2020 to 62% in March 2021 — it’s still much higher than it was in March 2020 (at only 27%). But that’s not the whole story. There are many areas of the world where L&D pros reported that executive championship is now essentially on par with June 2020 levels, including the United States, Southeast Asia, Canada, and France. ■

CEOs are continuing to prioritize learning in their organizations

% of L&D pros globally who agree that CEOs are active champions of learning



% of L&D pros in these countries who agree that CEOs are active champions of learning

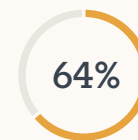


L&D pros expect budgets to grow and continue to shift to online learning

The big 2021 budget bounceback: L&D pros are bullish on their budgets, back to pre-pandemic levels

Although executive attention is an important factor to fuel winning learning programs, they can't run without ample budgets. This is particularly true this year, now that executives have higher expectations for the learning function, and organizations are likely to face more business disruption ahead.

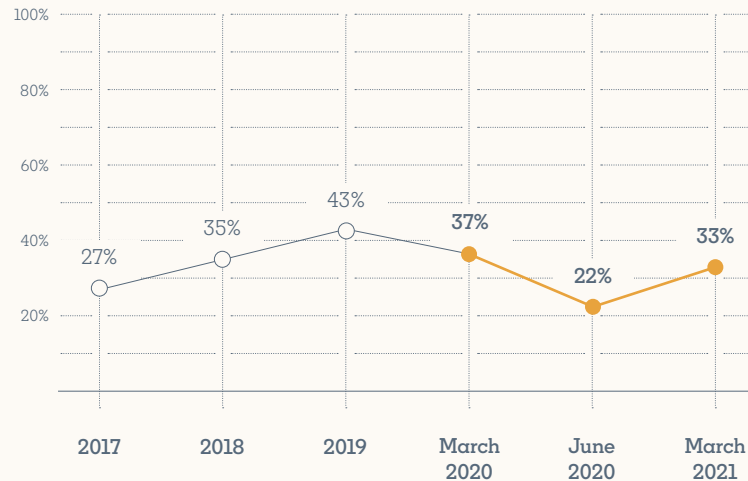
At the beginning of 2020, 37% of L&D pros expected their budgets to grow, but that number tumbled to 22% when we asked them again in the middle of the year. At that time, there were so many uncertainties related to the pandemic — particularly economic ones — that caused many organizations to freeze their budgets and scrutinize spending. Now that we have more or less settled into the new world of work, L&D budget growth is nearly back to pre-pandemic levels: 33% of L&D pros report that they expect their budgets to increase, and only 19% expect a decrease. Keep your eyes on India, where over two-thirds of L&D budgets are expected to rise this year.



% of L&D pros in **India** who expect their budgets to increase in 2021

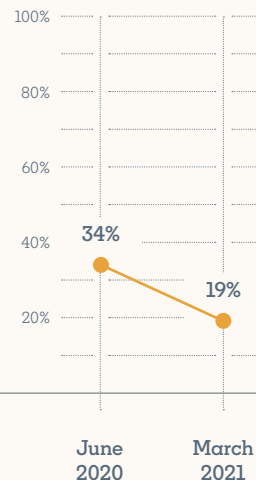
The number of L&D pros who expect budget increases are at pre-pandemic levels

% of L&D pros globally surveyed at these times who expect their budget to increase



Far fewer L&D pros expect their budgets to go down this year than they did last year

% of L&D pros globally who expect their budgets to decrease



Blended online learning is here to stay: less ILT and more online learning

Hybrid workplaces — organizations that function with some employees working remotely and some in a traditional office environment — are going to be the way we work for the foreseeable future. Over the last six months, many organizations announced that they will continue to operate in a completely remote environment, while some, including LinkedIn, will continue to offer employees the flexibility to work at home or in the office.

That means that the pivot L&D made from instructor-led training (ILT) to **blended online learning** — learning experiences with a mix of virtual instructor-led training (VILT) and online learning — will remain the status quo.

“Compared to instructor-led training, a robust online learning solution would provide far superior coverage in terms of reach, accessibility, and learning content. We wanted a solution that would open new doors and help ensure that every employee has the opportunity to learn,” explained **Samit Deb**, CHRO at Airtel, based in India.

From a budget perspective, the trend away from ILT, which is typically the most expensive line item in an L&D budget, and toward online learning was already happening before the pandemic hit.

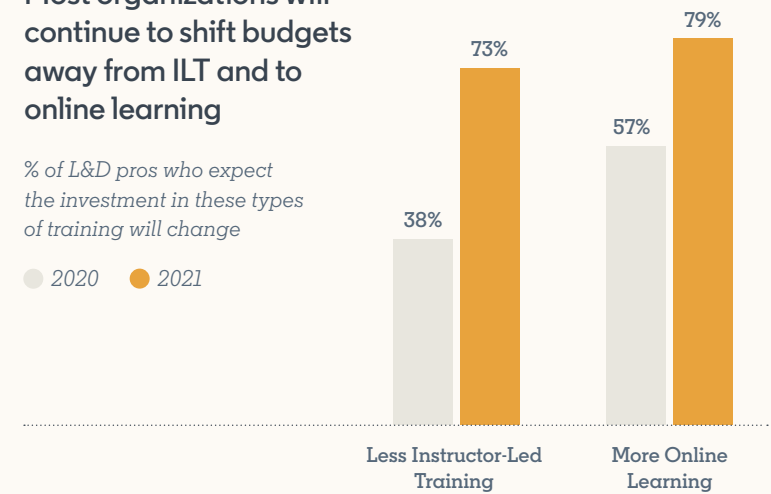


In early 2020, 38% of L&D pros expected to spend less on ILT and 57% expected to spend more on online learning. Today, those numbers are significantly higher: 73% of L&D pros expect to spend less on ILT and 79% expect to spend more on online learning.

Most organizations will continue to shift budgets away from ILT and to online learning

% of L&D pros who expect the investment in these types of training will change

● 2020 ● 2021



L&D pros have everything they need — a strategic position in the organization, C-level support, the budget, and the online learning resources — to make this year their most impactful one yet. Let's get going! ■

A smart way to measure the impact of learning: employee surveys

Quantifying the value of learning is not straightforward

Learning leaders have to rely on a wide spectrum of measures to gauge success and identify areas to improve. Gathering qualitative feedback from learners topped the list again, but a few quantitative measures — including the number of learners who keep coming back to online learning solutions and how many courses they complete — moved further up this year.



This is the year that employee surveys enter the learning measurement mix

What really surprised us was the 11-point rise in the use of employee engagement survey scores to measure the impact of learning — in just one year. Given that many organizations had fully remote workforces or were managing the new territory of a hybrid workforce, staying close to employee sentiment and needs was more critical this year than ever before. Globally, 27% of L&D pros said that they are now using survey tools to measure program effectiveness; in the UK, a whopping 43% of respondents are using them to gauge how satisfied employees are with learning programs.

Jacqueline Gay, L&D Manager at TomTom, based in Amsterdam, **shared with us** that her team spends time really listening.

“We’re talking to our internal customers more about what they want to learn and what the best format will be. We’ve been joining our software development teams’ virtual stand-ups every week and using **Glint** surveys to identify focus areas like collaboration tools. We’re able to go back to them with the right, relevant solution rather than just the programs we think they want.”

One thing is for sure. Measuring the value that learning brings to your organization will be a major factor in L&D pros keeping their spot at the C-suite table. ■



Top 10 ways L&D pros measure the impact of learning, in rank order

- 1 Qualitative feedback from employees using online courses
- 2 Satisfaction of employees using online courses
- 3 The number of employees that consistently engage with learning content
- 4 Employee engagement survey scores
- 5 Qualitative feedback about behavioral changes that learning was intended to drive
- 6 The number of online courses completed
- 7 An increase in the number of skills employees are developing
- 8 Team/organization/business metrics (deals closed, customer satisfaction) before and after training
- 9 Time saved/productivity increase
- 10 Ability to retain talent within your organization

Increasingly, savvy L&D pros are using employee surveys to solicit feedback and learner satisfaction scores

% of L&D pros globally who report using employee survey scores to measure the impact of learning



L&D's learning playlist of 2020

Carve out time to upskill yourself in 2021

When you're so busy helping others learn, it's easy to forget to make time for yourself to learn.

Make 2021 the year that you focus on you and let **Pamay Bassey**, Chief Learning and Diversity Officer at Kraft Heinz, be your inspiration. She made a commitment to learn something new every day for a year.

"There is power in making a commitment to start a new habit — even if you start with a few minutes a day," she said in a [LinkedIn post](#). "And, most importantly, there is joy as others join you, making their own commitments and sharing what they are learning, and powering the creation of an exciting learning culture — a culture of creativity, generosity, and curiosity."

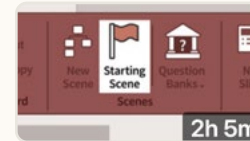
5 courses most uniquely popular among L&D pros globally in 2020

Check out these unlocked courses and sign up for the [LinkedIn Learning Course Club](#) to get a new list of unlocked courses every quarter.¹



[Instructional Design Essentials: Models of ID](#)

by Joe Pulichino



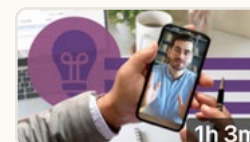
[Articulate Storyline Essential Training](#)

by Daniel Bringham



[Instructional Design: Storyboarding](#)

by Daniel Bringham



[Converting Face-to-Face Training into Digital Learning](#)

by Daniel Bringham



[Measuring Learning Effectiveness](#)

by Jeff Toister

What do your peers want to learn this year?

We asked your peers in the L&D Connect group on LinkedIn what they wanted to learn this year. We've included responses here to inspire you to continue to learn and grow. Thank you Sonia, Mike, and Diana for sharing your learning goals with us.

“People analytics, data visualization, creative writing, and search optimization.”

Sonia Malik,
Alliances Manager, IBM Training and Skills in Boston, Massachusetts

“A coaching mindset. I predict that the biggest challenge in 2021 will be well-being, particularly around mental health, stress, anxiety, and loneliness. Leaders and people managers need to be equipped to coach and support people through the year ahead — and build in resilience — as it's likely to be a bumpy ride.”

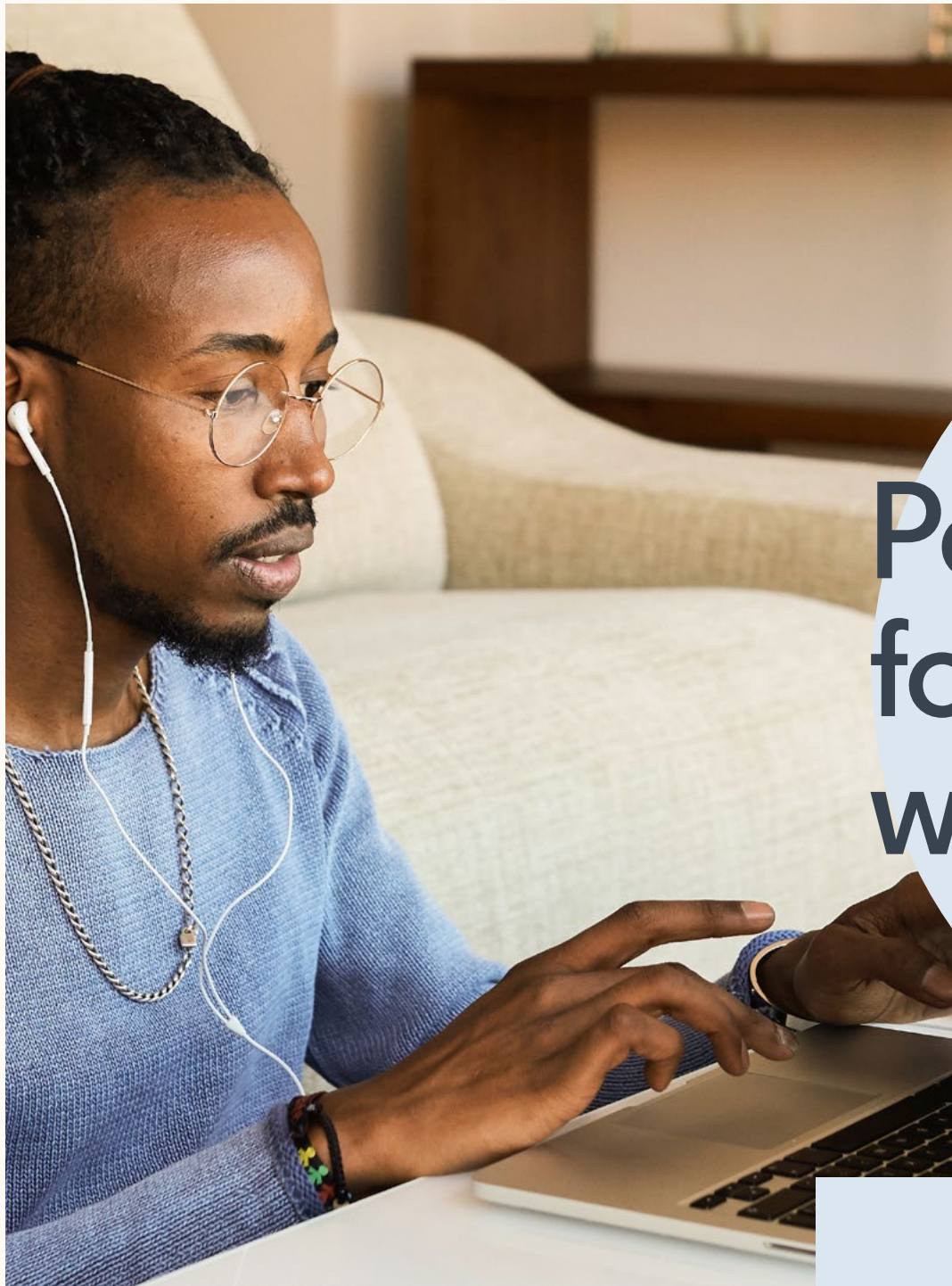
Mike Bedford,
People Development and Wellbeing Lead, Education and Skills Funding Agency in Leeds, UK

“Leading and managing in a hybrid work environment, resilient leadership, and psychological safety.”

Diana Antwiwaa Amoako,
Managing Consultant, Ideas & Update in Ghana

Your turn. What's on your 2021 learning playlist?

Share your learning goals and exchange helpful content with your peers around the world in the **L&D Connect** group on LinkedIn, the official LinkedIn Learning community. ■



Power skills for the new world of work

Talent as a renewable resource: the age of rapid upskilling, reskilling, and internal mobility

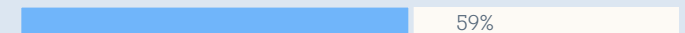
Sit down for this one. According to the [World Economic Forum report](#) published in October of last year, the rapid acceleration of automation and economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic will shift the division of labor between humans and machines, leading to 85 million jobs being displaced and 97 million new ones created by 2025.

Some of the largest enterprises globally have seen this shift coming for the last few years and have invested millions — even billions — in “future proofing” their employees, arming them with the skills needed for the new world of work. For example, JPMorgan Chase added the tidy sum of [\\$350M](#) to their \$250M plan to upskill their workforce. Amazon is investing over [\\$700M](#) to provide upskilling training to their employees. And, PwC is spending [\\$3B](#) to upskill all of its 275,000 employees over the next three to four years; the mantra of the program is “New World, New Skills.”

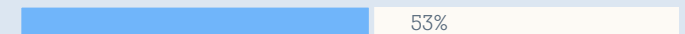
The top three areas of focus for L&D programs in 2021

% of L&D pros globally who identified these programs as their top priority in 2021

1. Upskilling and reskilling



2. Leadership and management



3. Virtual onboarding





Infineon is helping their manufacturing workers build their digital skills. **Jessica Richter**, Senior Director of People and Leadership Development at Infineon said:

“When it comes to building digital skills, we need to support the entire workforce in all countries — from production through to the back office.” This is why Infineon provided access to all of their employees, including more than 31,000 manufacturing workers. By setting up special learning facilities and aligning closely with their leadership team, Infineon is helping their entire workforce grow and learn.

[Read more](#)

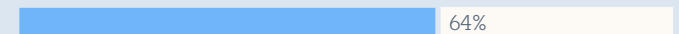
Today, it’s not just large organizations that are prioritizing skill building. We asked L&D pros globally what their primary focus was for their L&D programs in 2021, and their #1 priority (59%) is upskilling and reskilling — that’s a 15% increase since June 2020.

Interestingly, L&D pros at small businesses were prioritizing it more (64%) than large enterprises (56%). That could be because so many large enterprises already have robust programs in place.

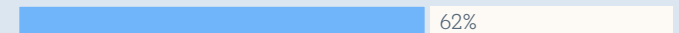
More L&D pros in small- and medium-size organizations are planning to upskill and reskill their employees this year

% of L&D pros globally in organizations of different sizes who reported that the focus of their L&D programs in 2021 is upskilling and reskilling

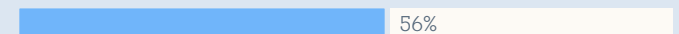
Small businesses



Medium businesses



Large enterprises

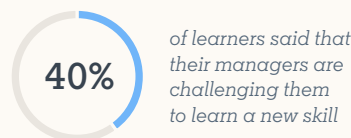
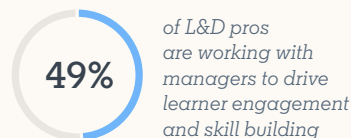


Who is your secret skill-building weapon? The manager.

Reskilling and upskilling programs are relatively new for most talent teams, and there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach in terms of how to strategically plan, resource, and execute them. As learning professionals, we're all figuring out this new world of work together. That's why we wanted to find out some of the tactics that they are using to move the skill-building needle.

We found that nearly half (49%) of L&D pros are working with people managers to drive learner engagement and skill building. That makes perfect sense because managers are responsible for the performance and growth of their teams. More specifically, we have heard from our customers that they are focusing

on upskilling managers to have higher-quality, meaningful career conversations with their direct reports. As a learning leader, you have your work cut out for you. Only 40% of learners report that their managers challenged them to learn new skills in the last six months, even though over half (53%) do feel that their managers support their career goals.



From tapping into the power of managers to gathering usage data, there's a wide variety of ways L&D pros help learners build skills

% of L&D pros globally who indicated that they are using these tactics to upskill and reskill their employees

Including people managers in driving employees learning and skill development



Using internal data and tools to identify skills gaps in the organization



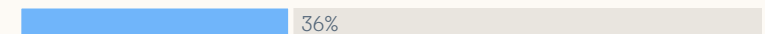
Creating career paths with course recommendations and skills needed



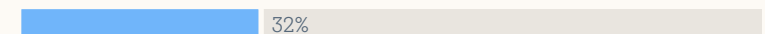
Setting up feedback loops to understand what skills to build or courses to recommend to the organization



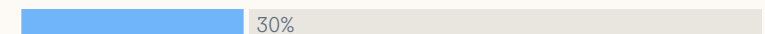
Working closely with your organization's executive team to align skilling programs to a revised business strategy, in response to COVID



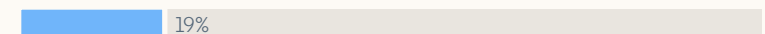
Working with talent acquisition and/or HR departments to identify skills needed for workforce planning



Leveraging skill assessments to validate skills in the current workforce



Using external data resources and tools to identify skills gaps in the industry



Creating large-scale reskilling programs to fill positions that are new or difficult to hire for



If internal mobility isn't on your 2021 L&D program list, then it should be

You have probably heard a lot about internal mobility lately. No, it's not about mobile phones. It is when a current employee moves from one job to another at the same company. More than half (51%) of L&D pros globally report internal mobility is even more of a priority since the pandemic struck, and that trend has shown up in LinkedIn data. We're seeing a sizable rise in internal mobility; from April through August 2020 the internal hiring rate was nearly 20% higher than it was during the same time in 2019. And internal mobility is happening all over the world, with the highest rate in Germany, where the focus on digital transformation is front and center of German learning programs.

51%

of L&D pros say that internal mobility is more of a priority now than before COVID-19

13%

of L&D pros say that their internal mobility programs are centralized to one team or person

Most organizations don't have an "internal mobility department" or designated person; that tells us that it's a distributed, cross-functional effort. However, L&D is already playing a critical role in internal mobility efforts. Over a third of L&D pros globally (39%) say that they are responsible for helping leaders identify current and future skills gaps, developing tools to help build internal mobility programs (33%), and helping to identify skills adjacencies (31%) — skill sets that are related to new skills that the organization wants to build.

How Nationwide's "Future of Work" program is reskilling and upskilling employees to prepare for the digital future

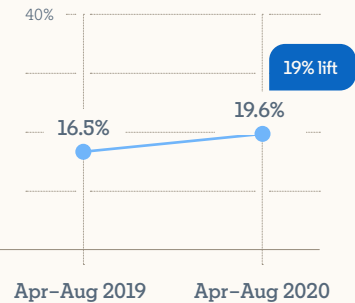


In January 2020, Nationwide made a significant commitment to their people and a major commitment to learning. A \$160 million investment in the **Future of Work** focused on enhanced benefits and incentives, and a five-year program to reskill and upskill 28,000 associates across the US with personalized learning curriculums. The goal is to help associates explore new learning focused on the skills of the future, and career progression opportunities, while also building digital literacy skills so they can keep pace with the technological change that's reshaping all industries.

Gale King, Chief Administrative Officer at Nationwide, said, "Upskilling is the investment we are making in ensuring that every associate is developing the new skills we believe are necessary for the future. This includes digital literacy and future capabilities (lead, innovate, and adapt). Each associate will receive eight hours of time annually to invest in their development with a personalized learning plan that's level specific."

Since COVID-19, internal hires make up a greater share of all hires

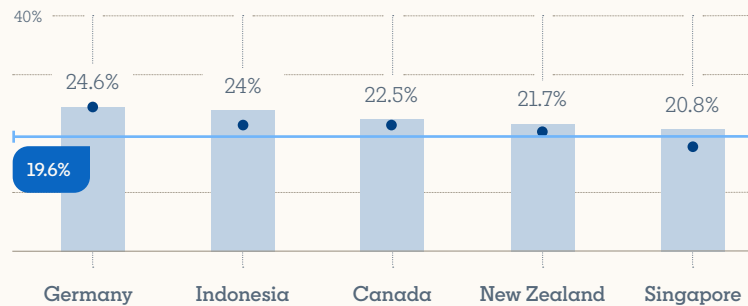
Internal mobility rates (share of all job changes that were movements within the same company)



Countries with the highest internal mobility rates since COVID-19

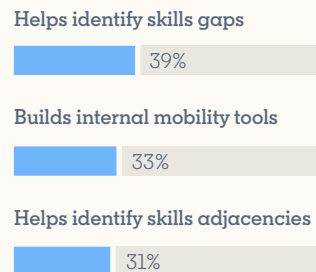
% of internal mobility rates April-August 2020

— Global average • 5-year average



L&D plays a critical role in internal mobility programs

% of L&D pros globally who are doing these tasks as part of their organization's internal mobility programs



"We want people to see that learning these skills, especially digital competencies, are just as important as learning about their job responsibilities," said **Tishia Damschroder**, Associate Vice President of Enterprise Learning and Development at Nationwide.

To help learners feel in control of their learning, the L&D team provides curated resources tied to the core skills, while also allowing for a flexible, "self-directed" experience. "We couldn't be more pleased with how the associates embraced it," said Tishia. "Many people are going well beyond their eight hours. Some completed it in the first week and immediately wanted more."

Laura Mierzejewski, Director of Learning Excellence, agrees: "Associates have shared with me that once they get into **LinkedIn Learning**, they find all this amazing content that goes well beyond what we've curated for the Future of Work."

Rebecca Schoepfer, SVP of Talent & Organization Effectiveness at Nationwide, is thrilled with how associates are embracing the Future of Work. "The Future of Work center is bringing a continuous learning culture to life, and it's clear that associates are taking advantage of it to ensure they are developing the skills needed for a rapidly changing world."

[Read more](#)

Learners without obvious skills adjacencies are making the leap into emerging roles

It's a commonly held belief that talent with “skills adjacencies” — or skills that are similar to other skills — are the people who can most easily make the leap from one role to another. But, we've found that's not entirely true. An analysis by **LinkedIn's data science team** conducted for the World Economic Forum showed that many employees who have moved into “emerging roles” over the past five years came from entirely different occupations. For example, half of the employees who moved into data science and artificial intelligence (AI) roles were coming from unrelated industries. That number jumps when we look at engineering roles (67%), content roles (72%), and sales (75%). What is even more interesting is that the people who transitioned into data and AI had the largest variation in skill profiles, with half of them possessing skills with low similarity.

The most inspiring takeaway from these insights is that people are much more capable of learning new skills and moving into higher-priority positions than traditionally thought. This will be critical given the acceleration of technological change and the increasingly pressing need to retrain and redeploy talent for the new world of work, as the World Economic Forum prediction tells us.



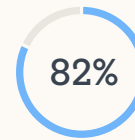
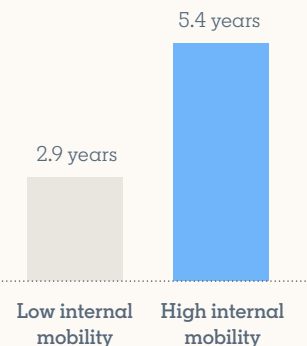
Internal mobility has an ROI that's easy to quantify: higher engagement and retention

Quantifying the ROI of learning is a very tough nut to crack, as we discussed in the first section of this report, but doing the same for internal mobility programs is much easier (finally, right?). According to LinkedIn data, employees at companies with high internal mobility stay almost two times longer than those who don't. That's extraordinary considering the impact of losing an employee in terms of both productivity and expense.

Not only are learners more likely to stay longer, but they are also much more engaged. Recent Glint data tells us that employees who have found new roles internally are three and a half times more likely to be engaged than those who haven't. It's a virtuous circle: 82% of L&D pros report that engaged learners are also more likely to participate in internal mobility programs. That's a win-win-win for you, your learners, and your organization.

Employees at companies with internal mobility stay almost 2x longer

Median employee tenure for companies with high and low internal mobility (top and bottom quartile)



of L&D pros agree that engaged learners are more likely to find new roles in their organization

Employees who move into new jobs internally are 3.5x more likely to be engaged employees than those who stay in their current jobs.

Employees are already learning to move into new roles, and managers approve

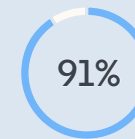
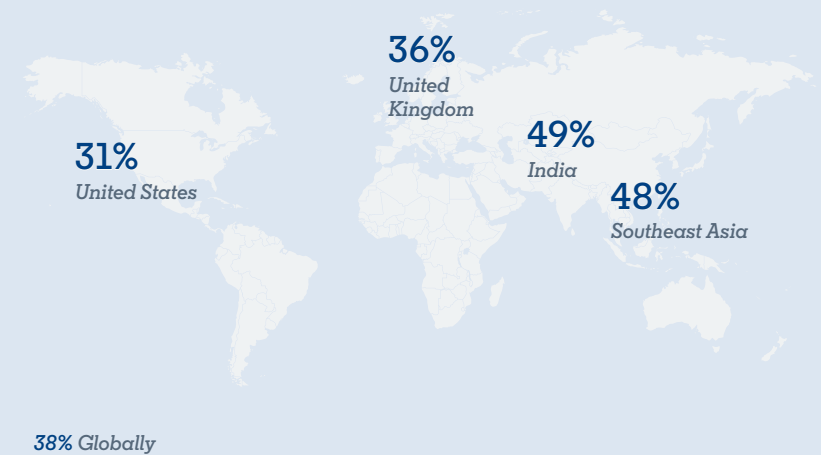
What do learners think about internal mobility? It turns out that they are already engaged in upskilling or reskilling to make the job change. Over a third (35%) of employees globally have used learning programs to help them find new opportunities in their organizations, though the number varies quite a bit from country to country. One thing that doesn't vary is the overwhelming number of managers (91%) who are supportive of helping their direct reports find new opportunities at their companies and who believe that learning can help close skills gaps on their teams.

Skill building and internal mobility programs make talent a renewable resource

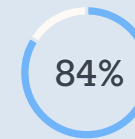
As talent developers and business leaders now living in the new world of work, we have a responsibility to our people to help them thrive and do work that is both engaging and makes a positive impact. When employees who are in roles that are no longer strategic can build the skills to successfully move into high-value roles that the organization needs, talent becomes a renewable resource that can quickly retool for whatever comes next. ■



% of learners who have spent time learning to help them perform a different function internally



91% of managers are supportive of their team finding other opportunities within their organizations



84% of managers agree that learning can help close skills gaps on their teams

The power skills of 2021: resilience, digital fluency, and making a case for creativity

There are definitely two things — among too many to count — that 2020's challenging circumstances helped us learn. First, we needed to build our resilience muscle to help us adapt to rapid-fire change. Second, we needed to learn new ways of working and collaborating in a virtual world. The good news is that resilience and digital fluency are exactly what we'll need to thrive in 2021.

What is resilience, and do learners understand the value?

In her LinkedIn Learning course **Enhancing Resilience**, **Gemma Leigh Roberts** defines resilience as a skill or mindset you can develop that will help you to navigate the new working world. “Enhancing resilience is all about creating your edge at work,” she explains. “It’s not just about learning to cope exceptionally well with challenges, but also learning how to thrive and reach your peak.” It’s about a mindset that helps employees perform well at work regardless of what changes and challenges come their way.

So, what do learners think? Nearly two-thirds (60%) agree that learning makes them more adaptable.

60%

% of employees globally believe that learning makes them more capable of adapting to change

*“A period of unprecedented disruption calls for transformation and learning agility. Now, more than ever, management acknowledges our employees need to be more agile and innovative. They also recognize the strategic role that L&D plays in preparing our organization for the changes that lie ahead.” **Read more***

Cheryll Ruth Lat-Agsaoay,
Vice President of Human Resources, SM Supermalls in Manila, Philippines



What is the difference between digital fluency and digital transformation?

According to Wikipedia, **digital transformation** is “the adoption of digital technology to transform services or businesses.” In other words, it’s how organizations use technology, talent, and processes to innovate and impact performance.

From an L&D perspective, digital transformation is a learning program, while being digitally fluent means that a learner has the technology skills to effectively operate in an increasingly digital world. It includes everything from understanding how to use the Microsoft Office suite to advanced artificial intelligence.

If you are a LinkedIn Learning customer, then we have a **digital transformation learning path** with over 40 hours of content to help your employees build their digital skills.



Learning Path

Master Digital Transformation

*“The UK Ministry of Defense needed to keep up with the evolving technical needs for soldiers and personnel. We identified a technical skills gap in our middle management layer. Accessible digital learning equipped the new ‘technical soldier’ with the understanding and qualifications needed for modern, data-driven warfare.” **Read more***

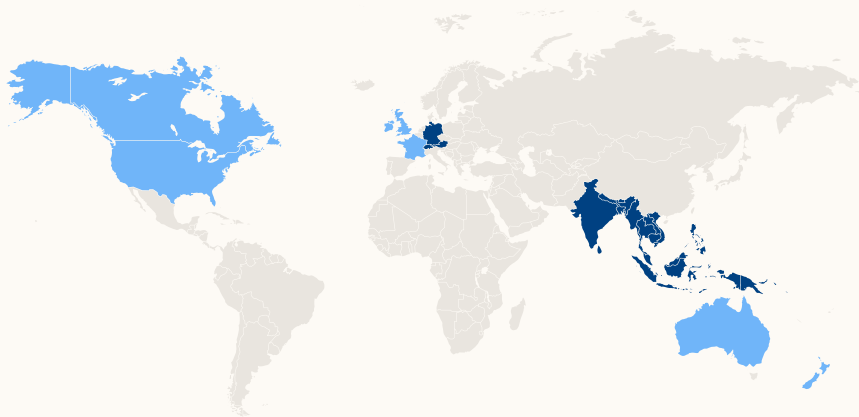
Captain Neil Donaghy, Strategy Development & Change Manager,
UK Ministry of Defense in Chichester, England

L&D pros globally cited these skills as being most important this year, in rank order

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Resilience and adaptability | 6 Leading through change |
| 2 Technology skills/
digital fluency | 7 Change management |
| 3 Communication across
remote or distributed teams | 8 Dealing with stress/
being more mindful |
| 4 Emotional intelligence | 9 Time management |
| 5 Cross-functional
collaboration | 10 Creativity |

Top 2 skills across countries surveyed:

- #1 Resilience | #2 Digital Fluency
- #1 Digital Fluency | #2 Resilience



*What's more important —
resilience or digital fluency?
It depends where you are.*

When we asked L&D pros globally to share which skills were most important to be successful in the new world of work, we gave them many options to choose from — from time management to communication across remote teams. The results that came back were loud and clear: resilience landed the number one slot, and digital fluency came in second.

Even more interesting was the discovery that resilience and digital fluency landed the #1 or #2 spots across every country we surveyed. Resilience was #1 in the US, Canada, France, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, with technology skills coming in second. In Germany, DACH, Southeast Asia, and India, the results were flipped, with technology skills ranking #1 and resilience #2.

Making the case for creativity

In 2019 and 2020, creativity took the top spot on the list of most in-demand soft skills that companies need. While it's always interesting to see what tops a list, it's equally important to see what lands at the bottom. This year, when we asked L&D pros which skills employees would need most in 2021, creativity was dead last.

In their recent book *The Curious Advantage*, Paul Ashcroft, Simon Brown, and Garrick Jones state that, "Curiosity is the greatest driver of value in the new digital age. Curiosity is at the heart of the skills required to successfully navigate our digital lives when all futures are uncertain."

Word to the wise — don't write off creativity. To help navigate our changing economic landscape, you need people on your team who can ideate on creative solutions to your biggest problems. Creativity will help us collectively adapt — even thrive — in the new world of work.

Case in point:

Johnson & Johnson Foundation & Sigma's LinkedIn Learning pilot helped nurses build resilience and advocate for PPE

Results from a two-month-long pilot of LinkedIn Learning courses for early career/bedside nurses overwhelmingly affirmed that fundamental personal leadership and resilience skills traditionally not provided in preclinical academic learning are critical to their professional success.

Despite the pilot running concurrent to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an 80% completion rate, and 100% of nurses surveyed noted that the program was worth their time, with some noting that a few courses provided them with "just-in-time" skills to advocate for PPE or other COVID-19-related training.

"The goal of this program is to build on the natural leadership skills of nurses early in their career," said Julie A. Cornell, Senior Manager, Johnson & Johnson Global Community Impact. "We believe nurses are agents of change, and they need to be part of a new, diverse generation of leaders leading and shaping health systems at all levels — from the bedside to the boardroom."

[Read more](#)



Food for thought:

Will companies or governments take the digital transformation lead?

Every wave of technology innovation creates more jobs than are eliminated. The same is true with the one we're in now. As we mentioned in the introduction, the **World Economic Forum** expects that 85 million jobs will be gone and 97 million jobs will be created by 2025 — many of them technology jobs requiring skills in artificial intelligence, blockchain, data security, emerging coding languages, and many more.

Both companies and governments are stepping up to help retrain millions of people for the digital economy. Last year, **Microsoft announced that they will upskill 25 million people** with LinkedIn Learning.

Countries are also investing in skill building to give their citizens access to opportunity and to set themselves up for future success in a digital world. For example, **Colombia** gave 500,000 Colombian students, teachers, and employees access to LinkedIn Learning to help them build both their technical and soft skills.

In 2021, we expect to see many more of these learning initiatives — from both the private and public sectors — as technological change accelerates at an exponential rate. ■

Diversity & Inclusion: L&D's critical role to help create a more equitable workplace

“At a time when the world is focused on racial justice, compounded by a pandemic that has disproportionately upended Black, Latino, and underserved communities, it is critical for companies — as the engines of economic opportunity and prosperity — to play a leading role in building a more equitable future for all. And as individuals, the importance of looking inward, as well as at the world around you to ensure you’re demonstrating the change you want to see, is the marker for initiating equitable change,” said **Rosanna Durruthy**, Vice President, Global Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at LinkedIn in a **blog post** announcing new LinkedIn research on the topic last October.

The challenges that Black employees face are profound. In the study, we found that one in four Black professionals feel they have been overlooked for career advancement opportunities because of their skin color, and a third feel they have missed out on career advancement opportunities due to a lack of internal mentorship and sponsorship programs. Black professionals also feel that they lack an ally at work — a person who stands up for others to proactively build inclusion in the workplace. Active allyship is a key driver to an inclusive culture, yet our research found that almost half of Black professionals (48%) do not know someone who they consider to be an ally at their place of work. This lack of allyship has consequences — over one in four (26%) Black professionals feel isolated at work, and one in three (33%) have experienced discrimination and/or microaggressions in their workplace.

Diversity & Inclusion is the right thing for people and the right thing for business

Investment in D&I programs are proven to have measurable impact, across many dimensions. Reports from **McKinsey**, **Deloitte**, **the Corporate Executive Board**, **Gartner**, **Harvard Business Review**, and **others** have overwhelmingly found that organizations with D&I programs see an enormous impact, including increased revenue and stock price. Other benefits include higher levels of creativity, performance, and productivity.

Companies with Diversity & Inclusion programs are:

22%

more likely to be seen as an industry leader with high-caliber talent

12%

more likely to be seen as an inclusive workplace for people of diverse backgrounds

Based on global **LinkedIn data**

Diversity & Inclusion is a top talent development priority in 2021

We clearly have a long way to go to create a more inclusive and equitable business culture (and world), but we're seeing some steps in the right direction. D&I is now top of mind for a majority of executives globally. According to our survey results, nearly two-thirds (64%) of L&D pros globally — and nearly three-quarters (73%) in North America — report that their executives have made D&I programs a priority. And talent developers are creating programs to support these initiatives; when we asked L&D pros about the programs they plan to run in 2021, D&I ranked #2 globally (behind “leading through change” programs) and #1 in North America.

Programs that L&D pros globally will deploy in 2021, in rank order:

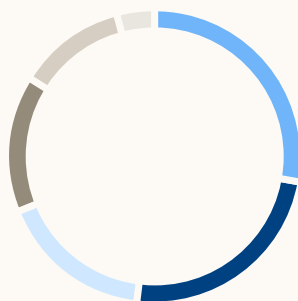
- 1 *Leading through change*
- 2 *Diversity and inclusion*
- 3 *Large-scale upskilling or reskilling*
- 4 *Digital transformation*
- 5 *Virtual lunch and learns*

64% of L&D pros globally and 73% of L&D pros in North America report that D&I programs are a priority in 2021

Most often, D&I and L&D partner to deliver joint strategies and programs

As organizations realize that D&I needs to be infused across all learning programs to drive lasting change and foster a culture of inclusion, the lines are blurring between L&D and D&I teams. When we asked L&D pros globally how they work with their organization's D&I strategy, the responses ran the gamut — from D&I teams (24%) or L&D teams (12%) responsible for diversity and inclusion, to both teams partnering to deliver these programs together (28%). While this tells us that there is no single way to approach D&I, we can say that D&I will be a higher priority for the majority of L&D organizations in 2021: 71% currently have a D&I program or are interested in starting one this year.

What is the role of L&D in your organization's diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategy?



- 28% L&D and D&I teams work closely together on a joint D&I strategy and programs
- 24% D&I team is primarily responsible for D&I programs
- 17% My organization does not have a D&I program, and there are no plans to create one
- 15% My organization does not have a D&I program, but has just started one or would like to start one soon
- 12% No D&I team, L&D team is primarily responsible for D&I
- 4% Other

% of L&D pros globally who responded affirmative to this question

MediaKind's D&I program involved their CEO, a competition, and sensitivity to regional and cultural differences



MediaKind, a 1,200-person Ericsson spinoff operating in 29 countries, was ready with learning content and programs to support employees when the call for social justice rang across the globe last summer.

MediaKind's CEO immediately sent a note out to the organization reiterating his commitment to D&I, which was then followed by an email from MediaKind's Chief People Officer **Dave Medrano** with recommended D&I learning content from LinkedIn Learning.

"We have a lot of diversity in our organization — national, country of origin, language — and we worked hard to be sensitive to that and ensure that our learning programs and communications weren't US-centric. After all, only 20% of our employees are based in the US," said Dave.

To help address regional and cultural differences, MediaKind's CEO asked his direct reports to facilitate live discussions with their teams about D&I. Dave also focused on promoting Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIBs) courses that are applicable globally. "Unconscious bias is a universal challenge and a connective tissue when words and jargon fall down," he said. "If you focus on equality, then you won't miss the mark. We offered a wide spectrum of courses during a learning competition, and DIBs courses naturally rose to the top."

[Read more](#)

Your go-to resource guide for D&I

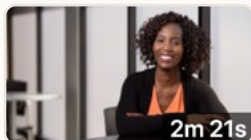
Creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace is an ongoing process and continuing to learn about D&I is a lifelong commitment. In that spirit, we'd like to share some D&I resources to help you craft your program this year. It is by no means exhaustive, but it is a good place to start. ■

Understanding and confronting unconscious bias



[Confronting Bias: Thriving across Our Differences](#)

by Verna Myers and
Arianna Huffington



[Unconscious Bias](#)

by Stacey Gordon



[Bystander Training: From Bystander to Upstander](#)

by Catherine Mattice Zundel

Creating diverse and inclusive workspaces



[Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#)

by Pat Wadors



[Rolling Out a DIBs Training Program in Your Company](#)

by Dereca Blackmon

Having inclusive conversations and communicating across cultures



[Skills for Inclusive Conversations](#)

by Mary-Frances Winters



[Communicating about Culturally Sensitive Issues](#)

by Daisy Lovelace



[Communicating across Cultures](#)

by Tatiana Kolovou

Don't fall behind: the fastest-growing skills in business, sales, IT, and engineering

It's a commonly held belief that the average life span of a skill — particularly a hard skill — is five years. Today, it seems like that life span is shortening, with new skills emerging at a more rapid pace than in years past. As a talent developer, it makes your job tougher to stay up to speed on the latest trends, let alone be ahead of the curve.

We're here to help.

Here are the fastest-growing skills in business, sales, IT, and engineering to incorporate into your 2021 planning cycles — we've also included links to blog posts listing courses you can share with your employees to help them build these essential skills.²

Business

1. Customer Experience
2. Digital Marketing
3. Data Analysis
4. Financial Statements and Forecasting
5. Analytical Skills

[Read more](#)

Sales

1. Data Analysis
2. Technical Support
3. Customer Relationship Management
4. Sales Process
5. Consulting

[Read more](#)

Information Technology

1. Cybersecurity
2. Network Engineering
3. Analytical Skills
4. Scrum
5. Information Security

[Read more](#)

Engineering

1. React.js
2. Docker
3. AWS
4. Node.js
5. MongoDB

[Read more](#)

LinkedIn data that helped us determine the fastest-growing skills: **722M+ members in over 200 countries • 55M companies • 14M jobs • 115,000 schools • 16,700 courses • 36,000 skills**

Learner engagement in hybrid workplaces



Want to win the hearts and minds of Gen Z learners?

Two words: Career growth.

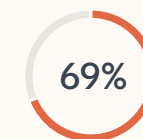
What happens when a completely digital generation — one that didn't know life before the smartphone and social media — all of a sudden needs to learn and work in a completely virtual environment? It turns out that they are in their element, and they mean business. We asked Gen Z learners (ages 18–24 years old) how they like to learn and why. Then, we asked our Insights team about Gen Z learning habits on LinkedIn Learning. Taken together, we have a more complete picture of the Gen Z learner to help fuel your learning programs.

Gen Zers are learning more now than ever before

When the pandemic hit, Gen Z flocked to learning resources and continued to learn at higher levels throughout the year — more than any other age group. In fact, 67% of Gen Z learners said that they spent more time learning in 2020 than they did the previous year. The data we gathered from the LinkedIn Learning platform bears that out. The number of Gen Z learners on LinkedIn Learning increased by two and a half times in 2020, compared to 2019, representing the highest increase of any generation. Once they found the online learning platform, they stayed to learn more. In fact, Gen Z learners watched 50% more hours per learner in 2020, compared to 2019. We also saw the upward trend in learning time in our survey data, with 69% reporting that they are carving out more time to learn.

The number of Gen Z learners increased by 2.5x last year.³

Gen Z watched 50% more hours per learner in 2020.⁴

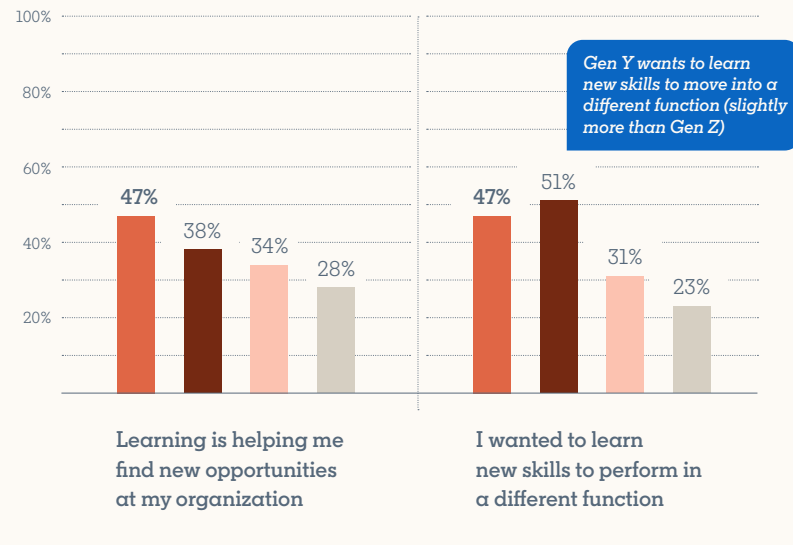
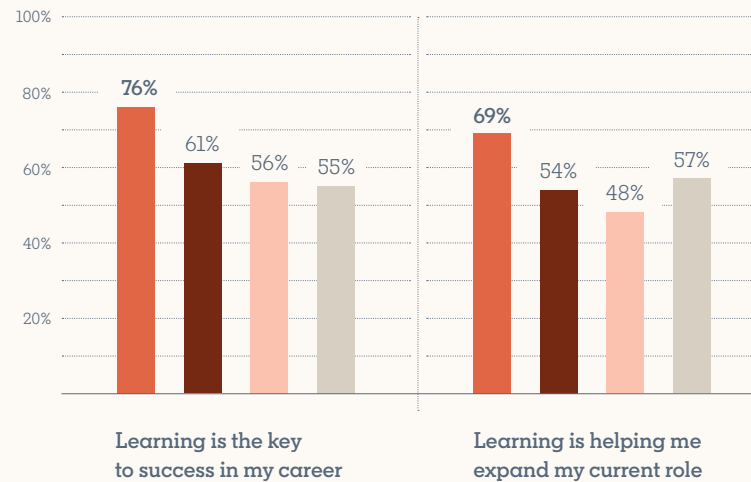


of Gen Z learners reported that they are making more time to learn

The key to Gen Z's heart is career growth

% of learners globally who agreed with the statements below

- **Gen Z:** 1997–2012 (ages 9–24)
- **Gen Y (Millennials):** 1981–1996 (ages 25–40)
- **Gen X:** 1965–1980 (ages 41–56)
- **Boomer:** 1946–1964 (ages 57–75)



They are career-minded to the core

Many of us have spent time learning how to work remotely, manage stress, build more resilience, or create a more equitable workplace. Gen Z spent time doing those things, too. But if you really want to motivate a younger employee, then focus on career growth.

Gen Z learners will spend time learning if it can help them perform well in their current jobs (69%), build the skills needed to work in a different function (47%), or find new roles internally (hello, internal mobility) — more than any other generation in the workforce. And, over three-quarters (76%) of Gen Z employees believe that learning is the key to a successful career. Music to our ears, right?

Gen Z learners are building their hard skill foundations

Older generations of learners are focused more on developing their soft skills, like communication and leadership. But Gen Z employees are spending their time learning how to be more productive (who isn't?), and on business and technology basics — from learning how to code Python to understanding online marketing foundations. In the list of top courses that Gen Z took last year, you'll notice that a majority of them are hard skills.

Fun fact: Gen Z spends 12% more of their time on LinkedIn Learning building their hard skills when compared to the average learner.

Top courses taken by Gen Z on LinkedIn Learning in 2020:



1. [The Six Morning Habits of High Performers](#)

by Pete Mockaitis



2. [Learning Python](#)

by Joe Marini



3. [Excel Essential Training \(Office 365/Microsoft 365\)](#)

by Dennis Taylor

4. [Strategic Thinking](#)

by Dorie Clark

5. [Learning Data Analytics](#)

by Robin Hunt

6. [Time Management: Working from Home](#)

by Dave Crenshaw

7. [Online Marketing Foundations](#)

by Brad Batesole

8. [Learning Excel 2019](#)

by David Rivers

9. [Project Management Foundations](#)

by Bonnie Biafore

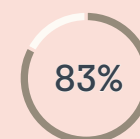
10. [Programming Foundations: Fundamentals](#)

by Annyce Davis

They turn to online learning to sharpen their hard skills and satisfy their curiosity

When it comes to online learning, Gen Z is a bit of a dichotomy. On the one hand, they want to learn new skills to uplevel their performance (83%), and on the other, they want to explore topics that they're curious about (73%). These numbers ranked higher than any other generation when we asked them the same questions.

Work

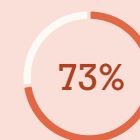


want to learn skills to perform better in their current role

Pro tip:

Make sure that course recommendations are highly personalized to their role and career goals. This was also the most important product feature that Gen Z values.

Personal



want to learn about a topic they are personally interested in

Pro tip:

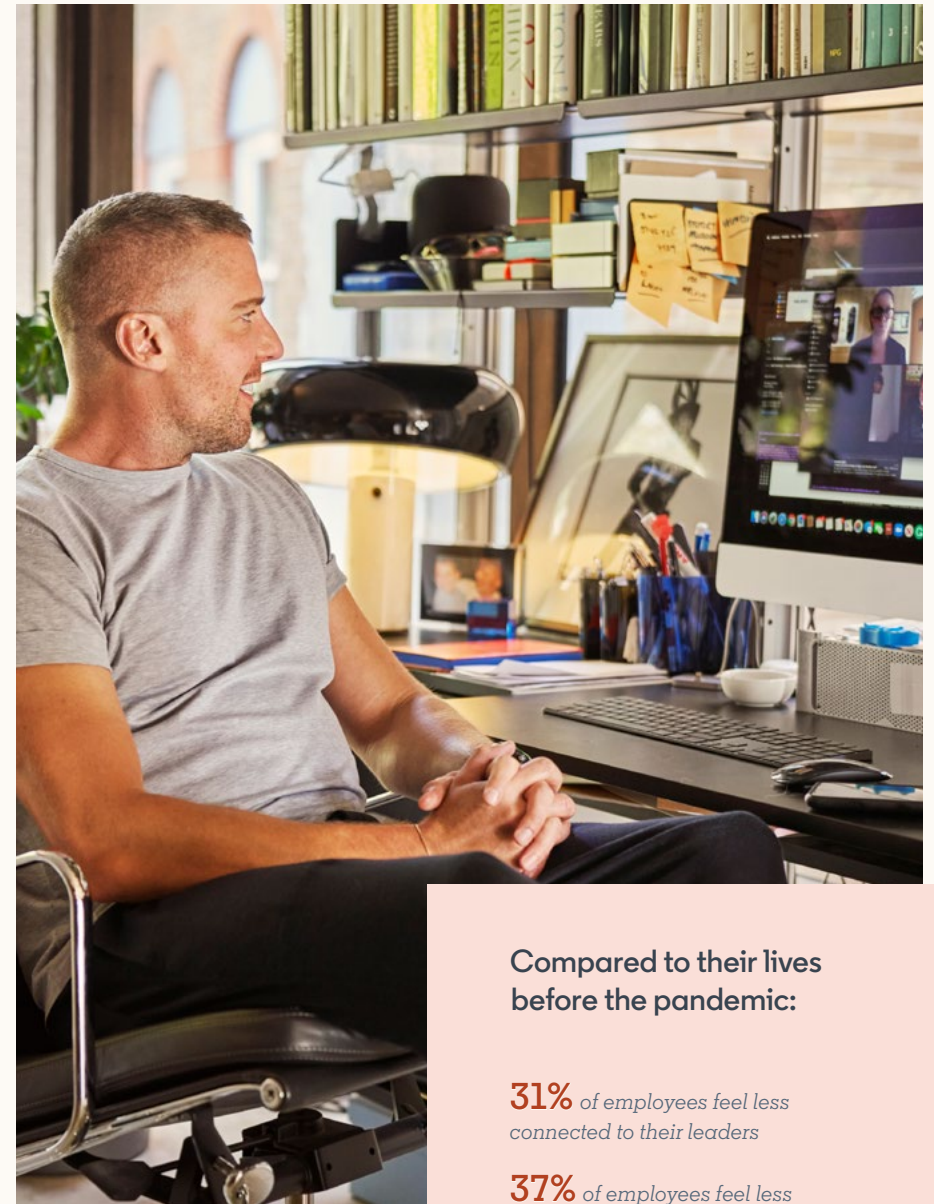
Find out what they are personally passionate about or sprinkle in a few course recommendations on photography or playing an instrument. Gen Z learners will thank you for it.

% of Gen Z learners globally who said that they used online learning programs in the last six months

People learn better together: 30x lift in learner engagement

Many of us spent the last year being physically distant from friends and family, and sometimes it can be...lonely. Humans are social creatures by nature, and recent circumstances have us creating community in new and innovative ways. Think about all of the new ways of connecting that have emerged over the last year. A stationary bike is nice, but when it's connected to a Peloton community, it's incredibly powerful. Zoom and Teams are now household names, with many of us spending an equal amount of time on personal video conference calls as on professional ones.

You can bet on it — your learners are more lonely now than they were a year ago. According to a **Glint-designed survey** of 2,393 LinkedIn members, employees experienced less connection to leaders (31% of respondents), teammates (37%), and even their friends (40%). As a way to combat this isolation, we're seeing our social features explode.



Compared to their lives before the pandemic:

31% of employees feel less connected to their leaders

37% of employees feel less connected to their teammates

40% of employees feel less connected to their friends

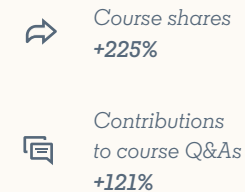
With the dramatic decrease of ILT, we were curious if community-based learning was having an impact on engagement. When we looked at the data from LinkedIn Learning, we found that learners who use social features on average watched 30 times more hours of learning content. Hello, higher learner engagement! L&D pros globally deeply understand the power of community and the benefits of learning together beyond pure engagement. They believe that learning is more engaging when people learn together (86%), that employees who learn together are more successful (91%), and that it helps create a sense of belonging (92%). Even better, employees who feel a sense of belonging are 5.2 times more likely to be engaged. The data clearly demonstrates a beautiful virtuous circle of learning, belonging, and engagement.

Learners who used social features spent 30x more hours learning than those who didn't.⁵

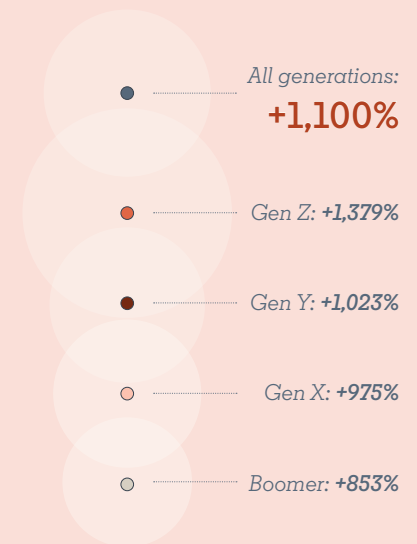
Community-based learning connects learners to colleagues, peers, and experts to drive higher engagement and inspire skill building. It uses blended online learning (VILT plus online learning), supported by social features — such as course recommendations from managers or administrators, sharing learnings on chat software, participating in online groups, or asking questions (and receiving answers) from instructors or influencers. Since the pandemic struck, we've seen an enormous increase in usage of all of these features. For example, there's been a 1,100% increase in people joining Learning Groups, with joins from younger generations much higher than their older colleagues. There was also a 225% increase in courses shared with a learner's professional network, and a 121% increase in activity — that includes both learners and instructors — in course Q&As.

By infusing more community-based learning programs and technologies, your employees will not only feel more connected, they'll spend more time learning. Boom. ■

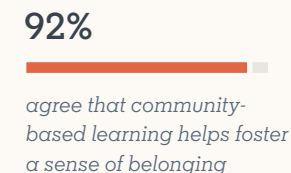
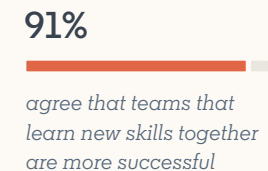
There was a massive increase in the use of social features in 2020:⁶



Growth in learners joining Learning Groups:⁷



L&D pros globally believe in the power of community-based learning:



"There's a social learning element to LinkedIn Learning that makes it quite engaging. Being able to connect with instructors and fellow learners, for example, and having the opportunity to learn from one another via the Q&A feature helps make learning more sticky. It also ingrains a habit of learning in moments of need, which is fundamental to developing a self-directed learning attitude."

David Hendrick,
Director of People Development, Centre for Healthcare Innovation at Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore

Pop Quiz: How well do you know your managers?

Unlocking the power of managers to inspire learning on their teams is the perennial challenge for L&D pros globally. As the world of work has changed, so too has the role of the manager. Cover up the answer key on the right side of the page to test how well you know your managers.

1. What do managers spend more time learning?

Choose one.

- a. Hard skills
- b. Soft skills
- c. An equal mix of hard and soft skills
- d. Personal hobbies

Answer: b, more soft skills

Compared to the average learner, managers focus 24% more of their learning on soft skills.

Source: LinkedIn Learning data

2. True or false?

Managers who have the room to learn and grow will be 2.5x more likely to be happy and engaged and 2.3x more likely to say that they will probably be with their company in two years.

Answer: false

Both stats are much higher. They are actually 3.5x more likely to be happy and engaged and 3.3x more likely to want to stay at their organization for two years. Talk about measuring the impact of learning!

Source: Glint data

3. What skills do most managers want to learn?

Choose one.

- a. How to lead through change
- b. How to manage a virtual team
- c. Both a and b
- d. Neither a nor b

Answer: c, both a and b

An astounding 80% of managers want to learn more about leading through change, and two-thirds (66%) want to learn about how to manage a team virtually. That's good news because those skills will definitely come in handy this year.

Source: % of managers surveyed who indicated they wanted to learn these skills



4. What is the biggest factor in manager burnout?

Choose one.

- a. Feeling disconnected from colleagues
- b. Unclear job responsibilities
- c. Conflict between demands at home and work
- d. Overwhelming workload

Answer: d, overwhelming workload

All of these pressures contribute to burnout, but trying to shoulder an overwhelming workload (40%) is the biggest one, followed by feeling disconnected from colleagues (37%), and trying to balance home and work responsibilities (34%), with unclear job responsibilities coming in at 30%.

Source: Sept 2020 LinkedIn omnibus survey

5. True or false?

70% of managers agreed that their direct reports who spend more time learning have higher employee satisfaction scores.

Answer: true

As learning leaders and HR pros, we've always known that learning usually correlates to higher employee satisfaction, but it turns out that nearly three-quarters (70%) of managers do, too.

Source: % of managers surveyed who agreed with this statement

Top 10 L&D tactics that drive engagement in hybrid workplaces

Learner engagement has always been a tough nut to crack. Add the challenge of a hybrid workplace, where you have some employees working remotely and some in the office, and it may feel daunting. But know this: you're prepared. Every step you've taken toward blended learning in 2020, however big or small, is essential for getting and keeping learners engaged — no matter what comes next.

Use these 10 tactics from your L&D peers to drive learner engagement to new levels in 2021.

#1

Create relevant learning paths.

Especially at a time when everyone is feeling decision fatigue, make it easy for your employees to find, follow, and focus on a learning path they're interested in. Create your own or tap into some of the LinkedIn Learning paths that learners have loved this year, like staying productive at home, diversity and inclusion, and well-being. Throw in a ukulele lesson. Why not?

*Sundt created roughly 70 learning paths to support every operational position within the company. They sent out announcements about what was surging to get employees excited about the resource. **Read more***

#2

Let your guiding principles lead the way.

At LinkedIn, we have four that helped us transition to meet learner needs in 2020:

- 1) Great content
- 2) Great delivery of that content
- 3) Operational excellence
- 4) Delivery of a great learning experience

*"If you nail all four, regardless of whether people are in a virtual or in-person setting, then the learning will stick." **Read more***

Kevin Delaney,
VP of Learning & Development, LinkedIn in San Jose, California

#3

Set up a digital training calendar.

Include links to daily offerings, such as VILT courses, an online course of the day (or week), and even in-person training if still applicable. You can also enable learners to sign up for a VILT course right from the LinkedIn Learning platform.

Being prescriptive about learning and adding “learning times” in calendars can go a long way to helping employees make time for learning.



#4

Assign “pre-watch” online learning before a VILT session.

It doesn't have to be lengthy; it just needs to be something to get the juices flowing. Whether you're focusing on helping employees build technology skills or raising awareness about unconscious bias, assigning learners prework with online learning content can help make virtual live conversations richer and more impactful.

“I had two training courses for new graduates planned, and we had to quickly pivot and make them virtual courses. We assigned online courses before the real-time session — so learners didn't go in cold, and we had content to discuss — and then after as a follow-up. It worked really well.” [Read more](#)

Lenny Deverill-West,
Learning & Development Manager, CDK Global in Totton, England

#5

Less is more.

Just like this tip.

“Someone wise once said that your mind can only absorb what your butt can endure. In this environment, less is more. I'm thinking about 60–90 minutes of live interaction a quarter.” [Read more](#)

Kevin Delaney,
VP of Learning & Development, LinkedIn in San Jose, California

#6

Make learning social.

In 2020, we were forced to take social events online, from happy hours and book clubs, to watch parties and weddings. Now it's time to apply that same creativity to learning, like using Microsoft Teams to keep people connected. Employees can take a course together, then discuss what they've learned through chat.

"Blending these online learning experiences helps keep learning social, and can help build a community centered around learning," [Read more](#)

Kirsten Dale,
HR Director, Global Talent and Capability, Treasury Wine Estates
in Melbourne, Australia

#7

Tap into chat.

Chat is where learners are hanging out these days, so make it a home for learning, too. Many organizations use Microsoft Teams as their primary chat collaboration and communication tool.

"One of the first things that we did is set up a quick portal with content about how to use Microsoft Teams more effectively, as that was our primary chat collaboration and communication tool. The technology may be new, but many of the techniques are the same." [Watch more](#)

Simon Brown,
Chief Learning Officer, Novartis in Basel, Switzerland

#8

Reimagine how to deliver live virtual.

Don't just convert in-person training into a video conference environment. Start fresh and bring a new perspective to building for live virtual: Can you drop the slides and just have a conversation? Is the content sufficiently modular? Is it too long for online consumption? Should we have virtual breakouts?

"We can't just port classroom training onto an online platform and expect it to work with the same level of effectiveness." [Read more](#)

Ann Ann Low,
Senior Director of L&D in APAC, LinkedIn in Singapore

#9

Get close to learner needs.

To deliver learning that's engaging, you have to understand what employees want. Reach out, ask, listen, and check in — again and again and again.

"Spend as much time understanding the needs of your learners as you do understanding the needs of the business and you're going to have a breakthrough program where everyone is engaged." [Watch more](#)

Alyson DeMaso,
CEO, Raising Beauty and former VP of Learning and Capability Building
at the Estée Lauder Companies in New York City



#10

Help learners find their purpose.

Give learners space for self-directed learning and access to a breadth of content to help them find what inspires them. Also help them find their purpose — when people can tie their learning to a bigger purpose, they'll be more engaged in the experience and more motivated to keep their learning journey going.

*"We believe that people learn better when they know what they're truly, truly passionate about. What is it that gives people meaning? When they discover what they're truly passionate and purposeful about, they learn much more easily — 92% of employees who have been through our Discover Your Purpose workshop have higher engagement levels, feel more well at work, and feel more ready to learn." **Watch more***

Leena Nair,
CHRO, Unilever in London, England

Give it a go: learning for good

When we asked L&D pros globally about the learning programs they were planning to deploy this year, “learning for good” came in dead last. We can take some guesses as to why: In a year like 2020, when you’re doing everything you can to remake your programs and meet increasing (and changing) learner demands in this new world — all while your budgets are under constant scrutiny — philanthropy may not be the top priority.

But we’re going to challenge you on this one. Especially in this tumultuous moment, giving back feels like the right thing to do. It’s also good for business. We walk, run, and bike for charity — why not learn for charity?



The Campaign

Avnet’s Learning for a Cause — COVID-19

The Call

If employees reached the goal of 9,000 hours of learning in May 2020, Avnet would donate \$30,000 to the “COVID-19 Solidary Response Fund” supporting the WHO.

The Goal

Support the communities they live in and foster a culture of self-directed learning.

Mission Accomplished

- **9,843 hours** of learning from global employees in the month of May
- **\$30,000 donation** to the COVID-19 response fund
- **~60% increase** in LinkedIn Learning activation
- Increased use of LinkedIn Learning by managers

Winning Strategies

- **Clear learning goal**
- **Course recommendations from execs**
- **Internal partners**
- **Regional alignment**

“The LinkedIn Learning challenge was a perfect way to engage employees in supporting those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic while improving their own skills through LinkedIn classes. The effort was a big success and brought employees together from all over the globe to focus on learning while doing good.”

Jeanne Forbis,
Avnet Cares Coordinator

“When asked who won the challenge, the answer was simple — the charity won.”

Sumy Joy,
Learning and Development Partner at Avnet

Are you up for the challenge?

Make 2021 the year that learning gives back — and tell us all about it in the L&D Connect group.

As Allianz Technology and Avnet have proven, when you create “learning for good” initiatives that tie hours of learning to donations, it can help you drive engagement, motivate employees to upskill, and foster a culture of continuous learning.

Get more details about how the L&D teams achieved this success in the [Avnet blog post](#) and [Allianz case study](#).



Allianz Technology

The Campaign

Allianz Technology's Learning for a Good Cause

The Call

For every hour that employees spent on LinkedIn Learning in a three-month period, Allianz Technology would donate one euro.

The Goal

Inspire employees to use LinkedIn Learning to develop their professional skills and support animal protection and environmental conservation.

Mission Accomplished

- 26,003 hours of learning completed
- €26,003 donated to “Frankfurt Zoological Society” and “Sea Shepherd”
- 5% increase in LinkedIn Learning registrations
- Reached donation target in just three weeks

Winning Strategies

- Alignment with company's core values
- Enthusiastic execs
- Extensive internal promotion plan
- Gamification

“This is definitely one of the most exciting projects I have worked on at Allianz so far. We’ve done something positive, motivated our employees to learn, and had a lot of fun implementing this initiative.”

Linja Fraenz,
L&D Expert, Allianz Technology SE

“Learning for a Good Cause allows us to offer employees an additional incentive to make use of the opportunities for development, while at the same time raising money to help save our planet. It’s an initiative that really benefits everyone.”

Alessia Vecchio,
former Group Head of Inclusion & Employee Experience at Allianz



Looking ahead:

What you need to know

Parting thoughts:

Learnings and advice from L&D pros around the world

*We'll leave you with some inspiration and
guidance from your peers in talent development.*

Keep showing up

"I'm convinced that if we as learning professionals show up day in, day out, week in, week out, and bring inspiring programs that communicate effectively with people, then we can raise the bar and help people do the very best work in their career."

Watch keynote at virtual summit

Kevin Delaney,

VP of Learning & Development, LinkedIn in San Jose, California

Adopt a "blank sheet of paper" mentality

"Go in every day and say 'How might I do my job today if I were starting right now with the resources that I have available to me today? How might I be more efficient? How might I connect in a more impactful way?'"

Watch keynote at virtual summit

Carla Harris,

Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Morgan Stanley
in Montclair, New Jersey

Cultivate your "inner game"

"A pandemic requires a different set of skills: a combination of both 'outer game' (e.g., high performance, industry domain expertise, etc.) and 'inner game' (a sense of purpose, service, personal resilience and mastery, and agility). If you have the foundations of a great inner game, you can learn new skills and manage the outer game of leadership."

Watch keynote at virtual summit

Leena Nair,

CHRO, Unilever in London, England

Encourage students to become teachers

“In China, we developed a peer-to-peer learning approach, where learners present what they’ve learned to their wider team. Having discussions about how you can apply learning to your working environment is a critical part of changing behaviour.”

[Read case study](#)

Dorna Eriksson Shafiei,
VP of Talent Management at Atlas Copco

📍 [Stockholm, Sweden](#)

Pay attention to the “4 Ps”

“I use the ‘4Ps’ to align learning programs with what learners need most. What are the *patterns* you’re seeing with leaders and teams? What are the *problems* that your teams and leaders are facing when they’re trying to achieve their objectives? What are the *priorities* of the business moving forward? And, what are the *pain points* that your HR leaders are experiencing the most?”

[Watch panel at virtual summit](#)

Naphtali Bryant,
Director, Learning & Organization Development Netflix in Los Angeles, California

Encourage employees to #LearnLikeAnOwner

“As soon as new employees walk in the door, we tell them that learning is a way we expect them to be engaged and encourage everyone in the company to commit to learning something new every day. We’re creating a movement that ignites a learning passion. That’s the foundation of a learning culture transformation.”

[Watch panel at virtual summit](#)

Pamay Bassey,
Chief Learning & Diversity Officer, the Kraft Heinz Company
in Chicago, Illinois

Don’t forget to inventory cross-functional skills

“Skills are the currency of the future. We are working to identify through our systems and through the data, the skills the organization needs, especially the functional and cross-functional strategic skills.” [Watch panel at virtual summit](#)

Laura Krsnik,
Head of Global Learning, Merck in Darmstadt, Germany

Listen to your internal customers

“We’re talking to our internal customers more about what they want to learn and what the best format will be. We’ve also been joining our software development teams’ virtual stand-ups every week and using [Glint](#) surveys to identify focus areas like collaboration tools. Then, we’re able to go back to them with the right, relevant solution rather than just the programs we think they want.” [Read blog post](#)

Jacqueline Gay,
L&D Manager at TomTom

📍 [Amsterdam, Netherlands](#)

Involve your “business sounding board” early on

“Our ‘business sounding board’ — a group of more than 30 GMs and VPs — has been with us from the very early stages of the design and piloting of our Group Leadership Portfolio module. We do this to better understand their needs, opportunities, and challenges around the specific skill that we’re going to help them build. We also use this group as our sponsors to promote the program.” [Watch panel at virtual summit](#)

Dorna Eriksson Shafiei,
VP of Talent Management at Atlas Copco in Stockholm, Sweden

Be intentional when setting personal and professional goals

“When we’re intentional about what we want in our personal lives and can apply that same level of personal commitment to our professional development, this can show up as being more deliberate about setting goals for ourselves and our teams. With so much out of our control, something you can control is setting an intention that you can use to be successful in your personal and work life.” [Read blog post](#)

Jodi Atkinson,
Senior Director of Global Learning, Deltek in Boston, Massachusetts

Measure your organization’s cultural competence

“Use the [Intercultural Development Inventory](#) to measure behavioral change. We have people take it, we do some education and learning plans, and then nine months or a year later we have them take it again. Most of the time they have moved along this continuum, so we can measure that they’re more culturally competent.” [Watch webcast](#)

Mary-Frances Winters,
President and CEO of the Winters Group and a LinkedIn Learning Instructor in Charlotte, North Carolina



Track the impact of learning with employee survey responses

“We’ll be looking at the response to questions in our employee surveys about whether our people have good opportunities to learn and develop and whether they actively seek out development opportunities. Those are our most important KPIs, and we’re looking forward to tracking progress against them.”

[Read case study](#)

Johannes Lystbæk,
Learning & Development Manager, LEGO Group in Billund, Denmark

Incorporate learning into individual development plans

“We take developing people very seriously, and we intensively use individual development plans (IDPs) to map an employee’s performance, and then carefully handpick courses to help them reach their highest potential, based on their role and required skills.” [Read blog post](#)

Gauri Butti,
Senior Manager of Learning & Organizational Development, CDK Global in Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Stay close to who is defining the new normal

“Now that most CEOs are prioritizing learning, it’s more important than ever to stay close to whoever is defining what the new normal looks like. L&D needs to be part of those conversations and address the reskilling and upskilling needs that will inevitably come up. That is the way to not only keep L&D’s seat at the table, but also continue to be a strategic partner shaping how work will happen in the future.” [Read blog post](#)

Simon Brown,
Chief Learning Officer, Novartis in Basel, Switzerland ■

Acknowledgements

Editor-in-Chief

[Amanda Van Nuys](#)

LinkedIn Learning Editorial

[Peter Wilson-Tobin](#)

[Tara Kusumoto](#)

[Laurie Moot](#)

[Paul Petrone](#)

[Rachel Lefkowitz](#)

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Methodology

We surveyed 1,260 L&D Professionals and 814 Learners in November 2020 in English, French, and German. The full list of countries we surveyed include: US, UK, India, Canada, Australia, Germany, Singapore, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, France, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Hong Kong, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, Iceland, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Austria, and Switzerland. We also surveyed 3,080 people managers in English who self-identified as having direct reports globally in November and December 2020.

1. We looked at the top 100 courses watched by L&D professionals between Jan 1, 2020, and Nov 30, 2020. We then compared the popularity of these courses among L&D pros to their popularity among all learners, to identify the courses where L&D pros most “over-index.” The courses highlighted here are the courses that L&D pros are more likely to watch than the average learner.
2. Among the top 100 skills added by LinkedIn members to their profiles, we identified the skills that had the greatest growth in the number of professionals with the skill from August 2019 to August 2020. We excluded common skills which are possessed by a majority of members.
3. We compared the number of Gen Z learners on LinkedIn Learning in 2020 with 2019.
4. We looked at the number of hours per learner watched by Gen Z in 2020 compared to 2019.
5. Compared learners who engaged with social features (course shares, Q&A, learning groups) at some point in a 12-month period (Oct 2019–Oct 2020) with those who did not.
6. Percent (%) growth of learners sharing courses and engaging with Q&A, comparing the first five months of the pandemic (March–July 2020) with the previous five months (Oct 2019–Feb 2020).
7. Percent (%) growth of learners joining Learning Groups comparing the first five months of the pandemic (March–July 2020) with the previous five months (Oct 2019–Feb 2020).

How can LinkedIn Learning prepare your team for what's ahead?

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

Let's chat

Request a [demo](#) or contact sales at 1-844-587-5735.



