

4th Annual

# 2020 Workplace Learning Report

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



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# 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:

1. How are learning leaders resourced to scale learning and engage executives to create a culture of learning?
2. How do L&D pros measure the impact of learning and define learner engagement?
3. What can talent developers do to transform managers into learning champions?
4. 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** who share 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



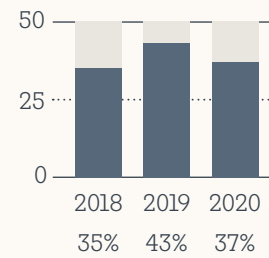
# L&D budgets continue to grow and shift to online learning

**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.

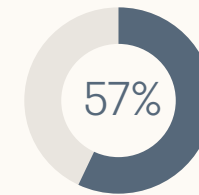
Senior leaders understand the value that L&D delivers to their organizations. That's why the constant struggle for budget and resources has diminished over the last few years. In fact, in the [LinkedIn Learning 2019 Workplace Learning Report](#), only 27% of L&D pros cited budget constraints as a top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

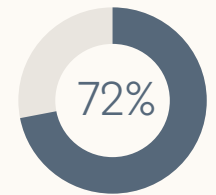
% of L&D pros who expect their budget to grow



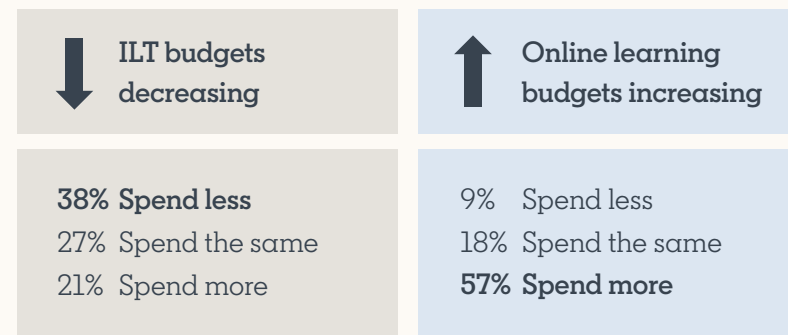
% of L&D pros who expect to spend more on online learning globally



% of L&D pros in **India** who expect budgets to grow



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



# 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.

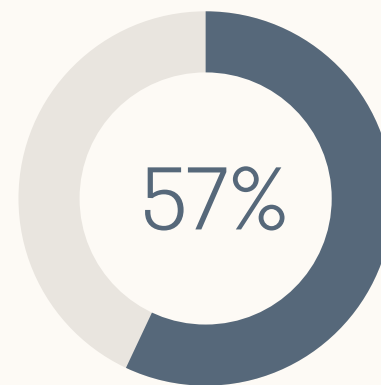
How much time L&D spend on the following activities:

- 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

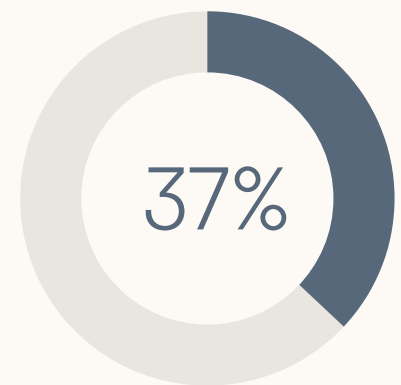


**We know that blended learning**, or a mix of in-person and online learning, is foundational to many learning programs. That's why we asked L&D pros how much of their time is spent managing their online learning solutions and in-person training. Based on data we've gathered over the last three years, 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.



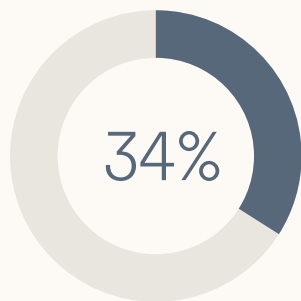
37% of L&D pros spend less time with instructor-led training than they did three years ago.



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

According to the [2019 PWC CEO Survey](#), “79% percent of CEOs worldwide 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 learners whose executive team encouraged them to learn



According to LinkedIn Learning data, CEOs spend 20% more time learning soft skills than the average learner.

# How do you get your executives involved in learning?

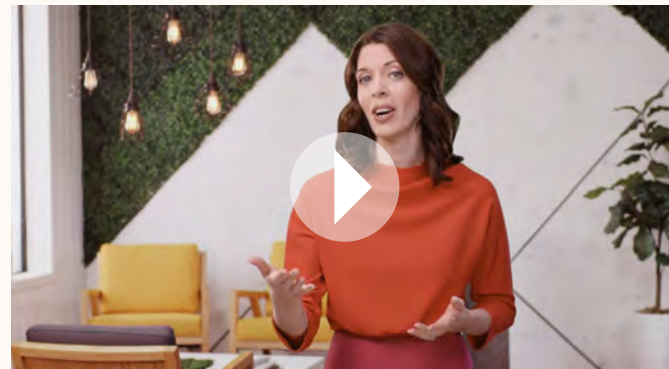
## Takeaway

**Creating and curating executive content** is a great tactic to get your executives more engaged in actively championing learning. It also drives employee engagement. If your CEO teaches a course on leadership, your employees will be inspired to take that course because of proximity and relevancy. Your CEO is known to every employee and the CEO's leadership advice is relevant to the employees' career advancement.

## LinkedIn Learning Course

### Communicating to drive action

Alexia Vernon helps you develop the mindset and skills needed to see results.



[Watch course >](#)

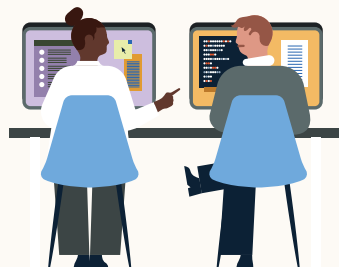
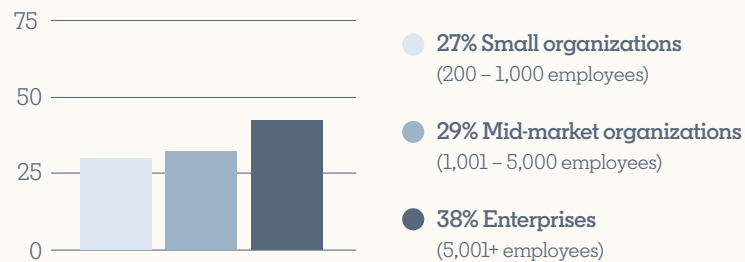




# Executives in large companies are leading the way

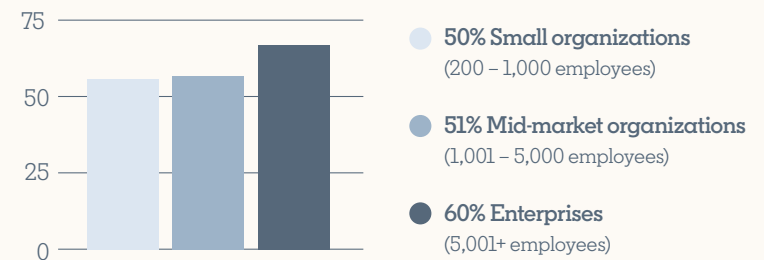
Given that enterprises are generally more impacted by global economic shifts, digital transformation, and automation, it makes sense that executives at these larger companies understand and value the impact of learning. And, L&D leaders are leveraging these decision makers to champion learning in new 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



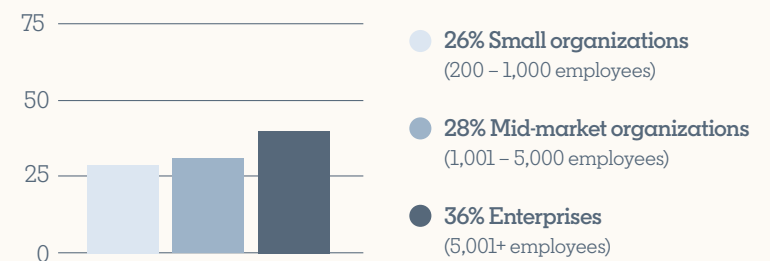
L&D professionals at enterprise companies understand the power of the C-suite. Still, the numbers are much lower than expected, given the urgent need to upskill and reskill their workforce.

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



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



# 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)

In 2019, we doubled each employee's 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%

Content created internally by LinkedIn



L&D POV:

**KEVIN DELANEY**

*VP of Learning & Development*

LinkedIn



“When it comes to activating executives, I approach them the same way I approach anyone else. **I regularly ask them what they are learning and share with them what I’m learning.** By bringing this into our everyday conversations, it generates even more sharing, which has a multiplying effect. That energy is what inspires people to learn and helps create a culture of continuous learning.”

“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 or recommended by our executives were the most watched in the library,** hands down.”



**KEVIN DELANEY**

*VP of Learning & Development*

LinkedIn

Industry standards for measuring impact and engagement have yet to emerge



# Measuring the impact of learning is the top focus area for L&D in 2020

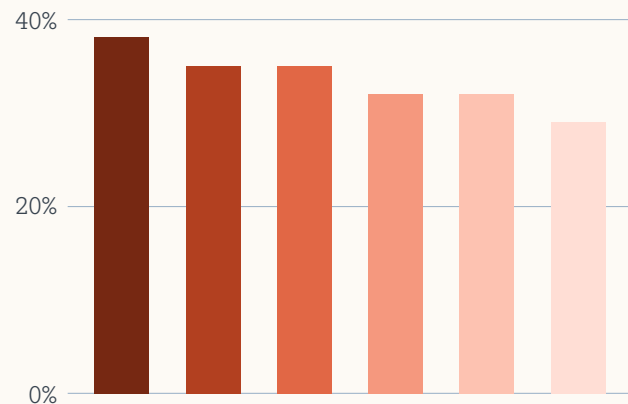
When we asked L&D professionals globally what their most important area of strategic focus was for 2020, evaluating the effectiveness of learning programs topped the list. This is an interesting shift, given that the top strategic focus area of 2019 was to identify and assess skills gaps (which fell to the fourth spot this 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.

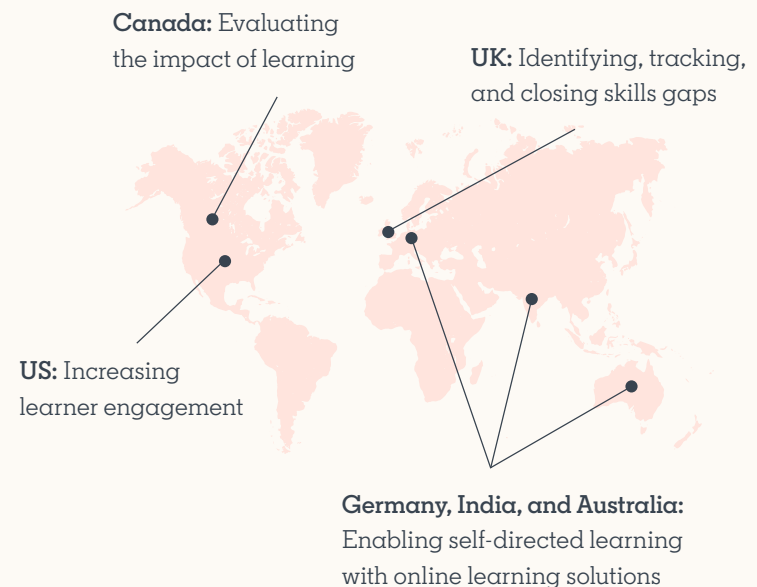
## Top strategic areas of focus globally:

% 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:



# 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.

## Takeaway

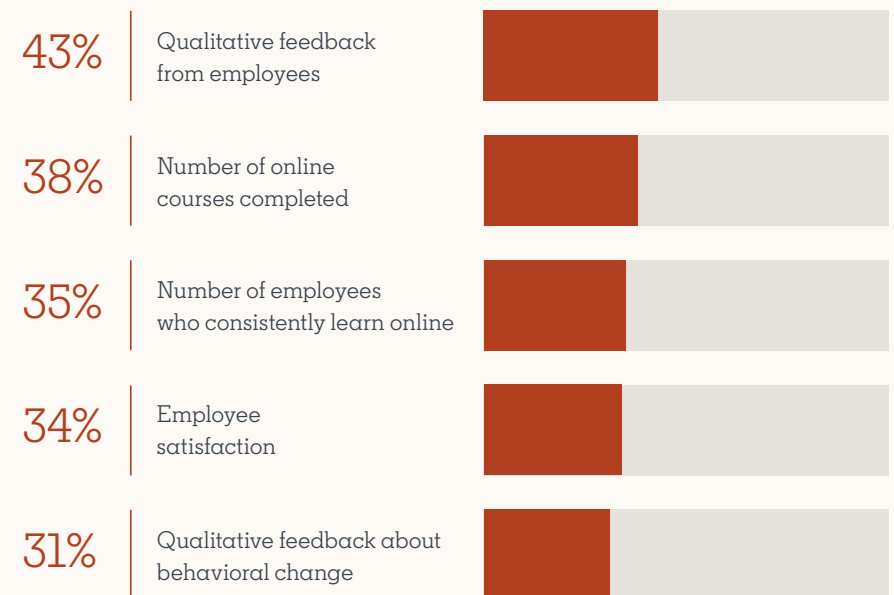
### When it comes to metrics, explore the possibilities

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



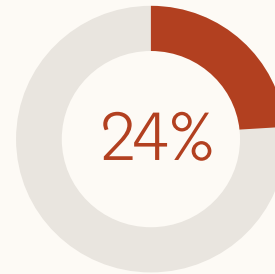


# A standard learner engagement measure has yet to emerge

**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



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

## LinkedIn Learning Course

### People Analytics

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.”**

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 really does 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.

L&D POV:

**LOU TEDRICK**

*VP of Global Learning & Development*  
Verizon



“We have a disciplined way of measuring the impact of learning at Verizon. We do the work on the front-end, work with the business to really understand 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 implemented.”

“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 co-worker—and how employees interact with online courses. But **we go 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 or service demo to their managers.”



**LOU TEDRICK**

*VP of Global Learning & Development*  
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:



# 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 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.

Surprisingly, only 11% of managers find out about learning resources during new manager training. Consider a blended approach to educate them about learning programs and help create a learning mindset at the onset of their journey as a people manager.

## How L&D pros promote learning programs to activate managers

43%	Integrating learning into onboarding
42%	Market the 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%	Employee Voice Survey (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 informs 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

# Marketing tactics that break through vs. those that fall flat

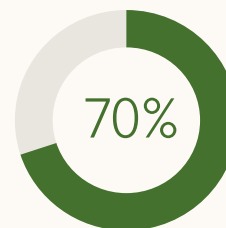
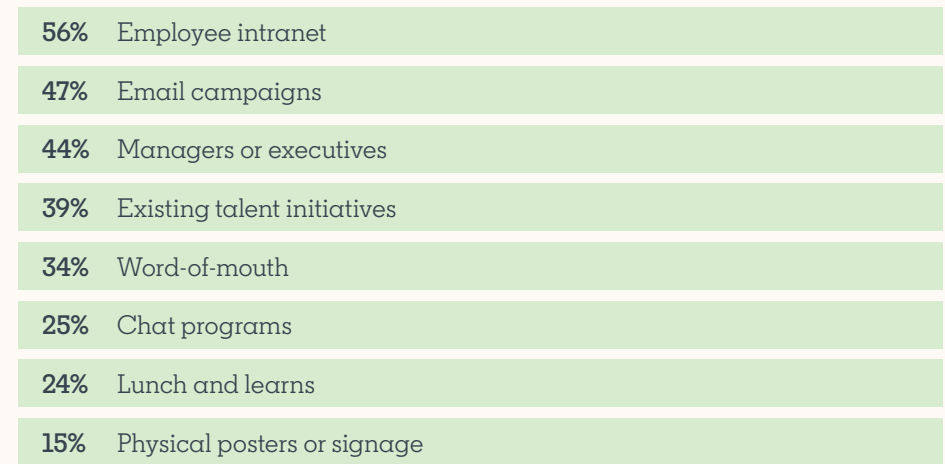
**Driving engagement is a perennial challenge** for talent developers and, according to LinkedIn Learning survey data, it was the #1 trend that will impact learning programs in 2020. However, talent developers only spend 15% of their time raising awareness about the learning offerings that are available 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



## How learners find out about learning programs



The percentage of learners in Germany who find out about learning programs on their employee intranet



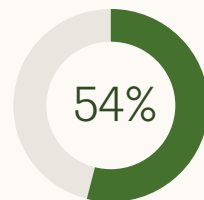
# Tapping into a growth mindset is one key to manager activation

**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



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.

## LinkedIn Learning Course

### Tactics for Learner Engagement

Learning leaders Naphtali Bryant and Jason Mulero show you how to inspire “boom” moments for your learners.

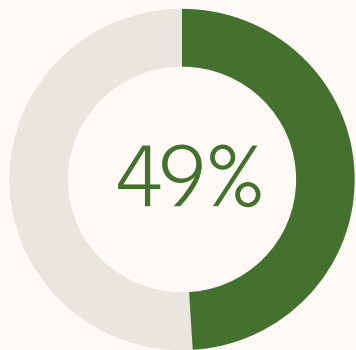


[Watch course >](#)

# 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.



Percentage of learners who said that they don't have time to learn at work

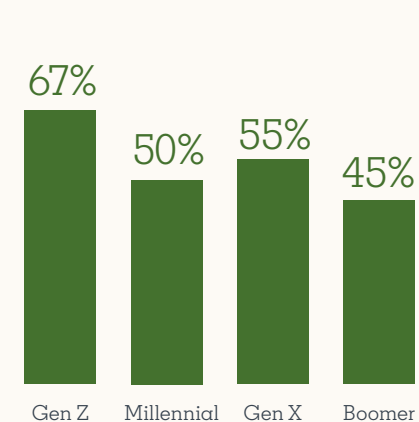


Percentage of learners who said that they see the career benefits of making the time to learn

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

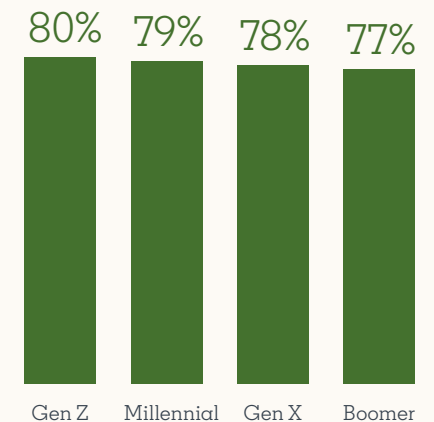
### Social and collaborative

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



### Personalized

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



According to LinkedIn Learning data, 83% of online learning happens during the work week.

# How Kellogg's is transforming their culture of learning

**Kellogg's Senior Director of Learning & Development, Thor Flosason**, has a vision to create a truly aspirational learning culture for Kellogg's employees.

When Thor took over global learning, he inherited a very traditional approach to learning. He described it as "classroom heavy, resource heavy, and events-driven." It was not delivered when it was needed.

Thor needed to evolve Kellogg's learning culture from one-size-fits-all to one-size-fits-one. He used a multi-prong approach to shift their learning culture. Key tactics included getting leaders to advocate for learning, creating an internal marketing campaign called #IGotThis, and kicking off a friendly competition that included prizes and recognition.

His plan worked. Kellogg's employees watched an astounding 485,00 LinkedIn Learning videos and spent 24,675 hours learning on the platform.



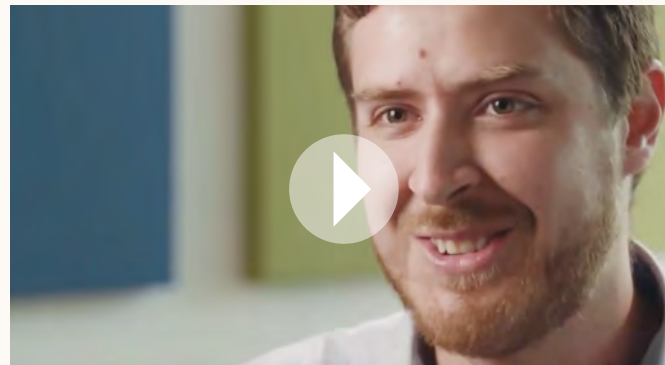
[Watch how Kellogg's is transforming its learning culture >](#)

"We are well on our way to creating a culture of learning. Increasingly, Kellogg employees aren't waiting for in-person training. They are using LinkedIn Learning to upskill themselves and immediately improve themselves and the business."

**THOR FLOSASON**

*Senior Director, Global Learning  
& Development, Kellogg's*

[Read Kellogg's story >](#)



[Watch how David ramped into his new role using LinkedIn Learning >](#)

"We have a great learning culture at Kellogg's. Everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills."

**DAVID CASTILLO**

*HR Manager,  
Sales Talent Management, Kellogg's*



L&D POV:

**PAMAY BASSEY**  
*Chief Learning Officer,*  
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  
Kraft Heinz Company

Digital transformation  
is catalyzing an  
upskilling and  
reskilling revolution



# The era of upskilling and reskilling has arrived

**L&D pros are taking the long view** when it comes to helping their workforce develop new skills. All talent developers want to help strengthen the skills that employees already have, but the rapid pace of business and technology changes is putting upskilling and reskilling front and center. Surprisingly, nearly half of them plan on reskilling a portion of their workforce this year indicating the L&D pros are strategically looking ahead to prepare their organizations for what's ahead. To that point, the #1 piece of information that L&D pros want to help them identify skills gaps is data on what skills will be most in-demand in the next 3-5 years.

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

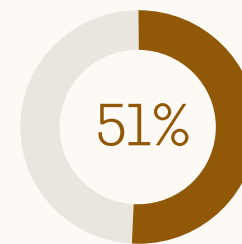
### Upskilling

learning new skills within the same job function

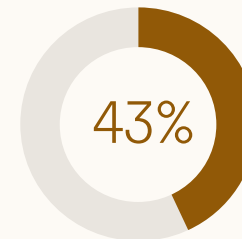
### Reskilling

learning new skills for a different job function

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



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



of L&D pros plan to launch **reskilling** programs in 2020

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

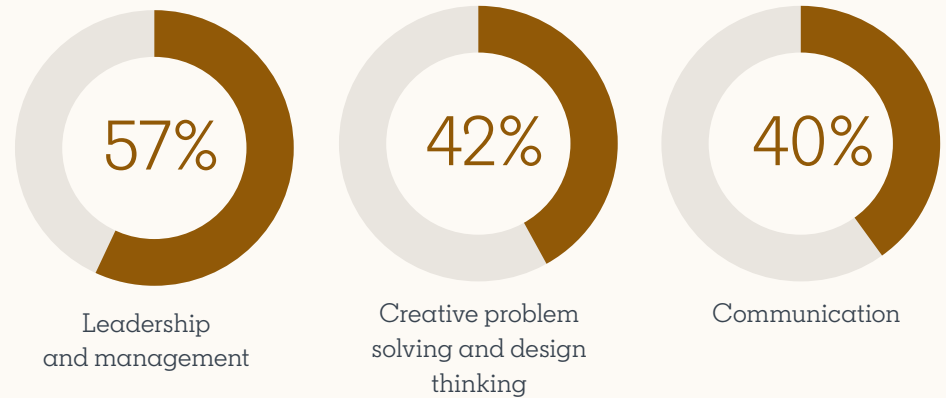
This year, talent developers are laser focused on building soft skills—interpersonal skills that are foundational to every employee’s success, regardless of their functional role or how the technology landscape evolves. This is a smart investment, given that the shelf life of technical skills is relatively short—less than 5 years—while strong leadership, creative, and communication skills are always in demand.

What is digital transformation?  
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.

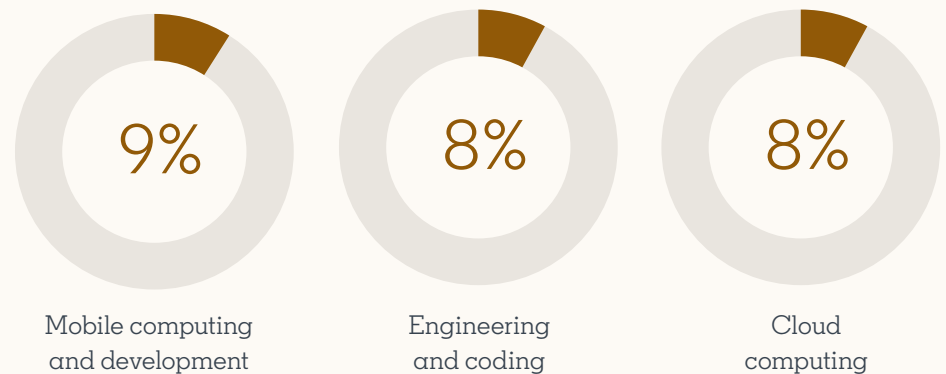


Percentage of L&D pros who are focused on developing these skills

## Highest priority skills



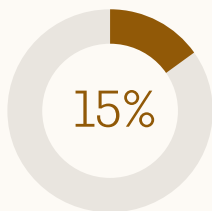
## Lowest priority skills



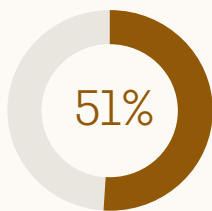


# Concerns about an economic downturn and the impact of automation on learning programs vary across the globe

**Despite fears of robots eliminating jobs** and a looming economic downturn, L&D professionals globally are not as worried about these macroeconomic trends this year as you might think. With only a relatively small percentage (15%) of talent developers believe that the economy will impact learning programs this year.\* That is largely true across the globe except for the UK. Over half of L&D pros in the UK are concerned about how Brexit will impact their learning programs.

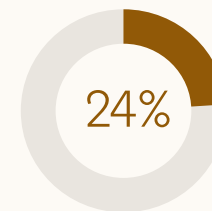


of L&D pros believe that a potential downturn in the economy will impact their learning programs



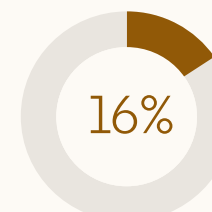
of L&D pros in the UK believe that upskilling and reskilling programs will be important this year due to the economic impact of Brexit

**The good news is that technology advancements** have always created more jobs than they destroy. The same is true today. According to the [World Economic Forum](#), AI and robotics will create almost 60 million more jobs than they will eliminate by 2022. Nearly a quarter of talent developers believe that automation will impact their programs in 2020, but that number spikes to over one-third in the Asia-Pacific region, where more manufacturing jobs are at risk of being automated out.

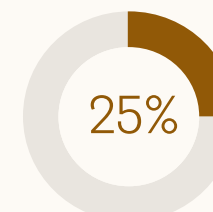


of L&D pros believe that automation will impact their learning programs globally

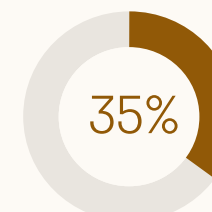
**Percentage of L&D pros in each region** who believe that automation will impact their learning programs



North America



EMEA



APAC

\* The 2020 Workplace Learning Survey was fielded prior to the emergence of the coronavirus.

# Skills gaps create real business gaps

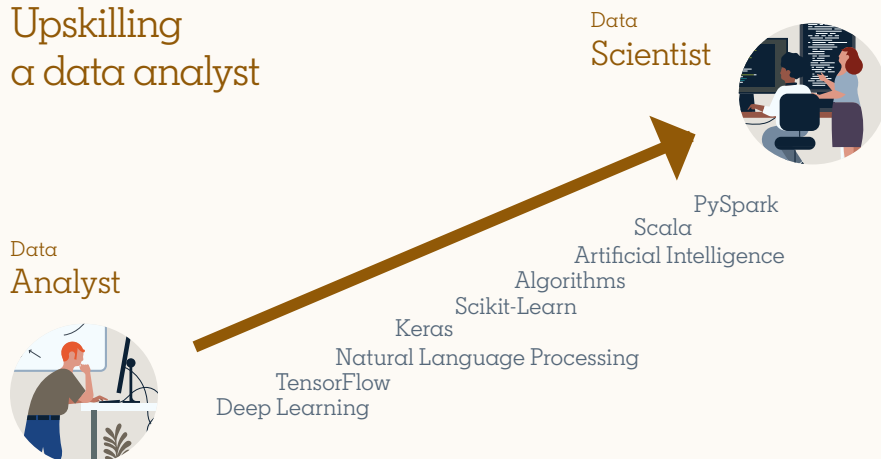
**Virtually every talent developer** we surveyed agreed: if critical skills gaps aren't closed in the coming years, then their organizations will be negatively impacted in a variety of ways—from future growth to how they interact with customers.

Only 1% of L&D pros said that if skills gaps aren't closed, then there would be no negative impact.

## Takeaway

Upskilling your current employees is a great strategy for filling key roles. According to [LinkedIn Economic Graph](#) data, 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.

## Upskilling a data analyst



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

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

## LinkedIn Learning Courses

### Digital Transformation for Leaders

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



[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 10 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%

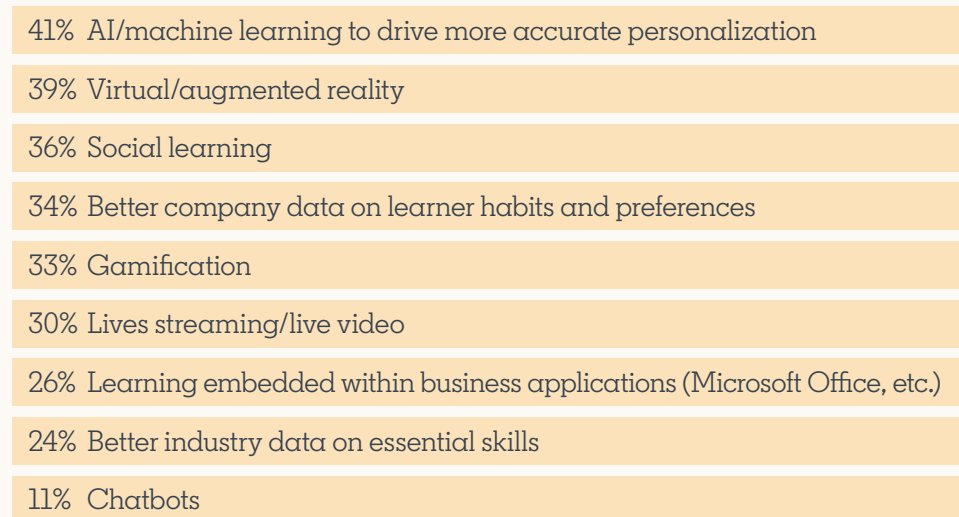


# AI tops the list of technologies expected to significantly impact learning

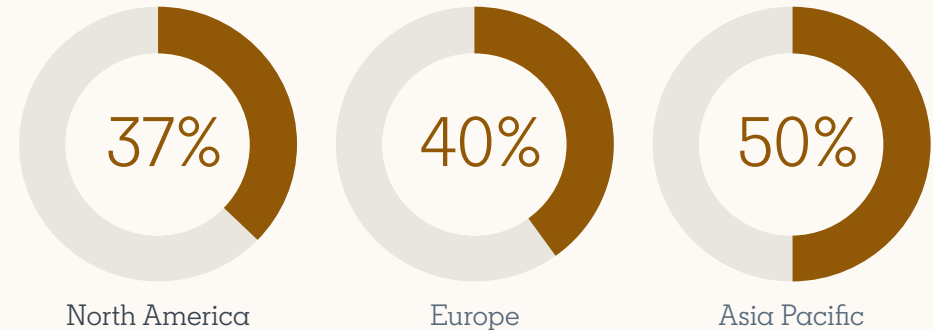
**Just as automation technologies** are rapidly changing the skills landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are expected to be the next big technologies to impact learning. While only 24% of L&D professionals believe that AI will impact learning programs this year, their perspective 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



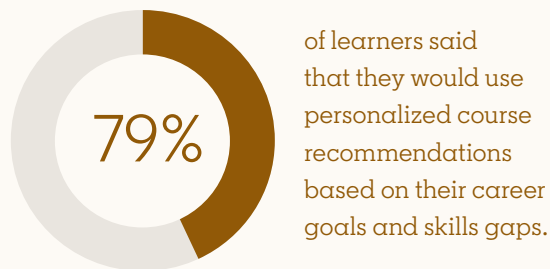
**Percentage of L&D pros** who expect AI and machine learning to drive more accurate personalization of recommended learning content



# 3 reasons to get excited about AI

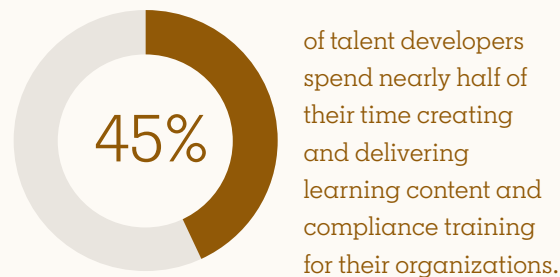
**As AI technologies continue to become more sophisticated**—and deliver even more relevant and timely content recommendations—both learners and L&D pros will reap the benefits. LinkedIn Learning delivers highly relevant learning recommendations based by leveraging LinkedIn data from 675 million members, more than 50 million companies, and 20 million job postings. Here are three reasons why AI matters.

## 1. Learners will likely spend more time learning



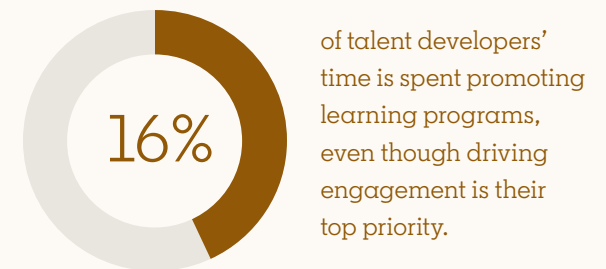
When the right learning content is delivered to learners in the right way and at the right moment, they will likely spend more time learning and less time searching (or not learning at all).

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



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



Even if personalized recommendations driven by AI and machine learning free up 10% of their week, L&D pros 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.



[Watch how MGM Resorts is upskilling its workforce >](#)

“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*

[Read MGM's story >](#)



[Watch how Quay strengthened her power of persuasion on LinkedIn Learning to grow her career >](#)

“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*



L&D POV:

**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 they are and why they are important. Once they are aware of their role in supporting our digital transformation, then we focus on inspiring them to be curious to 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, L&D pros 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.

The stakes have never been higher. The good news is that talent developers are ready for whatever technology and business changes the new decade brings.



# 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

United States  
Canada

### Asia-Pacific

India  
Singapore  
Australia  
New Zealand  
Hong Kong

### Europe

United Kingdom  
Ireland  
Germany  
France  
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.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who graciously contributed their talents, insights, and time to the LinkedIn Learning 2020 Workplace Learning Report.

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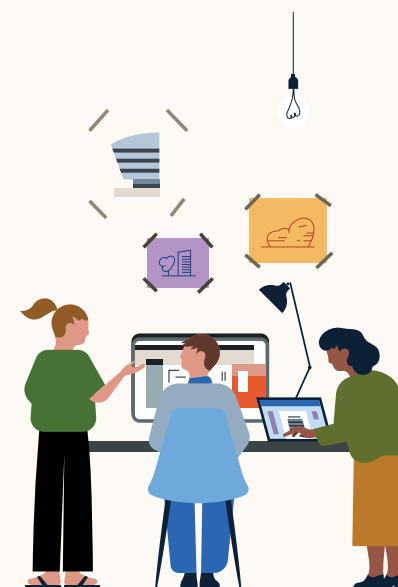
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# About LinkedIn Learning

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 in 7 different languages 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 your team prepare 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.

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