

# Learning and the Future of Work



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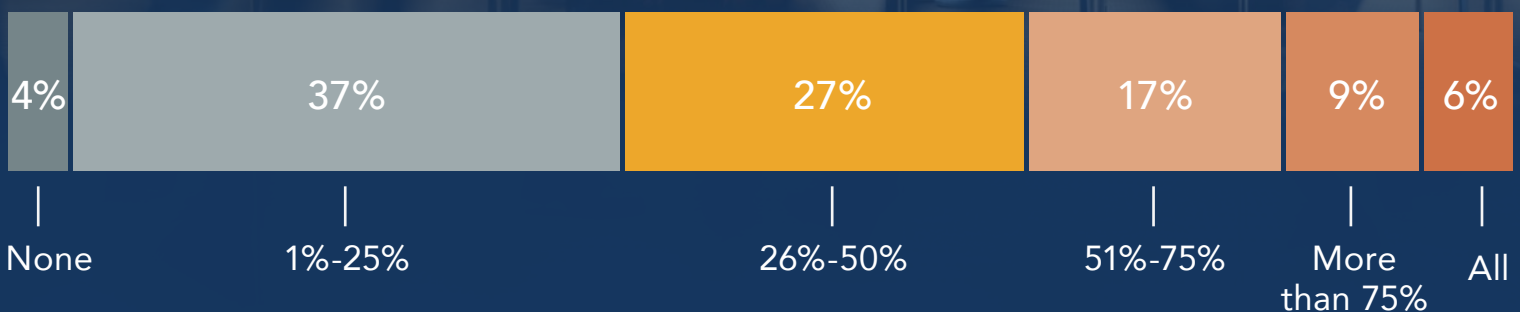
## Current State

The upheaval of the pandemic forced most organizations to either begin or accelerate their digital transformation. Learning & Development (L&D) has not been immune. In fact, it is critical for L&D to be a driving force for the digital transformation. As the various processes, procedures and protocols that make the business run change rapidly and dramatically, companies require a strategy to upskill their people for the digital environment. The L&D function must transform as well, acquiring new skill sets that keep them ahead of the curve.

The pandemic has proved to be an accelerant for change. Changes already occurring within organizations are now happening at a much faster pace. We know that work from home (WFM) is here to stay with around a quarter of the workforce working from home three days a week or more.



**Percentage of employees who will primarily work remotely when optimal return-to-the-workplace strategies are implemented**



Source: Brandon Hall Group, COVID-19: Impact on Workplace Practices, 2021

## Complexities

Many organizations are now facing a dynamically shifting workforce with employees who could be on-site full-time, remote full-time or a combination of both. This hybrid workforce may have set schedules of where and when they work or it could change daily. Additionally, remote work involves a time component where some employees may be

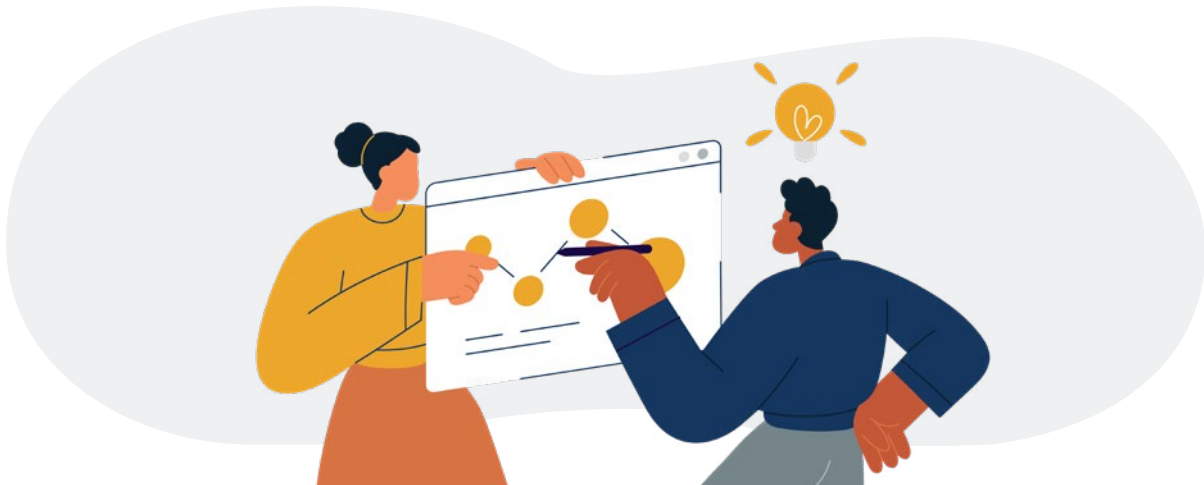
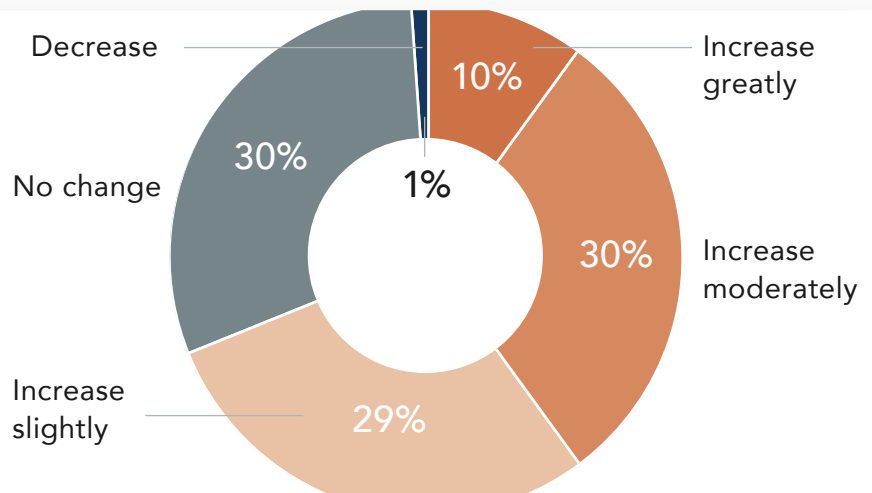
conducting business during nonstandard hours.

Add to this new workforce dynamic the growth of technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning and others, and these influences converge to make the next few years the most volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous

time businesses will see. While all of this is occurring, organizations are also feeling the strain of “The Great Resignation,” as talent attrition rises and new talent becomes hard to come by. Despite the flexibility that a hybrid on-site/remote workplace provides, 69% of organizations expect employee turnover to increase into 2023.

### Expected Change in Employee Turnover Over 12 Months

Source: Brandon Hall Group, How Can We Improve Work?, 2021





Additionally, the pandemic put a strain on the resources available to L&D, just when organizations need to be upskilling and reskilling their existing talent and onboarding new talent. Nearly half of companies faced some sort of reorganization or restructuring of the learning function, and many others faced reductions in budget and/or workforce. This all adds up to an extremely challenging and dynamic environment in which L&D must rise to the occasion.

## Current Most Serious Challenges for Organizations

### Employee engagement



### Talent retention



### Talent acquisition



### Effecting managing workforce



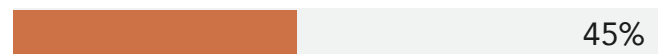
### Workforce planning/succession



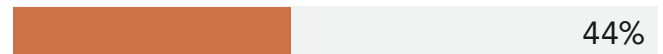
### Upskilling/reskilling



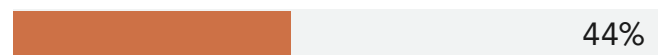
### Performance management



### Selecting/implementing new technology



### Leader development



Source: Brandon Hall Group, How Can We Improve Work?, 2021



## Consequences

Organizations failing to consider these changes face an uphill battle preparing for the future.

As it is, currently **only 36% of companies** consider themselves in a good position to develop the skills the business will require in the future.



Learning paradigms have permanently changed. The in-person, classroom event is no longer the most commonly used element in the learning experience. Even before the pandemic, organizations were undergoing various versions of digital transformation. The pandemic shifted these plans to overdrive. As the world adjusted to new ways of working, so, too, must it adapt to new ways of learning. The good news is that these shifts in learning modalities and technologies are a win for both the learners and the business.

Learners can receive more personalized, meaningful learning experiences that fit the way they work and the business reaps the benefits of continuous, impactful learning and development. To gain these benefits, however, companies must work toward building and sustaining a culture of learning within the organization. Despite the important role L&D plays in an organization's success, fewer than half of companies say that learning is truly integral to the organization's culture.

**76%** of companies

say business leaders would rate learning as very important or critical to the business

**45%** of companies

say they are mostly or completely a learning focused organization

Source: Brandon Hall Group, Upskilling & Reskilling Study, 2021

# Critical Questions

Organizations that want to prepare their workforce to be successful in the future of work need to answer several critical questions, including:

- Is our learning strategy flexible enough to stay aligned with a changing business?
- Are we applying learning and brain-science principles to our learning experience?
- Which tools and technologies will prepare learners for the future of work?
- Are we properly leveraging the role of managers in the learning experience?
- Do we fully understand how artificial intelligence, machine learning and other advanced data processing and analytics can help drive the learning experience?



# Brandon Hall Group POV

1

## Ensure tight alignment between business goals and learning outcomes

Fewer than half of companies in Brandon Hall Group's 2021 Learning Strategy Survey said their learning strategy either mostly or completely aligns with business objectives. Without this alignment, companies cannot hope to meet the business's needs today, let alone in the future. The strategy needs to be based on the needs of the business and revisited at least annually to ensure continued alignment.

To establish this alignment, companies must include business leaders and other stakeholders in the development of the learning strategy. This helps L&D better understand the needs of the business and ensure that stakeholders understand how learning can respond to those needs.

Additionally, learner feedback should be incorporated into the learning strategy.

A company can't hope to be able to meet the needs of learners if they don't know what they are. Having a deep understanding of the various audiences within the organization will create alignment between the business goals and how the workforce will achieve them. Articulating this alignment to learners gives them the critical "what's in it for me" element that is often missing

from learning, which drives engagement.

This exercise of alignment also helps set the metrics of success before the learning programs are even developed. Knowing what outcomes are expected and how they will be measured not only makes it easier to measure learning's impact, but they can be used to shape personalized learning experiences.

Organizations where the learning strategy aligns with both business and learner objectives are **four times more likely** to say their strategy is effective in achieving business outcomes.





## 2

## Leverage the right technology

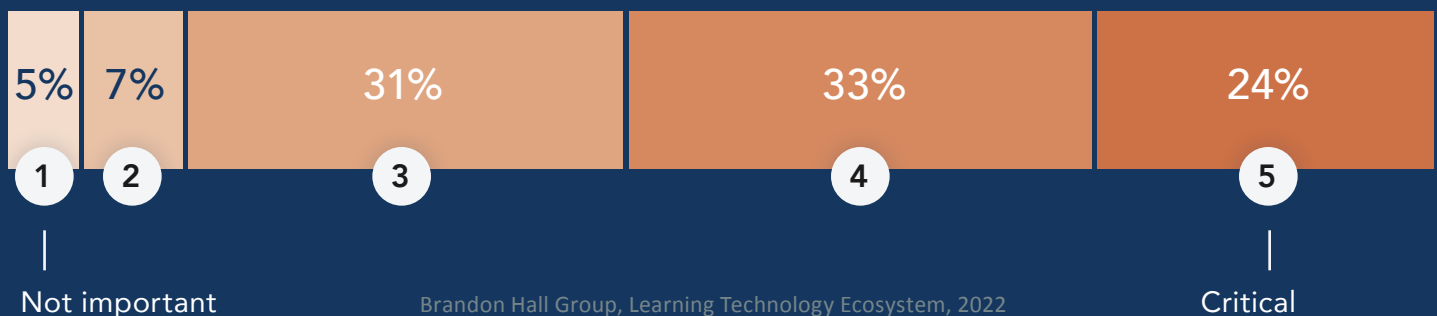
Any solid learning strategy requires a technology roadmap that lays out how the strategy can be executed. Creating the right learner experience requires the right strategy and the right technology to make it a reality. Sixty percent of companies cite a lack of the right technology ecosystem as highly challenging in their efforts to support a personalized, contextual learner experience.

The kind of highly blended, contextual and accessible experiences that are effective require a great deal of thought when it comes to technology. A single LMS may not be

enough. With an ecosystem that increasingly includes more video, microlearning, simulations and other interactions outside of the class and course, companies must be prepared to do robust due diligence on their technology selections. Additionally, organizations must be cognizant of how these tools and technologies work together, as well as with other systems and technologies across the business. As learning continues to get closer to the moment of need and within the flow of people's work, the learning ecosystem often extends beyond just the platforms leveraged by L&D.

Another technology aspect critical to personalization is data; what is captured and how it is used. Consumer facing technologies use a wide array of detailed information that feed algorithms to deliver completely personalized experiences. The learning function should recognize the need and value for this kind of data as well. Without things such as machine learning powering the technology, personalization is a cumbersome, manual process. The expanded use of data means companies must get a better handle on the data they have and how valid it is. Artificial intelligence is only as intelligent as the data fed into it.

### Importance of artificial intelligence and machine learning as it relates to learning technologies



Brandon Hall Group, Learning Technology Ecosystem, 2022

## 3

### Employ neuro- and cognitive-science principles

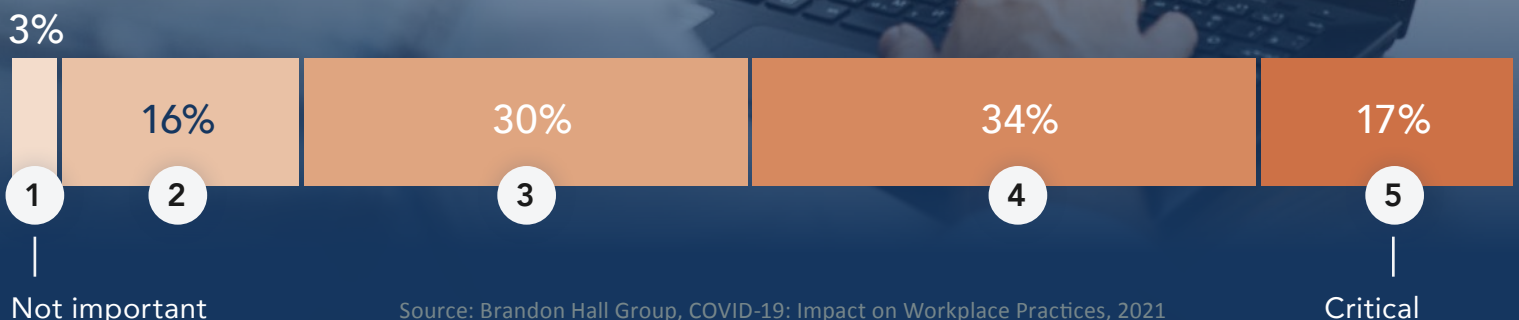
To be successful, learners must learn how to learn and solve problems flexibly. These processes are critically important for working memory to succeed. Working memory is critical for people to recall the information they need at the moment they need it. Personalized learning helps ingrain the knowledge more deeply so it can be retained to overcome the Forgetting Curve.

Additionally, learners' brains must focus on learning experiences with dynamic spatial and temporal structures. This is why a series of

event-based, formal experiences will never deliver the same results as an approach that includes more frequent, in-the-flow-of-work learning opportunities.

Learners presented with neurocognitive-based learning show far better results as far as attention, working memory and mood. Spaced learning enables learners to internalize and contextualize the learning within their job and workflow. Additionally, opportunities to practice and reinforce make the learning real and applicable.

#### Importance of neuro- and cognitive-science for the learner experience



Source: Brandon Hall Group, COVID-19: Impact on Workplace Practices, 2021

## 4

## Adopt more agile learning development processes

Not only do traditional learning delivery modalities impede the personalization of learning, so too do traditional content development processes. And while its design principles are sound, a complete reliance on the ADDIE model of content development (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate) makes it difficult to respond to rapidly changing business and learner needs. More agile approaches such as the Successive

Approximation Model (SAM), allow for faster, more iterative development cycles. SAM has an initial preparation phase followed by two iterative design and development phases that address performance needs through “repeated small steps rather than perfectly executed giant steps” prior to rollout. This allows the design cycle to better adapt and align with changing business and learner needs.

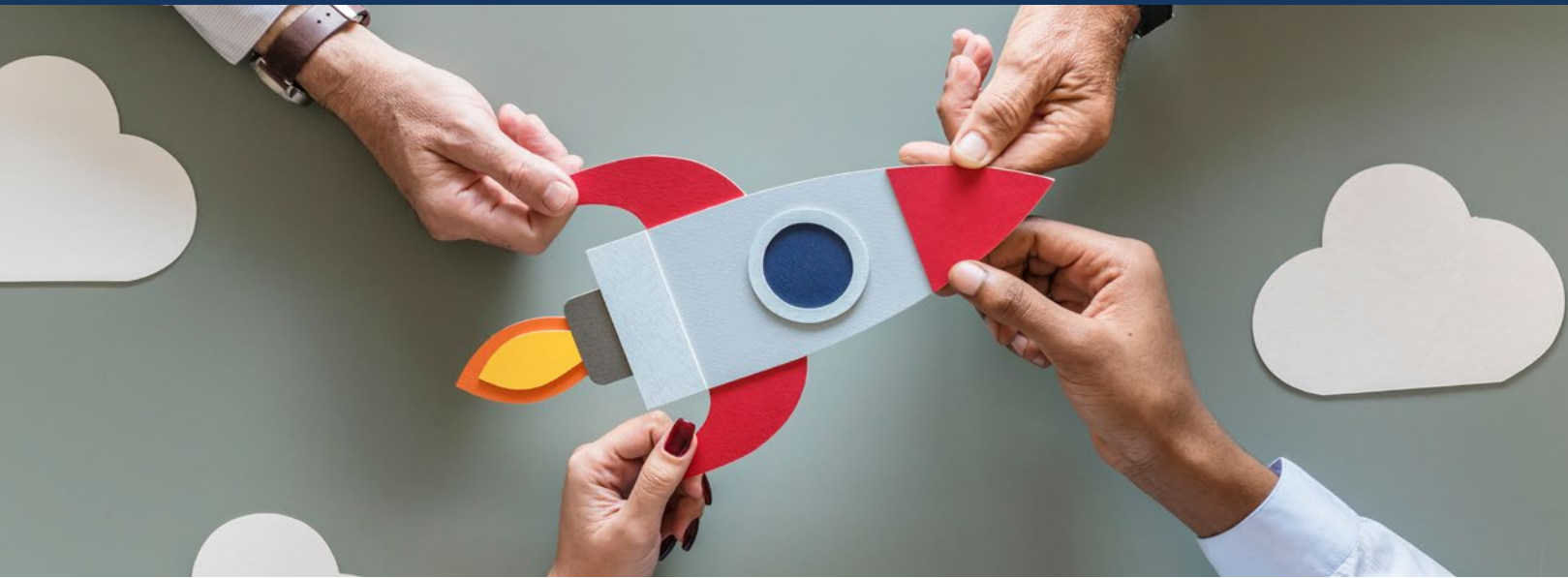
Companies who are not ready for the future of work are more likely to be following traditional development processes such as ADDIE and are less familiar with newer, more agile processes



If your development is collaborative, you have the benefit of continuous feedback from customers, end-users and stakeholders. If your development is incremental, you don't need to prioritize everything up front. You just have to decide what the next few priorities are. If you're designing, developing, testing and releasing changes in small increments, you don't have the same level of risk as when you're doing one big project. It's much easier to detect errors and make course corrections as you go.

#### If you want to bring the power of agility to your learning design and delivery:

- Commit to an agile mindset
- Adopt an agile process for design and development
- Focus on developing microlearning instead of courses
- Find ways to enable direct contribution of knowledge by those who have it to those who need it



## 5

### Managers and supervisors must play critical roles

One big blind spot when it comes to learning for most organizations is the role of the manager. While much time and energy is spent on leadership development and programs to develop good managers, very little thought is given to the role managers play in their employees' learning.

A good coaching strategy should include discussion

and feedback around learning programs, not just performance and workflows. Knowing that their manager is aware and involved in the learning programs makes them more personal and contextual for the learner.

Additionally, as companies strive to have learning occur within the flow of work, managers must be involved.

No one is better positioned to understand just what the flow of work is and how and when learning will fit into and support it than managers. Managers are much closer to the world employees live in day-to-day than the Learning function could ever be, so managers become an indispensable resource for designing contextual, in-the-flow-of-work learning.

**82%** of companies

that are ready for the future of work say it is critical managers give frequent feedback

&

**60%** of companies

believe their managers are aware and involved in what their employees are learning

## Authors and Contributors



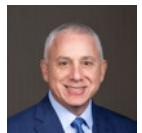
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# About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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## About Adobe

Great experiences have the power to inspire, transform, and move the world forward. Adobe's game-changing innovations are redefining the possibilities of digital experiences by connecting data and introducing new technologies that democratize creativity, accelerate document productivity, power-up digital learning and empower digital businesses.

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