

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

to Reskill Employees at Scale

2021



Table of Contents

Current State 3

Complexities 4

Consequences..... 5

Critical Questions..... 7

Brandon Hall Group POV..... 8

Key Take-Aways 12

Authors and Contributors 13

About Adobe Learning Manager 14

About Brandon Hall Group..... 15

Current State

The world of work has changed dramatically, requiring employers to carefully examine skills needed now and in the future and determine how to fill skill gaps.

In Brandon Hall Group's HCM Outlook 2021 Study, six in 10 organizations place a high value on determining upskilling/reskilling priorities related to changing business conditions.

About half are optimistic they can develop the workforce skills required for the future.

However, that optimism may be misplaced because our research also shows that few organizations are fully prepared to develop those future skillsets and most organizations don't have learning strategies to drive the innovation or technology that makes reskilling scalable.



26%
of organizations

say they are highly or fully prepared to develop skills that will be required in the near future.

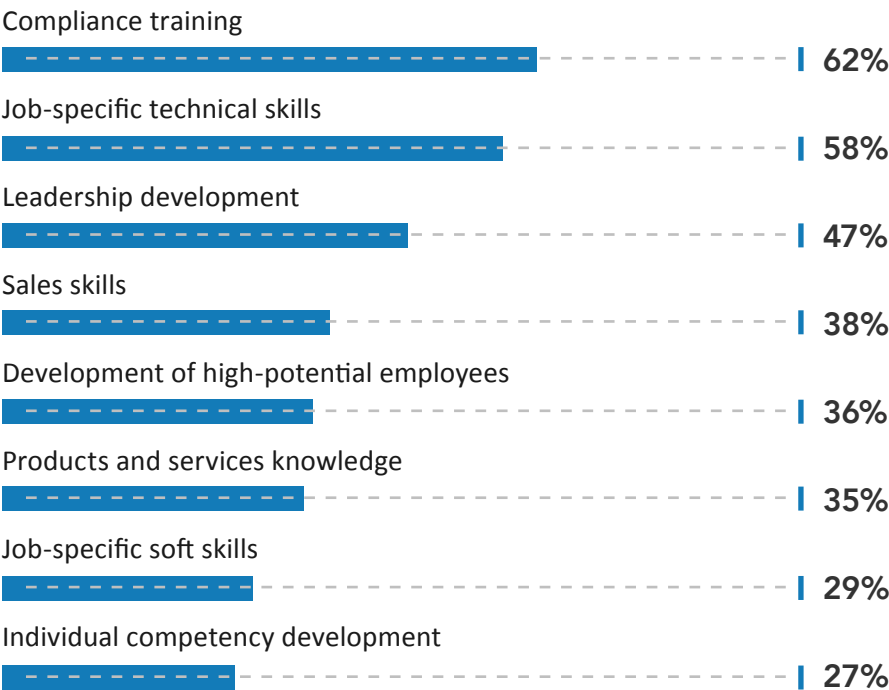
19%
of organizations

rate their learning strategy as having a positive impact on innovation.

Source: Brandon Hall Group
Learning Strategy Study

Complexities

Top Priorities in Learning and Development



Source: Brandon Hall Group Optimizing Learning to Drive Performance Study

Employers face tough challenges in upskilling and reskilling employees. New tactics, tools and coding languages are being developed at lightning speed. It's happening so quickly, a new skill can be obsolete by the time an employee develops a proficiency.

This situation makes it difficult for organizations to know what types of skills development is worth investing in. That's critical

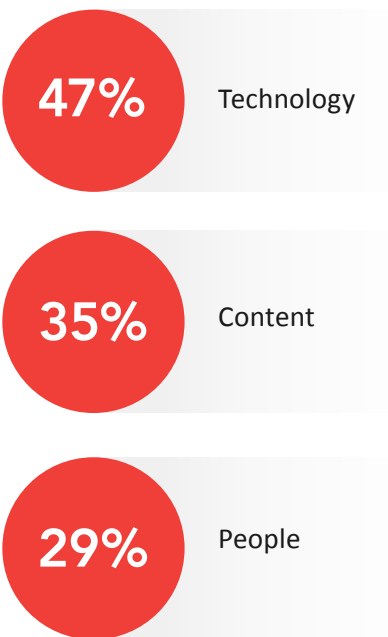
because the majority of organizations don't believe their learning budgets will increase in the foreseeable future, given the current and forecasted economic outlook.

The key to success is leveraging technology to:

- Identify skills gaps
- Make skills recommendations
- Deliver personalized reskilling programs

However, based on interviews with leaders across several industries, many organizations still manually identify and curate skills. That is unscalable and unpredictable — and is basically guesswork. Learning should be targeted, tailor-made and engaging for learners, automatically matching individual aspirations with organizational priorities.

Organizations Expecting Learning Budget Increases in These Areas:



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Strategy Study

Consequences

34%
of organizations

believe they are
above average or
high-performing
in developing
and delivering
effective learning

Source: Brandon Hall Group
Learning Strategy Study

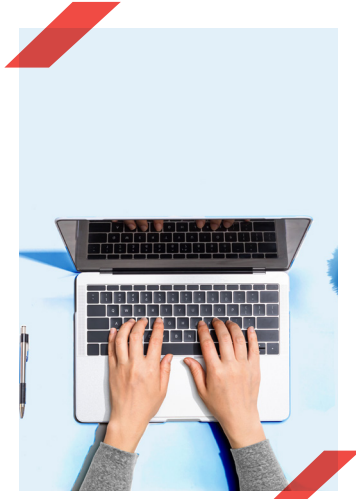


Organizations with the agility to identify skills gaps and develop these skills in-house quickly and efficiently have a distinct advantage over their competitors. Those unable to effectively leverage learning technology and digital content to upskill and reskill employees as the organization evolves will struggle in a hyper-competitive environment.

The ability to personalize learning through digital modalities is more important than ever because of the increase in remote workers who need to access content. Even when the COVID-19 pandemic recedes, our research

shows that more than 60% of organizations will have at least one-quarter of their workforce working remotely. About 30% of employers expect to have half or more of employees working remotely. That is about three times more than before the pandemic.

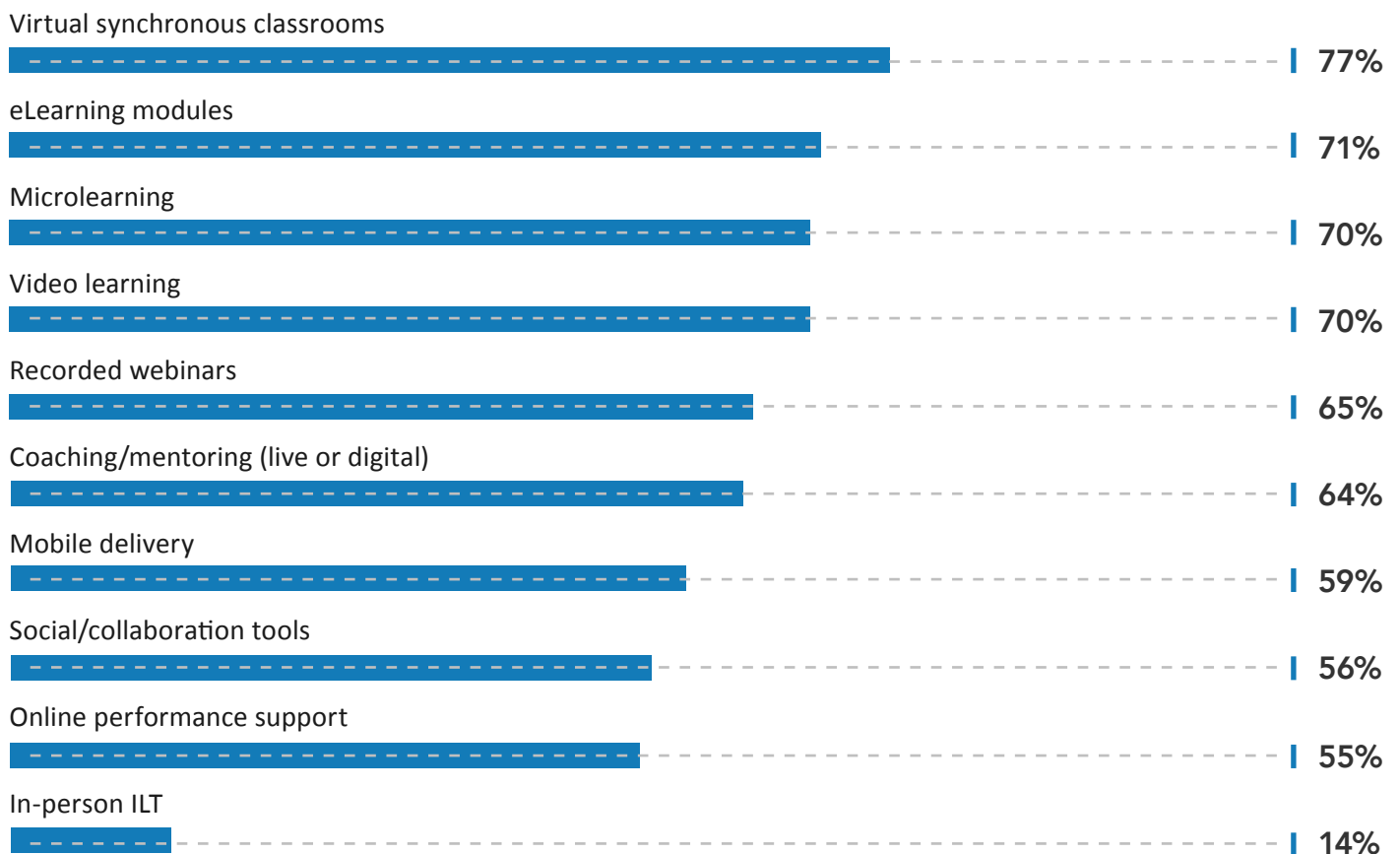
Because of the additional remote workers who had generally positive experiences with digital learning during the pandemic, most organizations plan to increase their investment in digital learning, while 64% of organizations plan to decrease their investment in live instructor-led training over the next two years.



In an expanded remote workforce, organizations require digital tools to address the skills of the future. Learners must connect with peers and their managers to collaborate and learn how to apply their skills to specific roles and situations. If managers and remote employees are not connected and training can't be virtually accessed in the flow of work and the moment of need, it will be impossible to upskill and reskill in this disruptive environment.

Employers that can align in-house skill sets with business objectives in real time will have a huge advantage over competitors still scrambling with manual reskilling programs. Automating employee reskilling through AI- and machine-learning-based self-learning technology also is a much more scalable way of ensuring an agile workforce.

Organizations Expecting Digital Modalities to Increase by at Least 10%, Next 12-18 Months



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Benchmarking Study

Critical Questions

Organizations that want to excel in upskilling and reskilling employees must address these key issues.

How do you ...

- Determine skills gaps in your organization?
- Acquire these skills?
- Target the appropriate employee for training in a desired skill?
- Track learning consumption?
- Encourage employees to take learning courses?



Brandon Hall Group POV

Leading-Edge Technology is Critical for Reskilling

Employers need technology to identify skills gaps and deliver engaging, personalized and relevant learning experiences to their employees to close these gaps.

The best technologies leverage AI and machine learning algorithms to analyze the skills needed

to meet upcoming challenges and make learning recommendations for each employee based on their current job and career goals.

This personalized learning path empowers employees to take charge of their own reskilling journey, facilitated by the Learning and Development team, while providing the organization with an agile workforce that can adapt to changing conditions and opportunities.

A strong solution allows you to:

- Define the experience you want your learners to have and easily enroll them.
- Set up personalized learning plans and programs
- Define a gamification strategy
- Export learning data to HRIS and talent management solutions
- Create a content strategy
- Define user groups
- Devise an engagement strategy
- And set up reporting that meets your organization's specific needs

Give Employees Time to Learn

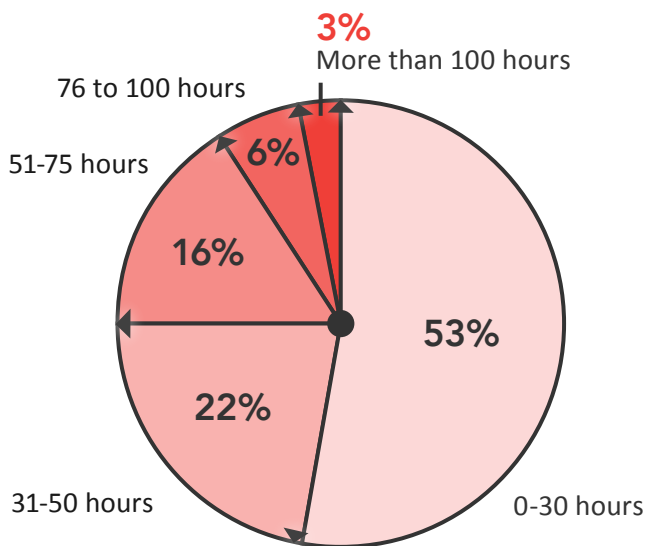
Brandon Hall Group research shows that when employees had downtime during the pandemic, and learning assets were available and targeted toward their interests or development goals, they often used that time to access learning. This can be aided by delivering a personalized

experience that encourages employees to browse through what interests them.

Employers should continue to encourage employees to allot weekly time to access learning linked to their performance goals and career objectives — something that only about one-third of organizations were doing before the crisis.

In most organizations, non-management employees spend, on average, less than 50 hours a year in competency and skills development training. Leaders and managers in most organizations spend less than 50 hours per year on any type of training.

Hours Spent in Competency and Skills Development Training among Non-Managers



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning and Development Benchmarking Study

A major reason training time is so limited is that learning is seen as an event outside of work. But if learning is personalized through technology, learners can access skills development training in the flow of work and as their workload allows.

Give Learners Choices and Communicate

It's important that employees have choices and for organizations to communicate effectively about learning opportunities.

Organizations made rapid progress converting live instructor-led training to digital assets. Virtual instructor-led training leads the way, but:



Video learning use has also skyrocketed



Social/collaboration tools have become ubiquitous in enabling informal learning among a more dispersed workforce, which is important in learning new skills



And **online simulations**, while still getting less use than other modalities, increased five-fold since the beginning of the pandemic and can greatly facilitate the application of new skills in virtual situations.



Organizations must now reinforce the importance of learning and encourage employees to take ownership of their own skills development. Your learning technology should be able to make learning recommendations based on learner information from other systems of record and by allowing employees to update their interests. Employees should have personalized learning plans

that allow them to track their own progress, and should be able to access a digital dashboard that links their learning to personal and career objectives. Engagement can be driven further by rewarding positive behavior through gamified elements such as points and badges. Those things occur in only about one-third of organizations. The right technology makes that much easier.

How Organizations Communicate About Learning

Communicate goals and outcomes expected from a learning program



Provides an introduction about how the learning is delivered



Learners have the ability to search, explore learning opportunities



Learning recommendations provided based on learner information



Personalized learning plans allow learners to track their own progress



There is a link between learning and learners' personal and career objectives



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learner Experience Study

Don't Forget About Foundational Skills

Technical skills are extremely important in any reskilling program and vary by industry and organization.

But reskilling should also focus on foundational skills that will be relevant no matter how much technical skills may evolve. These foundational skills help build organizational agility, which is critical during times of continuous change.

Top Digital-Age Competencies and Skills Targeted for Development

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Adaptability | 7 Empathy |
| 2 Coaching and mentoring | 8 Leadership |
| 3 Collaboration | 9 Listening |
| 4 Critical thinking | 10 Self-awareness |
| 5 Digital agility | 11 Valuing diversity |
| 6 Emotional intelligence | 12 Valuing inclusion |

Source: Adapting to the New Realities after COVID-19 Study.

Top 10 based on organizations rating the competencies at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale

For example, IT leaders and professionals face unprecedented demands as remote work expands and new technologies are introduced and evolve. There will be additional problem-solving and most of it may have to be done remotely.

For many in IT, this will require more coaching and conflict resolution — in new environments — than ever before. IT pros can't be expected to take on these new responsibilities without training on coaching, communicating effectively in a remote work environment, self-awareness, listening and showing empathy to tech users who are in unfamiliar territory.

Foundational skills can help in almost any new or unfamiliar situation and assist employees in coping with personal and professional stress. It's a good investment, especially since job-specific skills and competencies may not come into full focus for a while.

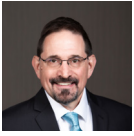




Key Take-Aways

- Employee reskilling is growing in importance as technology continues to disrupt business as usual at a lightning-quick pace.
- Organizations able to align in-house skillsets with business objectives in real-time will have a huge advantage over competitors still scrambling with manual reskilling programs.
- Automating employee reskilling through targeted, personalized and self-guided learning journeys is a more scalable way of ensuring an agile workforce.
- Despite all the job responsibilities employees have, it is critical to give them enough time to learn so they can own their development and build skills to advance their careers and help the organization.
- Because technical and job-specific skills sometimes take a while to define, it's important to build foundational skills that transcend specific job roles and develop agile employees.

Authors and Contributors



Claude Werder (claudio.werder@brandonhall.com) wrote this report. He is Senior Vice President and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. He leads the Talent Management research and advisory practice, specializing in leadership development, performance development, learning, career development, employee engagement, succession management, talent retention, and diversity and inclusion. He also produces Brandon Hall Group's HCM Excellence Conference.



Mike Cooke (mike.cooke@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is CEO and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Mike has more than 20 years' experience in human capital management and the research, software and technology industries. Before running Brandon Hall Group, Mike was co-founder of AC Growth, a research and consulting firm, and VP and General Manager of Field Operations at Bersin & Associates, a global analyst and consulting services firm in all areas of HCM.



Michael Rochelle (michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is Chief Strategy Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Michael leads a wide range of advisory support and strategic engagements for Fortune 1000 and small-to medium-sized organizations as well as leading and emerging solution providers across the HCM industry. Michael has more than 30 years' experience in HR, IT, sales, marketing, business development, and strategic and financial planning in Fortune 500 and venture-backed start-up organizations.



Richard Pachter (richard.pachter@brandonhall.com) edited this report. He is the Content Manager at Brandon Hall Group and is responsible for editing all types of content related to research. He has experience as a journalist, copywriter, editor, marketer, blogger and social media marketing manager. He also served as the business books columnist for the *Miami Herald* for more than a decade.



Emma Bui (emma.bui@brandonhall.com) is the Graphic Design Associate at Brandon Hall Group. She created the layout and graphics for this report.

About Adobe Learning Manager

Adobe Learning Manager is a comprehensive learning platform — now reimagined to meet the needs of every unique learner. Adobe Learning Manager gives you complete control to deliver personalized learning experiences to your employees, customers and partners. Take advantage of AI-based recommendations to deliver a hyper-personalized learner home page experience. Embed learning in the flow of work by taking advantage of out-of-the-box integrations with popular martech platforms such as Adobe Experience Manager Sites and Marketo Engage.



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 25 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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