

3rd Annual

2019 Workplace Learning Report

Why 2019 is the breakout year
for the talent developer



Introduction

2019 is the breakout year for talent development. As the modern workplace evolves, we see an imminent shift in the power, focus, and influence of professionals with learning and development (L&D) responsibilities.

Foundational efforts like soft skills and manager training, as well as scaling learning globally will remain important in 2019, but they will no longer take up the majority of a talent developer's time.

As a result, talent developers are now able to shift focus to have an even bigger impact on the business.

Executives are increasingly looking to talent developers to support the business in strategic workforce planning, including attracting and retaining talent, and ensuring their people have the right skills for today and tomorrow.

What's new in 2019

In 2019, our survey indicates that talent developers will spend more time finding and closing skills gaps while exploring learner engagement tactics to inspire the modern learner, including the incoming Gen Z workforce.

The shift is on and the stakes are high.

In LinkedIn Learning's 3rd annual Workplace Learning Report, you'll discover how learning leaders like you:

- Leverage increased influence and budget
- Lead organizations in closing skills gaps and upskilling
- Think like marketers to increase learner engagement
- Create learning opportunities for the modern employee

Methodology

For our 3rd annual Workplace Learning Report, we surveyed more than 1,200 talent developers (L&D and HR professionals with L&D responsibilities) and over 2,100 workplace learners across the globe to examine industry trends.

This report presents these survey results along with additional LinkedIn data and examples from leading companies who are successfully addressing the industry's top challenges.

Table of contents

00	Summary of key findings	6
01	State of the L&D industry: At the tipping point	11
02	The age of digital transformation: Understanding skills gaps	17
03	Marketing meets L&D: Think like a marketer	26
04	Know your learner: Boost engagement	32



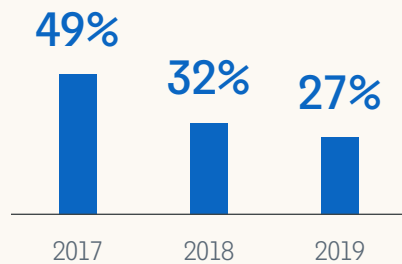
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Summary of key findings

01 State of the L&D industry: At the tipping point

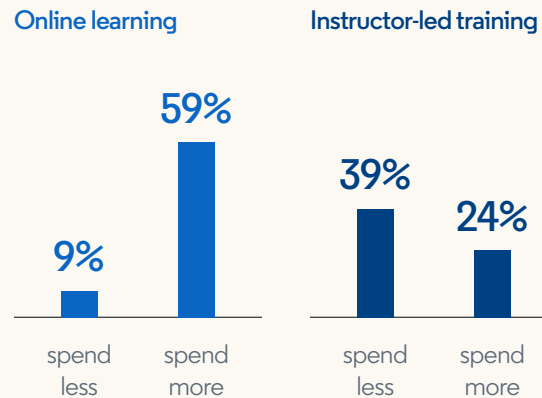
Survey results indicate a tipping point in the L&D industry. Increased budgets and executive support are paving the way for talent developers to play a more strategic role. One with the support and technology to tackle day-to-day challenges, as well as more strategic and proactive efforts like understanding skills gaps and marketing L&D programs to learners.

Fewer budget constraints



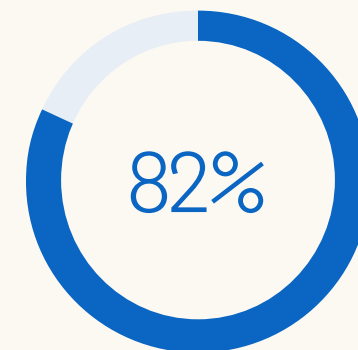
Fewer talent developers named 'limited budget' as a top challenge than ever before.

More budget for online learning



Since 2017, **59%** of talent developers spend more of their budget on online learning and **39%** say they spend less on instructor-led training (ILT).

Active executive support of L&D



82% of L&D pros say that their executives actively support employee engagement in professional learning.

02 The age of digital transformation: Understanding skills gaps

Macro trends like digital transformation and the decreasing shelf-life of skills are challenging organizations to play catch up as they try to hire and develop their people. This year, the number one focus for talent developers is to identify, assess, and close skills gaps and they are tackling the challenge head-on in a myriad of ways.

Talent developers prioritize understanding skills gaps in 2019

- 1 Identify and assess skills gaps
↑ 32% increase year over year
- 2 Increase engagement with learning programs
- 3 Develop career frameworks

Talent developers use a multi-pronged approach to identify skills gaps within the organization, including:

Internal skills gap assessments



Monitor business KPIs/key metrics



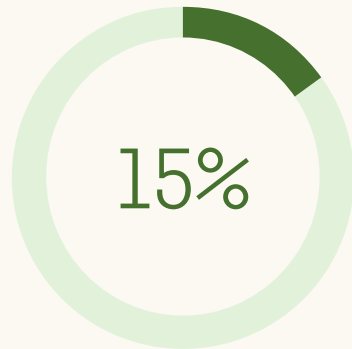
Attend meetings with executives/senior managers



03 Marketing meets L&D: Think like a marketer

It's time to turn up the volume on marketing communications. Data shows that owned channels—like email marketing—successfully reach employees today. In contrast, messages about learning from managers and leadership don't reach the majority of learners yet, but they have the potential to have the biggest impact.

It's time to embrace your inner marketer



Talent development *only* spends **15%** of their time promoting employee engagement with learning.

(e.g. video marketing, creative signage,

Email marketing is working

Talent developers



65% use email marketing to promote learning.

Employees



61% discover learning programs via email marketing.

Leveraging managers more is an area of opportunity

Talent developers



69% leverage managers and leadership to promote learning.

Employees

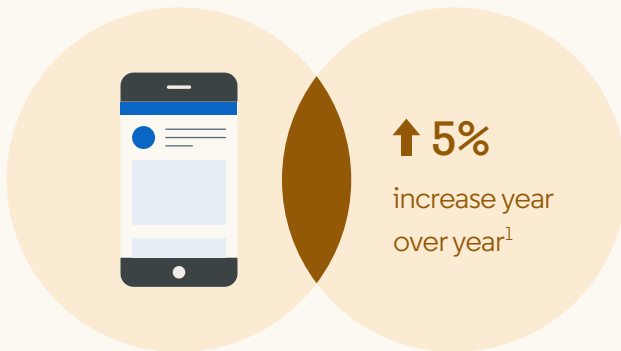


46% discover learning programs through managers or leadership.

04 Know your learner: Boost engagement

Today it's imperative for talent development to tap into the potential—and preferences—of all learners. This means that social, mobile, manager involvement, and self-directed learning opportunities will increase engagement, particularly with Millennial and Gen Z workers.

Mobile learning is on the rise

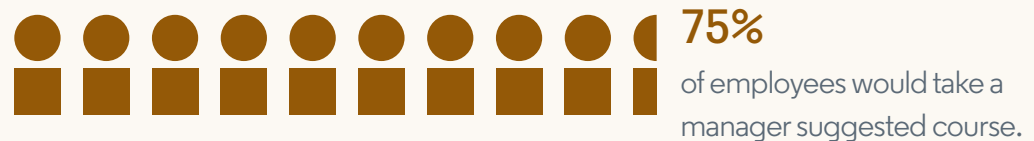


Talent developers are making changes for Gen Z



Managers are the missing link

Managers are an effective way to reach learners: 75% of employees would take a course assigned by their manager.²





01

State of the L&D industry: At the tipping point

Increased budgets and influence pave the way for more strategic talent development teams

L&D is one of the newer disciplines in HR, yet one that's gone through staggering amount of change in a short period of time. What started as a few classroom experiences has blossomed into comprehensive learning initiatives to help organizations cultivate talent from within.

For the first time, professionals with L&D responsibilities have the budgets, teams, and executive buy-in to expand their focus beyond day-to-day challenges—like closing skills gaps that are vital to stay competitive.

With the tightening labor market and the shortening shelf life of skills, creating and maintaining market leadership hinges on talent development's ability to help employees acquire and grow the right skills. Talent developers now have the support and resources that they need to take on the skills gap challenge at this critical moment.



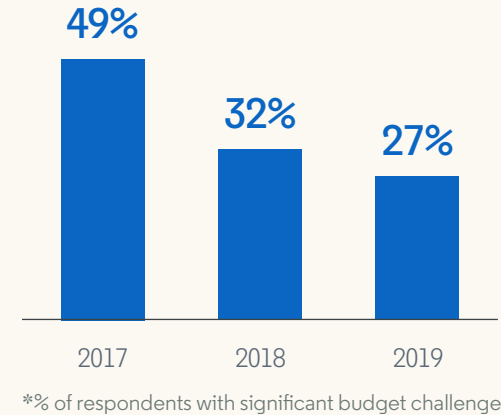
Budgets are no longer a top challenge

In 2019, only 27% of talent developers named limited budgets as a major roadblock. While any talent developer would benefit from increased budgets, survey data indicates that budget is no longer a top challenge hindering talent development teams from achieving their goals.

Compare that to 2017, when talent developers' number one challenge was a limited budget. The industry has come a long way in a very short amount of time.

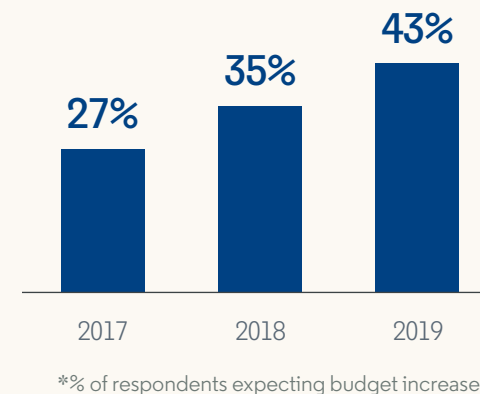
Talent developers have fewer budget constraints

Budget constraints no longer top the list of major challenges facing learning leaders today.



Talent development budgets are increasing

The steady rise in L&D budgets demonstrate the increasing importance of learning within organizations.



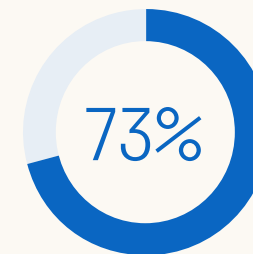
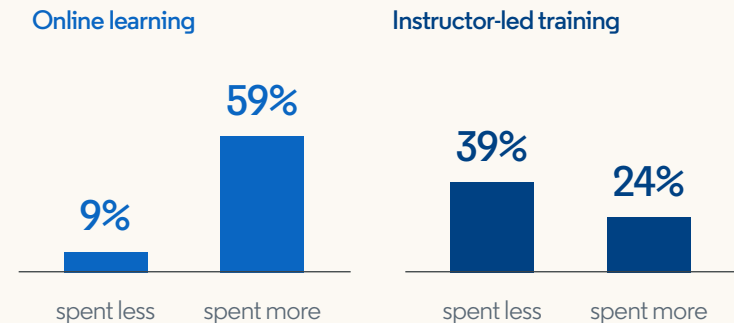
Budgets shift to online learning, fueling the ability to scale L&D

As L&D budgets grow, dollars continue to shift from instructor-led training (ILT) to online learning solutions like [LinkedIn Learning](#). While online learning will never fully replace in-person training, it's important to enable modern learners to upskill when and where they need to.

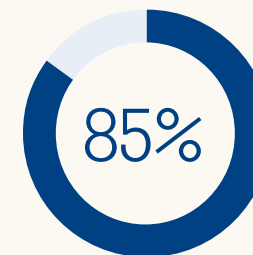
The vast majority of talent developers use off-the-shelf content mixed with customized content created internally.

LinkedIn Learning helps talent developers to mix and match content, regardless of whether it is created internally or is in the Lynda.com library, to craft curated learning paths. For learners, it's easy to search and find the best learning content all in one integrated experience.

Compared to three years ago, **59%** of talent developers spend more of their budget on online learning and **39%** spend less on ILT.



73% of talent developers say they use externally created content to train employees.



85% of talent developers say they use internally created content to train employees.



How Kellogg invested in online learning to scale L&D

With a vision to create a truly aspirational learning culture across the entire organization, Kellogg invested in online learning to empower their 10,000+ employees to learn what they need, when they need it, and grow their careers.

“Ultimately, this is about our people’s learning and growth experiences. We care about their needs and are now better equipped to deliver against them.”



[Thor Flosason](#)
[Global Learning Director, Kellogg](#)

LinkedIn Learning helped Kellogg:

- 1 Create real-time learning opportunities.**
Kellogg employees aren’t waiting for an in-person training to upskill themselves; they upskill in the moment with online learning, right within the flow of work.
- 2 Provide relevant and up-to-date content.**
Kellogg delivers up-to-date online learning content directly to employees in order to support the most relevant, impactful work.
- 3 Be more proactive.**
Prior to the launch of LinkedIn Learning, the Kellogg team often delivered ad hoc programs to respond to pressing learning needs. Today, when an employee needs learning content on a specific topic, the Kellogg team can direct them to LinkedIn Learning and continue to focus on the larger strategic needs of the business.

Headcount and executive buy-in signal empowerment for talent development

Increased budgets?



More headcount?



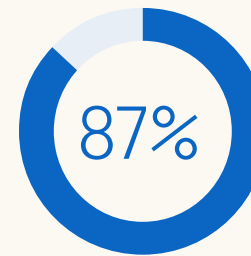
Executive buy-in?



Talent developers have never been in a better position to ask for more executive championship of learning to increase engagement and strengthen their organization's culture of learning.

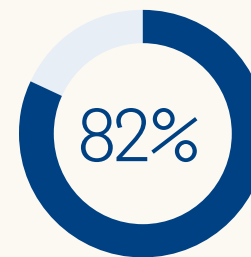
Talent developers report that they have strong backing from executive partners—a critical step to create a culture of learning.

Talent development teams continue to grow



87% of talent developers report that their teams will either stay the same size or grow this year.

Talent development teams feel supported by their C-suite



82% report their executives actively support employee engagement in professional learning.



02

The age of digital transformation: Understanding skills gaps

This is the year that L&D hones their ability to identify, assess, and close skills gaps

Digital transformation is leaving organizations to play catch-up as they try to hire and develop the right skills—particularly technology skills.

Armed with more resources and support than they have ever had, talent developers are now ready to proactively identify, assess, and close skills gaps.

The shift from instructor-led training to online learning comes at a perfect time.



Skills gaps top the priority list in 2019

Of the top seven areas that talent developers expect to focus on through 2019, four of them (including #1) focus on addressing skills gaps, while learner engagement (coming in at #2), remains a critical and constant challenge.

Of note, there's a range of only 12 percentage points within the top seven focus areas, suggesting that talent developers have a lot to juggle. The pressure to focus on multiple dimensions of learning—investigating skills gaps, developing career growth frameworks, and driving engagement—is challenging enough. Doing all of these things all while delivering stellar learning programs, makes the role of talent developer even more complex and demanding.

Top 7 focus areas for talent development in 2019

- 1 Identify and assess skills gaps
- 2 Increase engagement with learning programs
- 3 Develop career frameworks
- 4 Provide consistent and valuable learning to employees globally
- 5 Train for soft skills
- 6 Deliver company-specific insights to close organizational skills gaps
- 7 Understand the impact of technology and automation on skills development

Most in-demand skills for 2019

You've heard it before, but we will say it again: **soft skills matter**. Some of the country's fastest-growing roles—sales development, customer success, and customer experience jobs—are largely soft skills-based.

Using LinkedIn platform data, we've identified the hard and soft skills that companies need most in 2019. While each of these hard skills only apply to specific sections of the workforce, soft skills apply to all.

This year, creativity is the single-most in-demand skill for companies to cultivate in their employees.

Read more about the [skills companies need most in 2019](#) and how to learn them.

Soft skills

- 1 Creativity
- 2 Persuasion
- 3 Analytical reasoning
- 4 Collaboration
- 5 Flexible approach (a.k.a. Adaptability)

Hard skills

- 1 Cloud computing
- 2 Artificial intelligence
- 3 Analytical reasoning
- 4 People management
- 5 UX design
- 6 Mobile application
- 7 Video production
- 8 Sales leadership
- 9 Translation
- 10 Audio production
- 11 Natural language processing



How Allianz is closing skills gaps with a strategic workforce plan

Germany-based Allianz is a 128-year old insurance company that has kept pace with the modernization of skills for over a century. Allianz created Allianz University (AllianzU) to globalize learning for its 140,000 employees around the world.

To execute on this plan, the global learning team at Allianz uses internal assessments as well as LinkedIn Learning data to understand the skills they already have within their company and then map the critical skills they'll need in the future.

“We’re running an analytics project to identify job families and skills that will be relevant in the next three years. With LinkedIn Learning Skills Insights, we can curate lists that align to our future strategy, see if people are learning those skills, and keep adjusting from there.”



[Heather Duttweiler](#)

People Development Consultant at Allianz

Closing skills gaps: A new measure of success

This year's data shows that talent developers believe that closing skills gaps is the best way to demonstrate the value of learning programs. In fact, closing skills gaps (67%) came in 15 percentage points higher than positive learner feedback (52%)—which historically has been one of the primary metrics used to demonstrate learning success. This year, it didn't even make the top 5.

While qualitative assessments of learning are important, it's also critical to measure the quantitative business impact, such as an increase in sales performance or customer satisfaction.

Top 8 ways talent developers demonstrate the success of learning

67%

Closing known skills gaps within the organization

61%

Increasing employee engagement with learning resources

65%

Helping employees gain the skills needed to remain competitive

60%

Getting qualitative feedback from employees about their ability to apply learning

63%

Getting qualitative departmental feedback indicating a positive change

57%

Increasing favorable metrics tied to participation in learning programs

61%

Retaining top talent within the organization tied to learning

52%

Getting qualitative feedback from employees on their experience with learning resources

Measuring skills gaps is a multi-pronged approach

In 2019, savvy talent developers are strategically deciding which programs to build based on skills gaps assessments and input from strategic partnerships across the business. The vast majority (74%) of talent developers use internal skills gap assessments to decide which learning programs to create or curate.

While there will never be a “silver bullet” solution to identify the most pressing skills to train for, online learning platforms can help organizations improve how they measure skills gaps and benchmark them against similar organizations.

How talent developers find the most important skills to train

Perform internal skills gaps assessments



Monitor business KPIs/key metrics



Attend meetings with executives/senior managers



Rely on manager input



Look to industry trends to prevent skills gaps



Monitor complaints

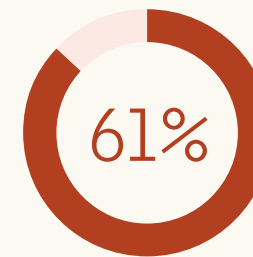
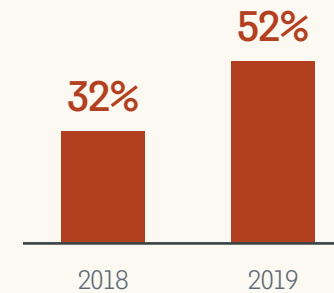


Talent developers increase collaboration with business partners to close skills gaps

Key findings indicate that talent developers are working more closely with business partners than they did last year.

This is good news, as business partners—the voices on the ground—are tuned in to the real-time impact of L&D programs. By working closely with business partners, talent developers can quickly understand which skills gaps are most pressing and which learning programs can help close them.

More talent developers leverage business partners



61% of talent developers attend meetings with executives or senior partners to help them identify which are the most important skills to train for.



03

Marketing
meets L&D:
Think like
a marketer

It's time to turn up the volume and creativity of marketing communications

When the L&D function emerged, it was focused primarily on curriculum building—to deeply understand how to craft learning programs that engage employees and deliver value to their organizations.

Today, the playing field has changed and talent developers need to be so much more. You're investigative reporters who uncover skills gaps. You're data analysts who create and track key business and learning metrics. But your most important role—the one that will have the biggest impact on learner engagement—is a marketer of learning programs.



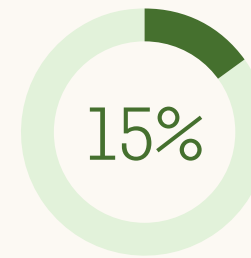
Spend more time marketing programs to increase learner engagement

Over half of respondents report that increasing learner engagement is the top challenge for their teams in 2019; yet talent developers only spend a small sliver of their time (15%) marketing learning opportunities to employees. Getting the attention of the modern learner requires more outreach and higher-impact marketing programs.

Take the lead of modern marketers, including internal communications professionals, who think beyond email. To get your message out, use a multi-channel approach that includes email, videos, events, signage, influencer campaigns, contests, and more. You can even partner with your marketing team to integrate learning messages into well-established marketing processes and communication channels.

Creative marketing can help solve top challenge

Investing more time in creative marketing can help raise awareness of learning programs.



Talent developers *only* spend **15%** of their time promoting employee engagement with learning.

(e.g. video marketing, creative signage, competition creation, etc.)

Learn more: Check out [8 ways to engage your learners](#).

Keep using tried and true marketing channels to reach learners

Talent developers use a range of marketing tactics to break through the noise and reach learners. This includes channels you have complete control over and others that require you to influence others.

Engaging learners via email marketing and employee intranet is working. The marketing channels you control—like email and the employee intranet—are getting through to employees.

Consider ways you can get creative with your emails and intranet posts—how can you add authenticity or bring in a cultural reference? Have you tried a teaser campaign before a new program launches? Creativity goes a long way to invigorate these marketing efforts and get even bigger reach.

Did you know that most workplace learning happens in **the first three days of the work week**?¹ Try sending emails at the beginning of the week to increase impact.

Email marketing

Talent developers



65% use email marketing to promote learning.

Employees



61% discover learning programs via email marketing.

Employee intranet

Talent developers



61% use the employee intranet to promote learning.

Employees



55% discover learning programs via the employee intranet.

Turn up the volume on partner marketing to reach learners

The majority of talent developers partner with people managers and HR leaders to ensure employees discover learning programs through their managers or key moments like onboarding or manager training.

The majority of talent developers work to leverage managers and leadership to encourage employees to learn, but it remains an opportunity area. Similarly, the majority of talent developers aim to reach learners through existing talent management initiatives like onboarding. These messages are not reaching the majority of learners yet, but they have the potential to make the biggest impact.

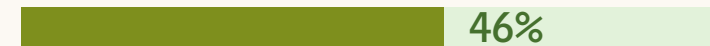
Managers and leadership

Talent developers



69% leverage managers and leadership to promote learning.

Employees



46% discover learning programs through managers or leadership.

Talent management initiatives

(e.g. onboarding)

Talent developers



62% leverage talent management initiatives to promote learning.

Employees



42% discover learning programs through talent management initiatives.



3 ways ServiceTitan drives learner engagement

Leading talent development teams like the one at ServiceTitan, a mid-sized software company, are implementing marketing tactics to connect with learners. These creative and attention-getting tactics foster a strong culture of learning within the company.

Pro tips for learner engagement

1

Create a brand for the L&D team.

The ServiceTitan L&D team created a learning brand that employees recognize. They have a logo, brand colors, and have rebranded their learning newsletter. This approach gets employees' attention and connects with them as consumers of learning.

2

Get creative with signage.

The learning team took signage to the next level by upping their design game—bringing in cultural tropes like the infamous 'got milk' ad to grab attention.

3

Embrace your organization's culture.

The L&D team used an upbeat, conversational tone in their internal communications by working jokes and quirky quotes into their emails so employees enjoy—and even look forward—to reading monthly updates.

Use video to get the organization excited about learning

What's the best way to raise awareness about learning programs?

Develop a full-production video with all the bells and whistles; or simply use your smartphone to make a quick video of your CEO sharing thoughts on why learning is important. Either way, you're sure to get the attention of learners and inspire them to learn.



[▶ TomTom taps into its gaming culture](#)



[▶ Econet's COO champions the importance of upskilling](#)



04

Know your learner:
Boost engagement

From Gen Z to Boomers, meet learners where they are

Millennials now dominate today's workforce and Gen Z just walked in the front door. These professionals want more collaborative work environments and self-directed career paths.

Today, it's imperative that you tap into the potential—and preferences—of all learners. Workers of every age are getting more mobile and social and the trick is to figure out what levers to pull to inspire learning. Get this right and you'll encourage cross-generational collaboration and participation, while nurturing the next generation of rising professionals to be learning leaders.



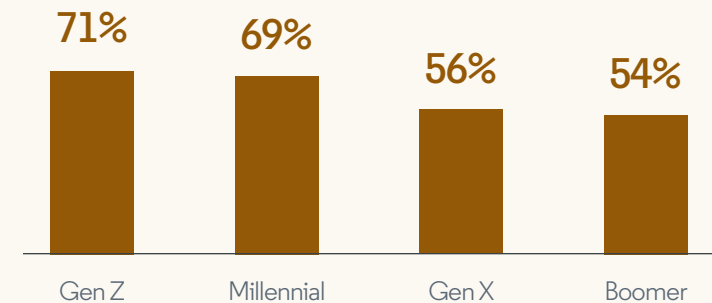
Create learning opportunities that are social and mobile

Learners are more mobile and social than ever. Mobile learning continues to increase—5% in the past year¹. And, over half of all learners value more social, collaborative environments—both in the office and when they are engaged with online learning.

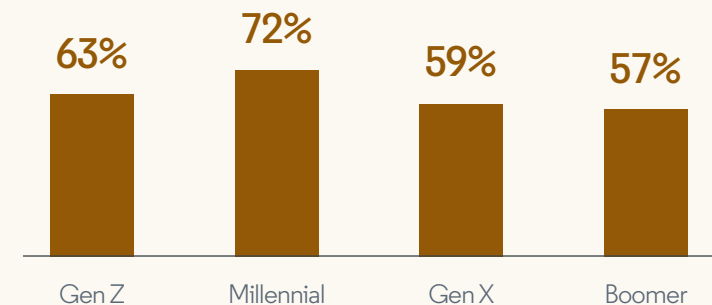
74% of talent developers say they plan to make changes to their L&D program to accommodate Gen Z workers². But it's not just about Gen Z—new ways of communication, marketing, and learning are sure to have an impact on learners of any age.

The majority of learners want social workplace learning experiences

Over half of each generation feels motivated to be around their colleagues at work, with Gen Z valuing it the most.²



Over half of each generation values the ability to collaborate with instructors and/or other learners via forums, groups, or Q&A session while taking a course.²

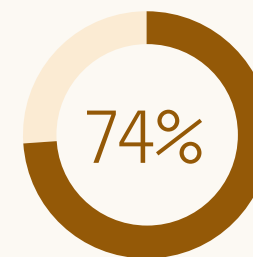
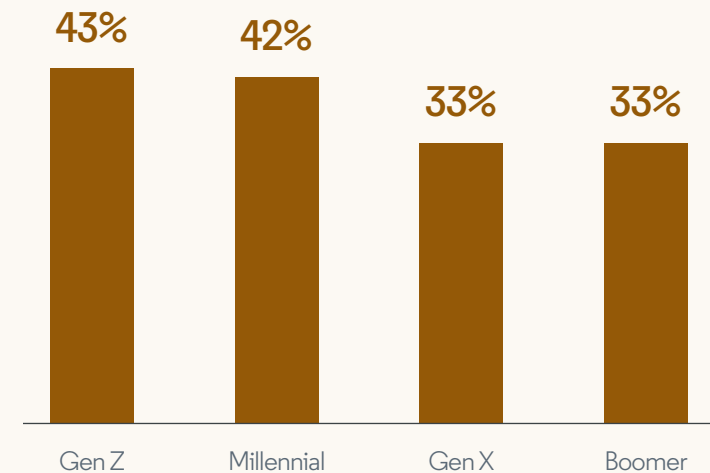


Learners want to control their learning journey

Survey data shows that employees want self-directed learning opportunities accessible in the flow of work. One way to accomplish that is through online learning, which enables employees to learn in the moment of need.

Work towards creating a frictionless online learning experience where employees can easily access relevant learning content.

Learners who want fully self-directed and independent learning²




74% of employees want to learn during spare time at work.

Enable self-directed learning by surfacing relevant content

Even if employees want to direct their learning journey, they may not know where to start. Be the catalyst for self-directed learning by pointing employees in the right direction—to courses that build the skills they need most.



Bella Arutyunan, a Product Manager at ServiceTitan, directs her own learning journey.

 [Meet Bella](#)

Top soft skills in 2019

The rise of AI is making soft skills increasingly important, as they are precisely the skills that can't be automated.

Based on the most in-demand soft skills of 2019, here are a few courses that you can send to employees to help them develop these critical skills.

Creativity

[Creativity Bootcamp](#)

Persuading others

[Becoming a Thought Leader](#)

Collaboration

[Collaboration Principles and Process](#)

Adaptability

[Developing Adaptable Employees](#)

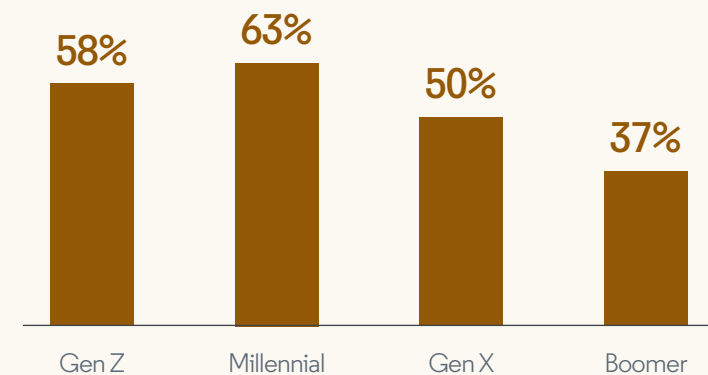
Time management

[Getting Things Done](#)

The biggest barrier to learning is time

We know that today's workforce cares deeply about learning and development opportunities from their employers, yet the biggest problem for talent developers is that employees don't make the time.

Most generations would like to learn a new skill but don't feel they have time.²



Communicate that learning is a good use of time

Yes, it's tough for employees to find time for learning; but data shows that taking more time to learn can make a significant difference in an employees' experience at work.

Employees who spend over five hours per week learning are more likely to know where they want to go in their careers, find greater purpose, and feel less stressed. We even see those benefits with "medium" learners, who spend one to five hours a week learning.

Compared to light learners (<1 hours per week), heavy learners (5+ hours per week) are⁴:

74%

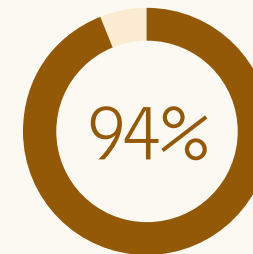
more likely to know where they want to go in their career.

48%

more likely to have found purpose in their work.

47%

less likely to be stressed at work.

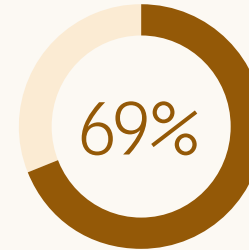


94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their learning and development.³

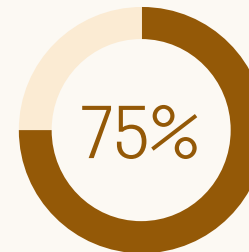
Manager involvement drives learner engagement

How can talent developers help employees carve out the time they need to overcome critical skills gaps? Based on this year's survey, the answer is clear: managers matter. Data shows the number one way learners discover the skills they need to improve or progress in their roles is when their manager provides specific direction or guidance.

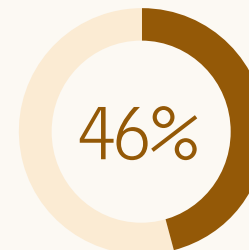
L&D understands this: nearly 7 of 10 talent developers proactively look to managers to encourage learning. Managers know their direct reports best and can make personalized learning recommendations based on interest and skills gaps. Although most talent developers are trying to engage managers, it remains a top challenge across the industry.



69% of talent developers proactively leverage managers to encourage learning, yet getting managers involved in learning remains a top challenge.



75% of employees would take a course their manager assigned.²



46% of learners find out about learning opportunities from their managers or leadership.

3 ways to activate people managers

Talent developers say getting managers involved is a top challenge in 2019. Whether you've launched your initiative to get managers to take on a larger role in employee learning, or are still considering your options, try these three strategies to activate your managers.



Casey Hackett, a Customer Success Manager at ServiceTitan, spends time learning and encouraging learning on his team.

[▶ Meet Casey](#)

Pro tips to activate people managers

1

Articulate the impact.

Just like employees, managers want to know what's in it for them. Help them understand how learning affects their performance, their team's performance, and their own personal growth.

2

Tap into urgency.

When learning is tied to a specific event—such as an upcoming conference, presentation, or big customer meeting—it holds more weight, as managers can see its direct impact. Identify and categorize upcoming events and remind managers of courses that can be particularly helpful in these moments.

3

Encourage action and ensure accountability.

To make training stick, create opportunities for managers to practice the concepts learned. Instead of one-and-done trainings, encourage ongoing learning—on a weekly or even daily basis—which supports the retention of ideas, extends the value, and allows learners to put new learning into action immediately.

How to take action on key findings

This is the breakout year for the talent developer. Budget and resources are finally beginning to catch up with learning needs. Online learning solutions are developing new ways to help talent developers like you solve top challenges—creating learning experiences employees want and surfacing the data you need to find, track, and solve skills gaps.

- Get proactive:**
With budgets increasing, have a plan ready for where additional budget can be allocated.
- Understand skills gaps:**
Assess where you are with skills gaps: what are the current methods and tools you're using? What's working? What's not?
- Harness skills data:**
Consider solutions like LinkedIn Learning that not only help you deliver up-to-date content, but also help you measure skills gaps and benchmark skills development against your peers.
- Tap into technology:**
Continue to increase your investment in online learning to meet the learning styles of every generation.
- Mix and match:**
Combine in-house content with expert off-the-shelf content in curated learning paths to make them even more relevant and applicable.
- Try new marketing communications:**
Invest more time in marketing learning programs and leverage the creative ideas in this report to increase learner engagement.
- Keep up the effort to engage managers:**
It is tough to get managers to take a more active role in employee learning, but this strategy is effective. Keep up the effort and try new strategies to motivate managers.

Sources

To create the 2019 Workplace Learning Report, we leveraged a few additional LinkedIn data sources to bring you comprehensive findings on trends in talent development.

1. LinkedIn Learning platform data from 2017 to 2018
2. LinkedIn commissioned study by Census Wide of 3,072 US full time workers 18+
3. LinkedIn study among employed LinkedIn Members surveyed from LinkedIn Member Databases conducted via online survey in 2017
4. LinkedIn study of 2,049 business, technical, and freelance professionals in 9 different developed countries in 2018



LinkedIn Learning, the leading online learning platform, helps organizations increase learner engagement and close critical skills gaps. With over 13,000 courses taught by real-world experts—and more than 50 new courses added every week—the library is always up-to-date with the most in-demand business, technology, and creative content. Additionally, LinkedIn insights and social experiences make learning more personalized and interactive so employees develop the most relevant, applicable skills.

For more information, visit <http://learning.linkedin.com>

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