

Talent Development's Skills Playbook



Foreword: Advancing career-driven learning, one play at a time

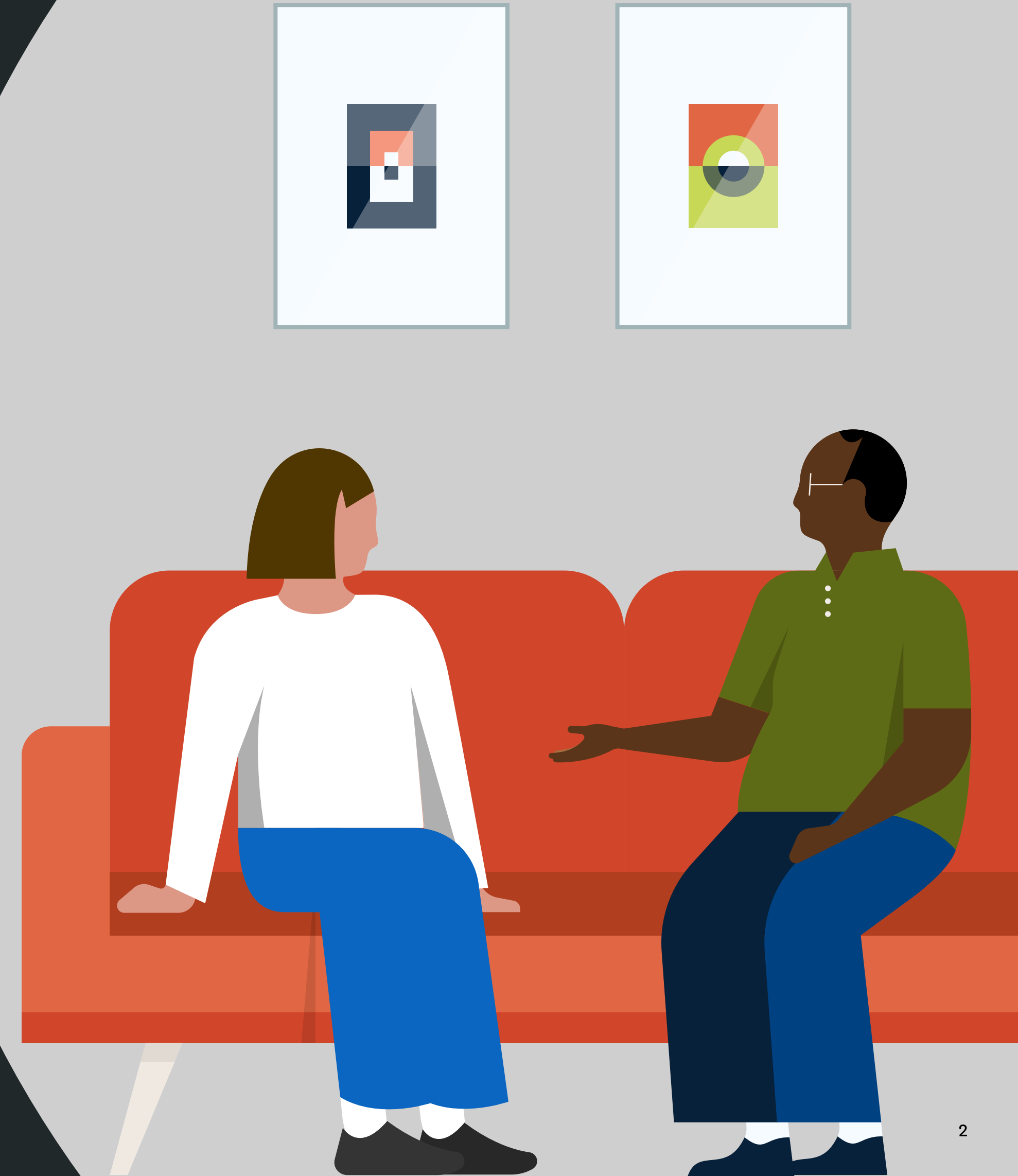
As companies adapt to a new landscape driven by technological transformation, talent leaders are tasked with keeping and energizing top talent, doing more with less across their programs, and inspiring employees to build the skills that will keep their company future-ready. While the challenge is significant, so is the opportunity. However, there isn't yet a playbook for unlocking that opportunity.

We believe **the key is career-driven learning**, where strategies combining upskilling, coaching and internal mobility are all combined to help **align employees' personal career goals with organizational needs**.

In fact, LinkedIn data has shown that progress toward career goals is employees' #1 motivation to learn. So, for companies to be their best, their employees need to be able to do their best.

LinkedIn has made a commitment to amplify the insights we've gathered from thousands of interactions with talent leaders. Our goal is to equip these leaders with effective strategies and frameworks to guide them through this unprecedented moment of change. Building agility into your upskilling initiatives, the focus of this playbook, is a key component of that change. Let's begin.

#1 Progress toward career goals is employees' #1 motivation to learn

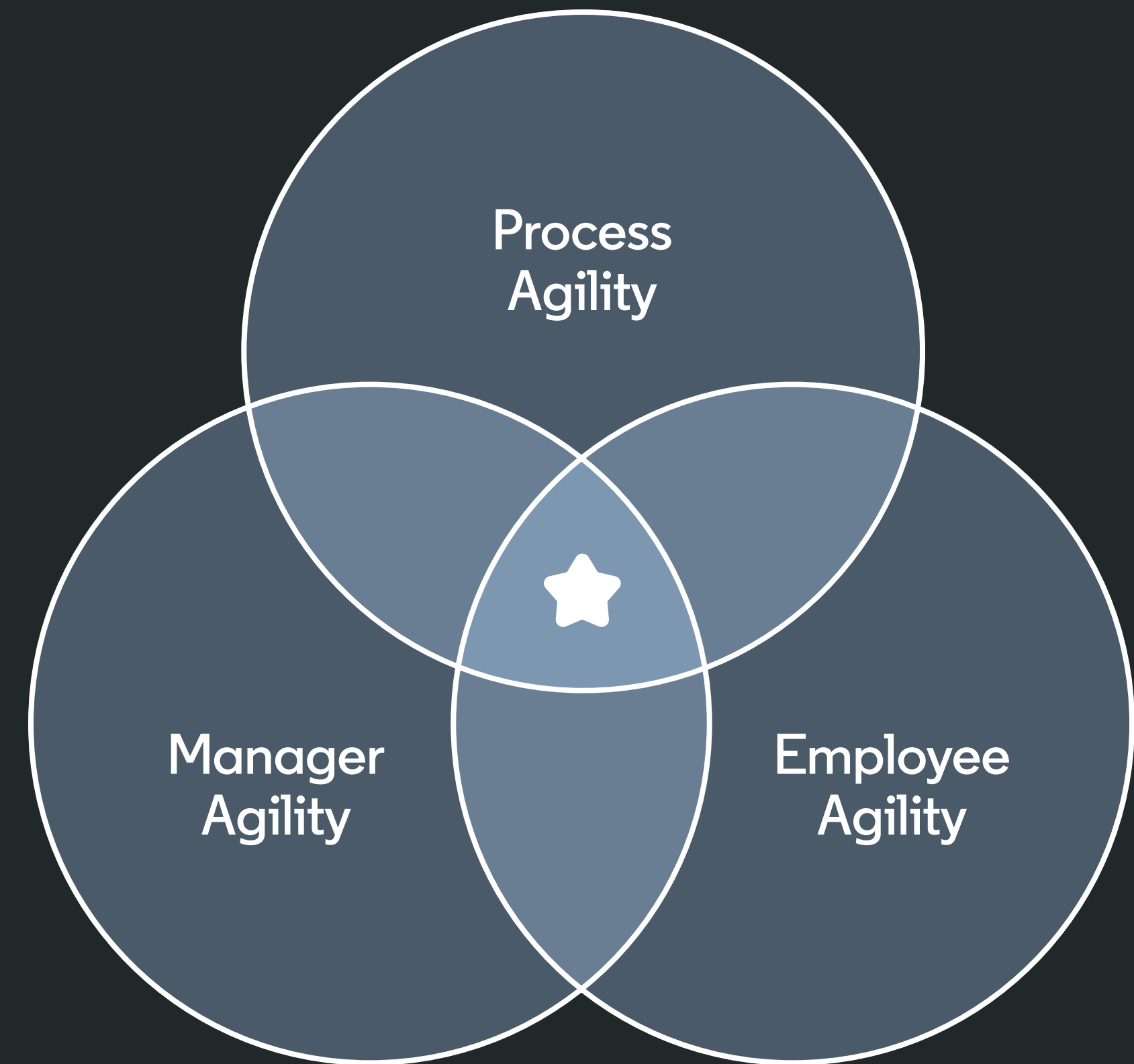


Introduction

AI's advancement compels businesses to prioritize agility in upskilling efforts. To succeed, Talent Development professionals will need to quickly evaluate and refine programs to meet rapidly changing skill needs. It's a critical shift, but one that's hard for Learning and Talent Development leaders to put into practice at scale.

Meeting this moment requires a new playbook for adaptable upskilling strategies, because the world of work is changing too quickly to do things the way you've always done them.

The goal is to put the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time. This playbook will show you how to implement three levers of agility: Your **process** for rolling out programs, your approach to equipping **managers** to become champions, and your strategy to helping your **employees** navigate their careers.



“Even if you aren’t changing your job,
your job is most likely changing on you.”



Ryan Roslansky
Chief Executive Officer at LinkedIn



Process Agility

Embrace dynamic approaches to upskilling

The skills to stay competitive are changing all the time. Keeping pace requires building more speed and dynamism in your skill-building programs.

In this section, we'll explore two ways Learning and Talent Development pros are making their upskilling processes more agile.

Where to focus

-  Audit skills frequently
-  Roll out new programs quickly



Audit skills frequently

Leverage two key data sources to determine the most business-critical skills:

Internal stakeholders' learning priorities

Align with business leaders by understanding their strategic goals and the skills required to achieve them.

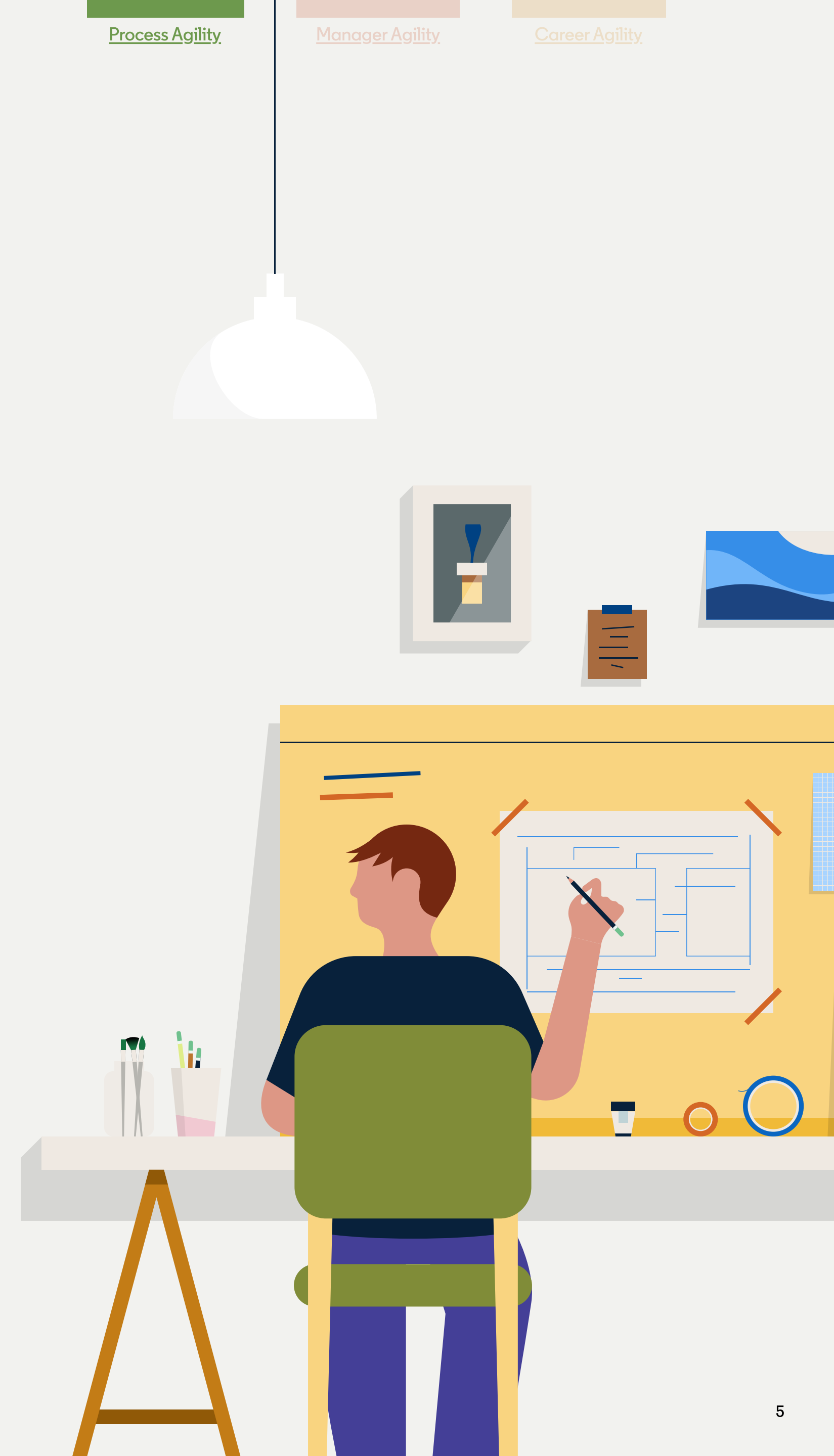
Benton McTaggart, Founder of Benton McTaggart Coaching, recommends shadowing teams to identify pain points that learning can address, and regularly asking:

- What are your top 3-5 strategic priorities for the next 1-3 years?
- What skills will your people need to deliver on those priorities?
- What skills and capabilities do you see our competitors investing in?

External reports on business-critical skills

LinkedIn frequently publishes reports analyzing hiring and learning data from our billion plus members to inform the skills your employees should learn, including:

[Workplace Learning Report](#)
[Global Talent Trends](#)
[Most In-Demand Skills](#)





Roll out new programs quickly

Like product cycles, time to launch of learning programs matters. For example, **Michelle Randall-Berry**, Global Head of Talent at Teradyne, spearheaded an effort that was able to go from concept to launch of a core upskilling curriculum — that would usually take 12 months — in 45 days. Her team reached this velocity by:

Securing executive leadership support early on

Early leadership buy-in helps cement your project's significance and fuels a company-wide push for upskilling

Proactively communicating goals and progress to stakeholders

Instead of waiting for major milestones, share work-in-progress updates to allow for faster course corrections

Creating feedback loops with impacted teams

As early as possible, gather cross-functional leaders to provide feedback on content relevance and to help validate learning approaches

25%

LinkedIn data shows that skills have changed 25% since 2015

70%

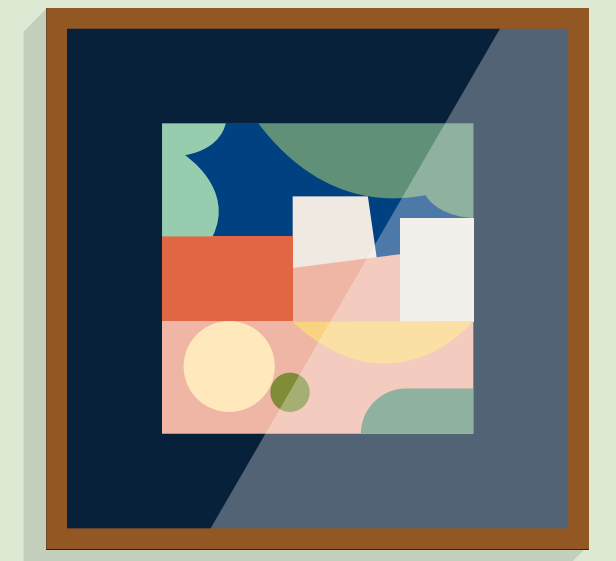
By 2030, that number is expected to reach at least 70%

Not sure where to get started? Try shifting annual skill assessment conversations to monthly check-ins with leaders, or provide biweekly written updates to a few select leaders.

“ Building skills and putting skills to work for your organization is not owned by L&D alone; it's co-owned by employees, managers, leaders, and business partners. The companies that outlearn other companies will outperform them.”



Vidya Krishnan
Chief Learning Officer at Ericsson



Exercise: Put the right foundations in place for process agility

Use this worksheet to identify areas for acceleration.

Even organizations with mature skill-building processes can prioritize agility.

What external resources can I use to keep up-to-date on in-demand skills?

Which internal stakeholders do I need to meet with regularly to keep up-to-date on skills needs?

Exercise: Put the right foundations in place for process agility

Use this worksheet to identify areas for acceleration.
Even organizations with mature skill-building processes can prioritize agility.

Rate your process on the statements below to identify where you can accelerate:

We are bringing key leaders into program design early in the process to get their buy-in

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Sometimes		All the time

We establish regular, rapid touch points to assess program progress and pivot as needed

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Sometimes		All the time

We have established feedback loops with the teams and managers who need to leverage new skills



1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Sometimes		All the time

Manager Agility

Transform managers into career accelerators

Managers are on the frontline where your people's skills and career development meet the needs of the business. These frontline leaders should be your strongest advocates for continuous upskilling. This section focuses on activating skill priorities through hands-on involvement from managers.

Where to focus

-  Translate business priorities into manager priorities
-  Equip managers to deliver on your skill priorities

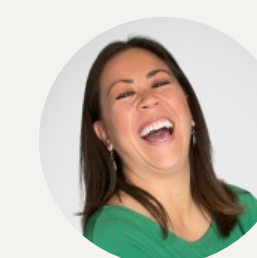


Translate business priorities into manager priorities

For a business interested in AI upskilling, talent development can help managers drive upskilling by aligning with their key priorities.

Priority	Desired outcome
Business-level priority	Improved AI proficiency across the business
Department-level priority	Product department leverages AI to shorten product cycles
Manager-level priority	Product team leads upskill on using AI to conduct quality control, build user personas, analyze data, improve SEO, etc.

“Don’t assume that different functions have the same learning needs across the board — tailor upskilling to each function. What does Engineering need? What does Sales need? Find out and give it to them.”

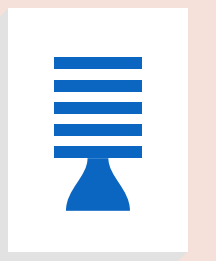
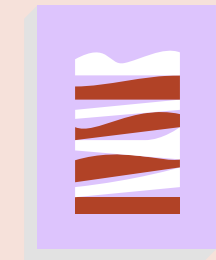


Chrissy Roth-Francis, Director of Talent Development at LinkedIn

“If you’re sitting in a talent planning room, you’re looking at great talent and asking, ‘What’s next for them? How can they develop and how can we, as an organization, make that happen?’ That’s the unlock — the decoder ring we’re all looking for.”



Rebecca Romano, SVP, Head of Global Talent Development at NBCUniversal





Translate manager priorities into action

Managers need the right tools and training resources to help their teams build business-critical skills and advance their careers.

These four qualities have helped make LinkedIn’s manager trainings effective:

- **Community-based:** Cohorts and discussion forums allow managers to ideate and problem-solve on how to best upskill their teams
- **Scalable:** AI coaching and feedback bots for managers to prepare difficult conversations
- **Personalized:** Have a common training curriculum — but suggest ways for managers to customize them to their teams and departments
- **Iterative:** Create venues for managers to give the Talent Development pros regular feedback on upskilling resources

LinkedIn’s Manager Training Programs

LinkedIn offers manager upskilling programs in various formats and durations to meet managers’ needs. These include live workshops, one-on-one discussions, small group activities, and assignments embedded into managers' work, such as prompts for employee check-ins and performance reviews.

As **Chrissy Roth-Francis**, Director of Talent Development at LinkedIn, says, “The activities are actionable, not just theoretical, and are integrated into the flow of work.”

Programs vary from in-depth, cohort-based courses to shorter, lighter ones, and are regularly refined to align with organizational needs and skill development.



50%

Recent LinkedIn research has shown that 50% of managers lack proper support for upskilling

Exercise: Are your managers upskilling champions?

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they engage employees regularly in career development conversations? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they have a solid understanding of current learning initiatives and programs? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are their people completing required training courses? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are their people taking stretch assignments or completing job rotations? |

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they engage in continuous learning themselves? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they celebrate and reward their team members who accrue and apply new skills? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they mentor other managers in building a culture of learning? |

If you can answer 'yes' to three or more of these questions, your managers are already upskilling champions.

If you checked fewer than three boxes, it's a sign you may need to train managers to help them become upskilling advocates.

Exercise: Translate business priorities into manager priorities

Managers have more on their plates than ever. They need Learning and Talent Development leaders to support them by helping to align their skill-building priorities with business priorities. Use this worksheet to cascade business priorities to team-level skill-building goals across key departments.

First, select the business priority you want to focus your skill building efforts on:

Business-level priority:

Next, identify the key departments that can help fulfill this objective:

Department:

How can this department deliver on the business priorities?

What skills do they need to build?

Then, ideate on how managers can support this initiative within their respective teams:

How can managers help unlock this skill growth?

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“

People managers at many companies are overwhelmed — juggling team leadership, employee well-being, and their full-time roles. At The Coca-Cola Company, we've focused on setting our people managers up for success by enabling them to better coach, remove roadblocks, and align priorities around the work that matters most.

Over the past three years, we've seen significant improvements in how our managers are rated by our people, along with overall satisfaction working at Coca-Cola.”



Tapaswee Chandele




Senior Vice President of Global Talent, Development & System Partnerships at The Coca-Cola Company

Agile Employee Career Development

Accelerate the flow of critical skills
through your people

When you embed more agility into how employees build skills to advance their careers, you're enabling faster paths to leadership and productivity across your business. This section will explore three career development tactics that will help accelerate upskilling.

Where to focus

-  Skills-focused mentoring
-  Employee reskilling
-  Peer-based learning

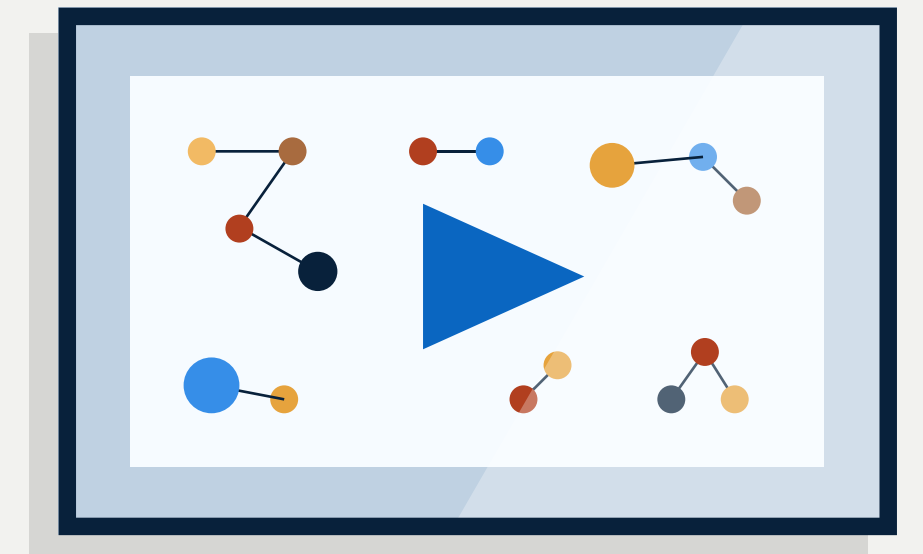
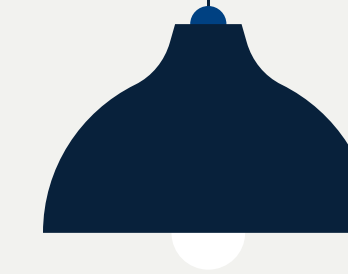
High impact investments in agile skill-building

According to our latest **Workplace Learning Report**, the most common career development practices employed by organizations globally are...

Leadership training	71%
Sharing internal job openings	59%
Creating individual career development plans or maps	55%
Mentorship programs	55%
Recognition and reward programs (excluding promotions)	50%
Opportunities to participate in cross-functional projects	45%
Internal mobility programs	44%
Tuition reimbursement / continuing education support	41%
Peer learning groups	31%
Job rotation initiatives	26%

You are likely leveraging some of the tactics above. In this chapter we will focus on 3 that are highly effective but often overlooked:

- Mentorship programs
- Opportunities to participate in cross-functional projects
- Peer learning groups





Tactic #1: Skill-specific mentoring programs

55% of L&D professionals surveyed in LinkedIn's **Workplace Learning Report** have set up mentoring programs. But there is still untapped potential: use mentor programs to build business-critical skills.

Mark Pearson, Corporate Vice President of Talent, Culture and Community at AMD, commented “Mentoring programs are especially helpful for deeply technical AI upskilling. With technology and skill sets so radically new, people haven't had time document best practices. Mentoring circles are having a huge impact.

We ask technical mentees what skill they most need help on, and then we connect them with a senior manager who specializes in that skill.”

Mark has seen a “gravitational pull of that apprenticeship spirit, and a willingness to learn” especially among Gen Zers newest to the workforce, and says they are building lasting relationships as a result of this mentoring for the moment.

Build a more agile mentoring program by:

Making mentor cycles shorter (no longer than 3 months)

Engaging a variety of mentors across the organization

Helping employees tap mentors with diverse expertise, from technical upskilling to leadership coaching

Helping new college graduates meet, learn from, and build working relationships with seasoned professionals across the organization





Tactic #2: Employee Reskilling

Reskilling your existing employees to fill internal roles is a great way to move skills and people throughout your organization. This approach minimizes the costs of making external hires and provides employees a way to use new skills to propel their careers.

For example, Amazon's Career Choice program supports frontline employees' skill development by encouraging managers to regularly discuss career growth and advancement with them.

Key parts of Amazon's program include:

Introducing the value of upskilling widely and early

- Amazon introduces the Career Choice program to managers in their initial training, priming them on the importance of upskilling early in the their tenure

Reminders in the flow of work

- Associates receive timely reminders to sign up for the program via warehouse scanners they interact with regularly

While Amazon's \$1.2B investment in Career Choice might seem like a herculean lift for the average business, consider how you might be able to adopt parts of the program. Can you engage employees in upskilling conversations as a routine part of their performance management? Are their moments in the flow of work you can leverage to remind employees to practice new skills?

“By arming our managers with these tools and fostering a culture of continuous learning, we ensure that new technologies create more opportunities for our workforce, reinforcing our commitment to striving to be Earth's best employer.”



Tammy Thieman, Director,
Career Choice at Amazon





Tactic #3: Peer-based, skill-driven learning

Peer learning is a powerful way to help employees both make time for learning and better retain knowledge.

Thomson Reuters is a great example of peer learning: they held global AI learning day, featuring structured group lessons and dedicated time for employees to experiment with AI and collaborate with one another.

In addition to the structured learning and time for experimentation, Thomson Reuters gives employees access to their internal Gen AI playground, Open Arena, and offers guided suggestions for how to use it.

This program helped Thomson Reuters build lasting hands-on learning driven by experimentation and employee ownership of the learning process.

31%

Just 31% of L&D pros are prioritizing peer learning initiatives





Additional Resources

LinkedIn Learning is the only skills development platform built on insights from 1 billion professionals on LinkedIn.



[1. LinkedIn's 2025 Workplace Learning Report](#)

Discover how career development can help your people and your company thrive

[2. Global Talent Trends](#)

Explore data-driven insights on the changing world of work

[3. Hold an AI Learning Day to Boost Your Company's Skills](#)

Learn how Thomson Reuters and Kraft-Heinz built business-critical AI skills

[4. Most In-Demand Skills](#)

LinkedIn data from our billion-plus global members reveals this year's most in-demand skills for your organization

[5. 6 Critical Human Skills for the Age of AI](#)

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